

To: Citizen Task Force
From: Melinda Holland, Clean Sites
Kate Whitby, Clean Sites
Subject: Summary of March 5, 1997, Meeting
Date: March 11, 1997

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the Citizen Task Force will be held on:

Date: Tuesday, March 18, 1997
Time: 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.
Location: Ashford Office Complex
9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY

If you have questions or comments regarding the upcoming meeting or about this summary, please contact Melinda Holland at (864) 457-4202 or Tom Attridge at (716) 942-2453.

Task Force Attendees:

Pete Scherer, Warren Schmidt, Joe Patti, Tim Siepel, Larry Smith, Ray Vaughan, Pete Cooney, John Pfeffer, Elaine Belt, Paul Piciulo, Barbara Mazurowski (for Tom Rowland), Rich Tobe, Nevella McNeil, Bill King, Blake Reeves, Dick Timm, Eric Wohlers, and new to the Task Force, Lana Rosler from the Seneca Nation of Indians.

Regulatory Agency Attendees:

Jack Krajewski NY State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
Bill Tetley NYSDEC
Todd Jackson U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

Attendees by Video Conference:

Gary Comfort NRC
Mike Weber NRC
Boby Eid NRC
Tim Johnson NRC
John Greeves NRC
John Hickey NRC
Kim Gruss NRC
Heather Astwald NRC
Patti Swain Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)
Joe Price SAIC

March 5, 1997 Meeting Summary:

Melinda Holland began the meeting by addressing administrative issues and reviewing the agenda with the Citizen Task Force (CTF). Tom Attridge was unable to attend this meeting, so Ms. Holland reported on Mr. Attridge's conversation with Patricia Briggs of Senator Jess Present's Albany office about the Senator's seat on the CTF. Ms. Briggs explained that there

had been a miscommunication between the Senator's Jamestown and Albany offices and that Katherine Koss had never officially been appointed by the Senator to represent him on the CTF. She also stated that as soon as they hire a new staff member they will send that person to fill the Senator's seat on the CTF.

Mike Weber, NRC, offered to provide a presentation to the CTF at the April 2 meeting, covering such topics as NRC's regulatory framework, decommissioning criteria precedents, NRC's proposed regulations and how these and other issues could impact the West Valley site. A member of the CTF requested NRC to come prepared to talk about NRC's comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), specifically page 3.3 of their comments. Another CTF member encouraged NRC to actively participate in discussions of each Waste Management Area and to raise issues and concerns as they appear.

Ms. Holland also explained that feedback about the last meeting received from the CTF members, via the evaluation forms and conversations, indicated that some of the material presented on February 18th was unclear and overly technical. To respond to those concerns, the agenda for this meeting was revised to include a more simplified review of some of the technical information.

Waste Management Area 5 - DEIS Synopsis - Jim Hammelman, SAIC, presented a "higher level" overview of the material he covered at the end of the February 18th meeting on the DEIS analysis of Waste Management Area 5. Materials supporting this presentation were handed out at the meeting.¹

CTF Discussion - After Jim's presentation, Melinda opened the meeting up to the CTF for discussion. A member of the CTF pointed out that page 6 of Jim Hammelman's presentation referred to the maximally exposed individual off-site. The NYSERDA representative of the CTF talked about the feedback received from the previous meeting and encouraged members to continue providing feedback so future meetings will most effectively meet the members' needs. Another CTF member mentioned that he attended a site tour which was very helpful to him in understanding issues about the site and encouraged other members to go on a site tour.

A member stated that he's concerned that he doesn't yet have adequate information to decide what the critical issues are for the site. A "high level" overview is what the Task Force probably needs at this time, but it doesn't provide the breadth of information he feels is needed for the CTF to evaluate and develop recommendations. Ms. Holland responded that the facilitators share this concern and are working with the site on ways to provide both levels of information and welcome suggestions. The member also feels that although we are discussing the environmental and health impacts for the Western New York Nuclear Service Center, we are not adequately assessing the long-term environmental impacts on the locations where the waste could be potentially sent to. He felt that transportation and off-site impact information is needed for the CTF to be able to balance the impacts of the various alternatives. Mr. Hammelman responded by stating that a specific analysis for West Valley wastes disposed at other sites had not been done. He added that sites receiving wastes would be licensed and permitted and, therefore, would be protective of human health and the environment.

Other members discussed the need for a better understanding of the assumptions that underlie the conclusions in the DEIS. They also indicated a need for a CTF educational session on computer modeling and how it was used in the DEIS.

¹ If you would like a copy of the materials handed out at the Citizen Task Force meeting, please call Sonja Allen, West Valley Nuclear Services, (716) 942-2152.

