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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 5--Senator Strom Thurmond revealed today that a mammoth expansion of facilities totaling more than \$100 million may be initiated at the Savannah River Plant near Aiken, S. C., within the next few years.

The South Carolina Democrat, a resident of Aiken, said the expanded facilities would include another atomic reactor for the production of plutonium, a vital ingredient for nuclear weapons. Although the project would require Congressional approval, Thurmond said he expected little difficulty in view of the demand for plutonium and the recent approval of a similar project for Hanford, Washington.

The President yesterday signed the Atomic Energy Authorization Bill which authorized the construction of a \$145 million reactor at Hanford. Construction on the Hanford reactor is expected to take from 4 to 5 years.

The House has already approved a \$45 million appropriation to begin work on the Hanford reactor during fiscal year 1959. The appropriation bill is now pending in the Senate Appropriations Committee and will be acted on by the Senate prior to adjournment.

Thurmond said the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Atomic Energy Commission, and leading scientists in this country have called for more plutonium than existing facilities and the new Hanford reactor can produce and that the Savannah River Plant is the most logical site for the next reactor. He said he has been assured by Senator Henry Jackson (D-Wash.), a ranking member of both the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Joint Atomic Energy Committee, that the next reactor will be constructed at the AEC installation near Aiken. This has been

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confirmed by other checks Senator Thurmond has made with the staff of the Joint Atomic Energy Committee and the Atomic Energy Commission. All say that the Savannah River Plant is the "most logical site" for the next reactor.

The initial appropriation for the Hanford reactor should be assured by the end of this session of the Congress, Thurmond noted, adding that he will join with Senator Jackson and others in pushing for the authorization for the Savannah River Plant reactor next January when the Congress reconvenes for the 1st Session of the 86th Congress.

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