Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

July 24, 2026

The Honorable Patricia L. Lee
Board Member
Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board
625 Indiana Avenue NW, Suite #700
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Dr. Lee:

This letter serves as the Department of Energy (DOE) 2026 annual response to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's May 28, 2025, letter requesting annual reports through fiscal year 2027 after the closure of Recommendation 2012-1, *Savannah River Site Building 235-F Safety*.

DOE assembled the enclosed report which provides an update on facility conditions, actions taken, and the completion status of the decommissioning project. The report addresses the following topics:

1. Progress made to deactivate and decommission Building 235-F.
2. Results of radiological surveys and inspections to verify that contamination is not spreading.
3. Status and schedule for establishing an end state determination with regulatory authorities.
4. Results of structural integrity inspections and any corrective actions identified and implemented from these inspections.
5. Any changes to the status of the E-5 ventilation system and sand filter, including any maintenance activities performed.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Ms. Brenda Hawks, Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary for Field Operations Oversight/Chief of Nuclear Safety, at (865) 805-0391.

Sincerely,

Timothy J. Walsh
Assistant Secretary
for Environmental Management

Enclosure

Safety at Savannah River Site Building 235-F

The Department of Energy (DOE) Savannah River Operations Office, along with Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, has been working to improve the posture of Building 235-F. DOE is providing this report in response to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's letter dated May 28, 2025, requesting an Annual Report through fiscal year (FY) 2027 regarding safety at the Savannah River Site (SRS) Building 235-F.

Deactivation of Building 235-F began in July 2019 and was completed in February 2023. Deactivation activities prepared the facility for long-term safe storage, which is relatively free of non-radiological hazards, with acceptable radiological risks, and minimal continuing surveillance and maintenance.

Deactivation involved the shutdown of all active structures, systems, and components in Building 235-F along with electrical/mechanical isolation of the building. The deactivation prepared the facility for decommissioning. This shutdown/isolation greatly reduces the cost for surveillance and maintenance of Building 235-F during safe storage until decommissioning is completed. Decommissioning of Building 235-F is a top priority for the Office of Environmental Management and SRS.

1. Progress Made to Deactivate and Decommission Building 235-F.

Deactivation was completed in February 2023, and the building is in long-term safe storage awaiting decommissioning with minimal surveillance and maintenance.

Demolition and Removal (D&R) of Building 235-F exterior ancillary equipment and facilities started in FY 2023 and was completed in FY 2025. The scope included asbestos abatement and removal of exterior conduit, piping, and ductwork, and D&R of office trailers, cooling tower, electrical substation, diesel generator/components, and security entry point. D&R of the ancillary equipment and facilities supports eventual decommissioning of 235-F.

Decommissioning activities for FY 2026 and FY 2027 include final design, preparation, submittal, and approval of design documentation, technical baseline establishment, and award of the subcontract to commence decommissioning in the field. This effort includes updating the Safety Basis Documents to address in-situ decommissioning (ISD), developing the ventilation strategy and grouting strategy for the ISD design, and implementing the procurement process to obtain a viable subcontract.

The project schedule is dependent upon an approved baseline and receipt of funding. Currently, activities continue to complete the design, with grouting planned to begin in late FY 2027 and field work completion in FY 2029.

2. Results of Radiological Surveys and Inspections Verifying that Contamination is not Spreading.

Radiological Protection Personnel performed routine surveys of Building 235-F prior to each entry. No spread of contamination was found.

The current Documented Safety Analysis (DSA) continues to support the facility's surveillance and maintenance state and will do so until changes are made to the facility. Final design and DSA considerations to support the late FY 2027 in-situ decommissioning scope are in progress.

The most recent radiological survey was conducted along with the enclosure integrity inspection on May 6, 2026, by F-area Facility Radiological Protection personnel during entry for the annual inspections. The preliminary radiological survey results indicate consistency with the prior year with no new conditions identified. The final evaluation results are expected to be completed by the end of August 2026.

3. Status and Schedule for Establishing a Final End-State Determination with Regulatory Authorities.

The Regulatory Process for End-State Determination is complete and includes approval from DOE, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) for the ISD.

4. Results of Structural Integrity Inspections, and any Corrective Actions Identified and Implemented from these Inspections.

Structural Integrity Inspections

The structural integrity inspections are performed every 5 years. The last inspection conducted in February 2022 found no conditions requiring repair. The inspection results are documented in the 235-F Facility 2021 Structural Integrity Program (SIP) Report (T-ESR-F-00036). The next inspection is scheduled to be completed no later than February 2027.

Enclosure Integrity Inspections

The 235-F Enclosure Integrity Program (EIP), described in the Basis for Interim Operation, AC 5.7.2.15, has an annual periodicity for the EIP inspections. The EIP consists of radiological surveys, visual inspections, and smoke leak testing of the enclosures to verify the integrity of the structure and the pressure boundary.

The last EIP was performed May 6, 2025, with no new items identified during the inspection and no new spread or increase in contamination.

F-Area Complex Operations and support personnel made the most recent entry into and inspected 235-F on May 6, 2026. Preliminary results of the inspections identified no new or unexpected progression of conditions align with the previous years.

The final evaluation results are expected to be completed by the end of August 2026 to satisfy the annual inspection requirement.

5. Any Changes to the Status of the E-5 Ventilation System and Sand Filter, including any Maintenance Activities Performed.

The E-5 Fans draw a vacuum on the process areas of Building 235-F. There were no changes to the E-5 Ventilation System or Sand Filter Status. One fan is on standby when the other fan is in operation. The fan run times are equalized by rotating the operation. Periodic preventive maintenance includes daily ventilation readings, monthly vibration readings, and 24-month belt checks and lubrication.

Corrective maintenance since 2023 includes solenoid valve replacement on the 2E5 damper, 2E5 fan bearing replacement, 2E5 fan starter replacement, and multiple E-5 ductwork support replacements. These were completed various dates from May 2024 through December 2025. During May 2026, maintenance was initiated on the 2E5 fan to replace bearings and fan sheaves due to a continuing trend of increasing vibration readings. The facility has continued to work repairs to bring vibration readings within limits.

The 292-2F Fan House and 294-2F Sand Filter are inspected every five years for structural integrity. The last inspection was performed in July 2022 and is documented in the 2022 SIP Inspection Report for 294-2F (T-ESR-F-00040). The Filter Media was found to perform its design function. The next inspection is scheduled to be performed no later than July 2027.

The Sand Filter efficiency is checked every 18 months. From the most recent 294-2F sand filter efficiency test on August 18, 2025, the resulting efficiency was 99.99 percent. The next test is expected in early 2027.

The Fans and the Sand Filter remain in good working order and will remain functional while Building 235-F is in long term safe storage and decommissioning.

Conclusion

DOE completed deactivation of Building 235-F in February 2023. Radiological Survey Results verify that contamination is not spreading, and Structural Integrity and Ventilation System/Sand Filter Inspections conclude that systems are performing as required.

The SCDES and the EPA have approved the ISD end state of Building 235-F.

Responsibility for the facility has been transferred to the Office of Closure and Project Management (OCPM) for continued surveillance and maintenance, and decommissioning activities.

The Office of the Assistant Manager for Nuclear Material Stabilization personnel will continue to support OCPM, as requested, during the surveillance and maintenance, as the plans and designs for the decommissioning are implemented.

The facility is radiologically safe, with no spread of contamination.