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**First Shipment of Downblended Surplus Plutonium from SRS's K Area Leaves South Carolina**

**AIKEN, S.C.** (January 13, 2023) - The Department of Energy's Savannah River Site (SRS) recently made the first shipment of downblended surplus plutonium from the site's K Area, a momentous milestone culminating from multiple years of effort to remove plutonium from the state of South Carolina.

"Words really cannot describe the amazing day we've had today or the sense of accomplishment - with the years of planning, dedication to the mission, and effort to make it a reality," said National Nuclear Security Administration's (NNSA) Office of Material Disposition Director Virginia Kay.

Plutonium is diluted, or downblended, in the site's K Area Complex glovebox in a process that mixes plutonium oxide with a multicomponent adulterant to enable DOE to produce a proliferation-resistant form that can never again be readily used in nuclear weapons, which meets requirements for shipping and disposal of the surplus plutonium as contact-handled transuranic waste at WIPP. The downblended material is packaged in Criticality Control Overpack (CCO) drums and staged on a designated storage pad until it is characterized and ready to be shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico.

In the past, all transuranic (TRU) waste shipped to WIPP was characterized, stored, and shipped from the SRS Solid Waste Management Facility (SWMF), located several miles away from K Area.

"This shipment is the result of years of planning, preparation, construction, and coordination," said Lee Sims, K Area Facility Manager for the Site's managing and operating contractor Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS). "Shipping directly from K Area, instead of through SWMF, saves time and resources and allows for more efficient removal of plutonium from the state."

"We are celebrating today, but we know we have a lot more work ahead of us," said SRNS President and CEO Stuart MacVean. Work is ongoing in K Area to increase the rate of downblending and shipping, including the construction of three new glovebox lines (used to

perform the downblending process), and new entry control facilities and housing for an influx of new employees that will be needed to meet the mission.



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