

Summary of Remarks by Danny Black,

President, Southern Carolina Alliance

before the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future

Augusta, GA, January 7, 2011

I have been invited here today to represent the economic development entities in our region. These groups include the Development Authority of Richmond County and Development Authority of Columbia County in Georgia, the Aiken-Edgefield Economic Development Partnership in South Carolina and my own organization, the Southern Carolina Alliance.

More than two-thirds of the 310 square miles on which the Savannah River Site is situated lies in two of our counties – Allendale and Barnwell. This land was acquired by the Government in the early 1950s. In the process, several communities and thousands of farm families were displaced under eminent domain to make way for construction of the Site.

While the people of the Southern Carolina region have been dedicated employees and supporters of the Site, the region has been challenged by the reduced tax base resulting from the acquisition of those thousands of acres 60 years ago.

Unlike other parts of the broader region, our counties are currently experiencing some of the highest unemployment levels in South Carolina – indeed, the entire Nation. In Allendale County alone, unemployment is now approaching 20 percent – double the national level.

Speaking for all of my colleagues in the business of job creation in our region, I want to clearly state that we fully support the Savannah River Site. We appreciate the contributions SRS has made to our region and our nation. And we are confident that its best years lie ahead as SRS continues to meet critical national challenges.

The federal government has shirked its responsibility by failing to provide a permanent repository for commercial spent fuel and high level defense waste.

Regardless of what waste management option is chosen, a repository will still be necessary and should be pursued without further delay. The absence of a permanent waste storage solution is a potential impediment to economic development as many worry that SRS will become a *de facto* permanent repository.

We are concerned that this negative image will impact our ability to attract industry and create new jobs, creating a chilling effect on future economic development throughout the region.

We support full utilization of the Savannah River Site's impressive capabilities in helping your Commission and this country meet the current challenge. For more than a half century, the Savannah River Site has possessed outstanding capabilities in spent fuel processing. In that time, SRS has assembled an unequalled team of experts and has built an enviable record of performance and safety that exceeds any other facility in the DOE complex.

We are confident SRS can play a major role in helping to close the fuel cycle ... minimize the volume of waste ... and put the country back on track with respect to ultimate disposal.