

TESTIMONY OF  
CHARLIE ANDERSON, PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON INVESTIGATIONS AND OVERSIGHT  
AND  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
AUGUST 1, 2007

Good morning Chairman Miller, Chairman Lampson, ranking members Sensenbrenner and Inglis and members of the Committee. My name is Charlie Anderson and I am the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management. In that role, I am the program's senior career federal officer and manage the day to day operations of the organization. I appreciate the opportunity to come here today to discuss with you the timeline and decisions made by the Department that has resulted in my appearance here today.

Deputy Secretary Sell has provided you with an overview of the events. My testimony today will provide details on my specific role in decisions made, discussions with the University of Georgia, members of Congress and my staff, and direction given relative to the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory.

Although the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory is located on the Savannah River Site, it is managed by the University of Georgia. The Department expected the University to take leadership in setting the course for the Laboratory's future. The Office of Science made tough budget and programmatic decisions for fiscal year 2006. As a result, the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory no longer would receive direct funding from the Department of Energy outside of successfully peer reviewed proposals for mission relevant research. At that time, the Department received letters from both the Georgia and South Carolina Congressional delegations requesting restoration of the Laboratory's direct funding.

In May 2005, the Assistant Secretary for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, and I helped negotiate an agreement among the Department, the Laboratory, the University of Georgia and members of both the South Carolina and Georgia Congressional delegations.

We agreed that the Office of Environmental Management would provide an additional \$3 million dollars in fiscal year 2006, with the Department providing a total of approximately \$4.3 million in funds for the Laboratory in FY06. The Office of Environmental Management would then provide \$1 million in fiscal year 2007 for infrastructure along with additional funds for research projects to be provided on a task-by-task basis. Additionally, for its part, the University of Georgia agreed to provide \$1 million for infrastructure in support of its Laboratory in fiscal year 2007.

The basis of the Department's agreement to provide additional funding in 2007 was the commitment by the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory and the University of Georgia to seek outside funding sources and to become self-sustaining. This is exactly how our National Laboratory at Savannah River is funded. I will note former Savannah River Ecology Laboratory Director Paul Bertsch's understanding of this arrangement when he was quoted in a July 11, 2005 University of Georgia Campus News article as "...we are grateful that our Congressional delegations have seen fit to give us a year to develop alternative funding sources." I would ask the Committee to include this press article in the hearing record.

In December of 2006, the Savannah River Site and the University of Georgia signed a new cooperative agreement that captured the terms made by the parties in 2005. The cooperative agreement provided the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory with \$1 million in guaranteed funding for infrastructure in 2007 and a mechanism to receive additional funding for research projects on a task-by-task basis as determined by programmatic need and funding availability. Under that framework, SREL proposed 27 tasks. These tasks were reviewed by Savannah River Site personnel and it was determined that six tasks, totaling approximately \$800,000, met critical program needs for the Office of Environmental Management. In addition, the National Nuclear Security Administration funded two additional tasks totaling \$435,000 in fiscal year 2007.

In May of this year the Department met with University officials to discuss potential paths forward. I was disappointed that given the self-declared “funding crisis” at the Laboratory, the University did not come to the meeting with any concrete plans for how it would move to refocus the Laboratory so that it would become self-sustaining. In a subsequent phone call between Secretary Bodman and University President Adams on June 1, 2007, President Adams committed to providing the Department with a plan for the future of the Laboratory. The Department has yet to receive a response to this request. The Department has received a closure plan unrelated to the Secretary’s request which fails to identify either clear objectives and activities or the funding and key personnel associated with those activities.

The Department will continue to honor the commitments it made as laid out in the cooperative agreement just as it has met all of its commitments to the Savannah River Ecology Laboratory to this point.

I would be pleased to answer any questions.