



Savannah River Site Watch

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<https://srswatch.org/>

**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact: Tom Clements, tel. 803-834-3084, cell 803-240-7268**

**DOE's National Nuclear Security Administration Extends by 15 Days Comment Period on Draft EIS on Proposed Savannah River Site Plutonium Bomb Plant, Period Extended from May 18 to About June 2**

Columbia, SC – The U.S. Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), in response to public requests, has extended for 15 days the public comment period on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the proposed Plutonium Bomb Plant at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina. That draft EIS examines expansion of production of plutonium "pits" (triggers) for nuclear weapons to SRS, a controversial mission the site has never had and which would yield a host of hard-to-manage radioactive and chemical wastes.

In response to a group letter dated April 14 from over 20 public interest groups and in response to a number of requests from individuals - requesting a 45-day comment period extension - NNSA on April 21 notified the non-profit public interest group Savannah River Site Watch (SRS Watch) that the comment period will be extended on the "Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Plutonium Pit Production at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina."

The letter received by SRS Watch on the morning of April 21 states that the comment period will be extended for 15 days - from May 18 to about June 2 - and notes the precedent NNSA recently set in recently extending the comment period for 15 days on a Supplement Analysis being prepared on pit production at the Los Alamos National Lab in New Mexico:

"As was true with the comment period for the draft SA for the Los Alamos SWEIS, which you refer to in your email, we are not insensitive to the disruptions caused by the need to adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic situation. And, as in that case, and in accordance with what you refer to as a "precedent for extension of other comment periods being managed by NNSA during the pandemic crisis," we will extend the Draft EIS comment period for fifteen days."

The letter to SRS Watch from NNSA's general counsel, Mr. Bruce Diamond, is linked here:

<https://srswatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Letter-to-SRS-Watch-draft-EIS-comment-period-extension-NNSA-April-21-2020.pdf>

The [draft EIS was released on April 2](#) and "noticed" in the [Federal Register on April 3](#).

SRS Watch welcomes the extension of the comment period as it will give the public more time during the COVID-19 crisis to review and comment on the controversial proposal to bring the new, provocative nuclear weapons mission to SRS.

“While we welcome the additional time for the public to review the proliferation and environmental impacts of bringing yet more plutonium to SRS for pit production in the abandoned MOX building, we will continue to question the need for this project,” said Tom Clements, director of SRS Watch.

“Production of 50 or more pits per year in the abandoned MOX plant is not justified, will result in more plutonium and toxic waste at SRS and is illogically being pursued primarily to fill the imaginary funding gap left when the MOX boondoggle was terminated,” added Clements.

“We encourage the public to engage in the EIS process and support our call for preparation of an overarching Programmatic EIS that would review all options across the DOE complex concerning pit production, including the option to not construct new facilities to produce pits at SRS and Los Alamos,” said Clements.

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