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### **Treat lab's uranium**

Donald Bridges

Letter to the Editor of *The Augusta Chronicle*

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A federal judge recently ruled that the U.S. Department of Energy followed proper environmental regulatory procedures for allowing liquid highly enriched uranium to be shipped from the Chalk River Laboratories in Canada to the Savannah River Site. The uranium is of U.S. origin and is a byproduct from the production of nuclear isotopes used in medical procedures internationally and in the U.S.

The ruling should now allow for transfer of the material to SRS processing facilities where it will be combined with other processing streams (primarily from spent nuclear fuel processing). This material will be blended down from highly enriched to low-enriched (making the material no longer a proliferation risk) and then all the uranium will be sent to a commercial fuel fabrication facility to produce fuel to generate nuclear energy in a Tennessee Valley Authority reactor. A minimal amount of waste will be generated from this process and will be safely managed through existing processes at SRS.

The bottom line is that the DOE and SRS know how to perform this work better than anyone in the world! Safely transporting nuclear materials has been a hallmark of the DOE for years, both for defense purposes and for environmental cleanup. Both the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the Canadian regulator have reviewed and approved the shipping package design for this material transport.

SRS is an advanced nuclear materials manufacturing site, not a dumping ground, and possesses the only facilities in the Western Hemisphere that can recover the uranium from this material, render it nonproliferable and safely treat the small quantity of resulting waste. The entire project is financed by the Canadian government, providing further benefit by offsetting U.S. tax dollars for maintaining SRS facilities.

It is time to move forward with this project and do what is in the best interest of Canada and the U.S.

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(The writer chairs the board of directors for Citizens for Nuclear Technology Awareness.)