Melinda Holland inquired whether the Task Force had any recommendations for changing the topics or sequence of future CTF meetings. She indicated that additional meetings for discussion of cross-cutting issues needed to be added and asked CTF members to submit ideas for issues that they would like covered at these meetings. She also distributed one CTF member's proposed list of issues for these meetings. The CTF had no recommendations at this time for other changes to the sequence or subject matter of future meetings. Ms. Holland encouraged CTF members to continue to provide feedback on the quality and effectiveness of presentations and meeting agendas so improvements can be made to the CTF process.

Waste Management Area 9 (Drum Cell) Overview

Rich Humphrey, West Valley Nuclear Services (WVNS), gave a presentation on the history, construction, contents of the drum cell also known as Waste Management Area 9. Supporting materials were distributed at the meeting.

A member asked about the level of radioactivity of the drums stored in the drum cell and Rich Humphrey responded that originally it was anticipated that the drums would be approximately 700 to 1,000 mrem/hour on contact, but that due to the efficiency of the pretreatment system, the contact doses from the drums range from about 8 mrem/hour to 80 mrem/hour. The member also asked if the waste in the drums is considered transuranic (TRU) and whether it will continue to read above background 200,000 years from now. The member also raised the issue of the strength of the concrete and its ability to remain intact over excessive time periods.

Rich Humphrey clarified that Greater-Than-Class-C (GTCC) is an NRC classification and that TRU waste is a DOE classification. Mr. Humphrey stated that GTCC is the NRC term for radioactive waste which has greater than 10 nanocuries per gram of TRU material (atomic # greater than 92), while TRU is DOE's term for waste that is greater than 100 nanocuries per gram of TRU material. The discussion continued on the requirements of the Stipulation of Compromise, more specifically on the challenge of resolving whether the drum cell waste is considered TRU or GTCC waste. The NRC provided clarification on this topic, stating that NRC agrees that the decision has not been made regarding classification of the waste as GTCC or TRU at West Valley. The NRC added that, in any case, a performance assessment needs to be presented to the NRC demonstrating the ability to store or dispose of these wastes on site.

Another member asked if the drums were segregated based on curie content. Rich responded that the radioactivity of each of the drums is unique and that they were placed in the drum cell as they were produced. Rich added that each drum is numbered and location-mapped in the drum cell. Jim Hammelman added that some of the higher dose drums were placed in the center of the facility, allowing the lower dose drums to provide extra shielding on the sides of the facility.

A member stated that he thought the Cement Solidification System was still in operation. Rich clarified that although the system is capable of running, it is not currently operating. Another member asked how difficult it would be to repair or replace the metal exterior of the drum cell facility in the event it became damaged. Rich responded that it would be relatively easy, a matter of applying regular construction techniques.

Another member asked about the wastewater from the Cement Solidification System and whether or not radioactivity was released into the air during the processing. Rich explained that the system collected boiled liquid in the form of steam condensate, which was decontaminated through the Low-Level Waste Treatment Facility and eventually released (once it was confirmed to be below acceptable regulatory levels) from the lagoons into Buttermilk Creek. The NYSERDA representative of the CTF added that the discharges from the lagoons are regulated by the NYSDEC through a State Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit.

NRC asked how much of the thorium bled through in the supernatant (liquid) treatment and ended up in the Cement Solidification System drums? Rich explained that it was very little due to pH adjustments, however, he would check on this. NRC also asked if all of the Plutonium and Americium isotopes were considered in the radionuclide inventory for the drum cell. Rich wasn't sure and offered that if the issue was significant enough, detailed calculations should be done and peer review provided.

Observer Comments:

A member of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters requested that their organization be allowed to have a seat on the CTF. Melinda Holland stated that the group would have to discuss the issue at the next meeting. One member responded that at our first meeting it was decided that there would be no new members. Another member stated that since the membership issue was resolved at the first meeting, it shouldn't be reopened now. The NYSERDA representative told the Task Force that he had communicated with the League regarding the CTF's position against adding new members, but that the League had decided to present their request anyway.

The NYSERDA representative informed the Task Force that the CTF received a letter from Paul Mayo and Associates regarding the possibility of presenting information on a technology for disposal of low-level radioactive waste in a drift mine. Copies of the letter were provided to the CTF.

Action Items:

Respond to member inquiries about:

- ▶ Whether the costs for Alternative #1 are based on rail or truck transport (rail may be less expensive)
- ▶ Consideration of potential impacts from West Valley wastes at out-of-state disposal sites
- ▶ Add an educational session on modeling and related issues to the CTF schedule
- ▶ Request by League of Women Voters for membership on the Task Force

Parking Lot Issues:

- ▶ Potential for closure of area rail lines and possible CTF response