

To: Citizen Task Force  
From: Melinda Holland, Clean Sites  
Subject: Summary of April 21, 1998, Task Force Meeting  
Date: April 28, 1998 - **Revised 5/13/98**

**Next Meeting:**

The next Citizen Task Force (CTF) meeting will be on:

Date: Wednesday, May 6, 1998  
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.

**CTF Attendees:**

Attending were: Ray Vaughan, Pete Scherer, Joe Patti, Nevella McNeil, John Pfeffer, Tim Siepel, Dan Sullivan, (for Tom Rowland), Paul Piciulo, Bridget Wilson (for Elaine Belt), Larry Smith, Eric Wohlers, Warren Schmidt, Paul Krantz (for Rich Tobe), and Bill King. Not attending were: Tom Rowland, Lana Rosler, Murray Regan, Blake Reeves, Elaine Belt, Rich Tobe, and Pete Cooney.

*Regulatory Agency Attendees*

Tim Rice, NYSDEC; Jack Krawjewski, NYSDEC

*Attending Via Video Conference*

Congressman Amo Houghton, U.S. House of Representatives; John Greeves, Tim Johnson, and Jack Parrot, NRC

**April 21 Workgroup Meeting Summary:**

Tom Attridge and Melinda Holland opened the meeting by reviewing administrative issues and the agenda.

At this meeting, Congressman Amo Houghton met with the Task Force via video conference to answer CTF member questions. Congressman Houghton mentioned that the current DOE budget for West Valley is \$110 million. While the long-term budget for the site is unknown, he doubted that it would increase beyond the current annual appropriation and would be likely to decrease significantly after the year 2006. In response to a CTF member question about what happens after 2006 if waste is left at the site and long term institutional controls are required, Congressman

Houghton responded that the distant future is unknown but he felt that DOE would want to be involved in monitoring the site. He reiterated the fact that DOE plans to complete its major investment at the site by 2006 and that he feels DOE will want to do the best possible cleanup at West Valley. Congressman Houghton mentioned that the vitrified wastes should leave the site once a permanent repository is available, but he is not sure how long that will take.

On the issue of how the site should be managed in the future, Congressman Houghton stated that he would like to hear the CTF's recommendations for the closure and future use of the site. He stated that he would review the CTF's draft report and support their recommendations, but reminded the group that federal dollars are limited. Another CTF member asked how the community could be assured that the site would be safely maintained for hundreds of years, and what assurances can be given that the government will keep its word. Congressman Houghton responded that the mood of Congress is to do right by nuclear waste sites but they must balance this need against other needs like social security, etc. When asked if he favored a "green field" approach to the cleanup, Congressman Houghton responded that would be the goal, but he is not sure it can be done; the intent is to remove threats and leave the site as pristine as possible.

A Task Force member asked about the chances of passing another federal statute (or amending the existing act) on the cleanup of West Valley when vitrification is complete. Congressman Houghton feels it is very unlikely that Congress would re-open the existing West Valley Demonstration Project Act or pass another act.

CTF members then asked Congressman Houghton to focus on the wastes which will remain after vitrification, such as the burial grounds. They asked which agency (NYSERDA or DOE) is responsible for cleanup of what remains. Congressman Houghton responded that traditionally low-level waste is the responsibility of the states. A NYSERDA representative distinguished between the state's responsibility for low-level waste currently being generated and the old wastes (which include low-level waste and other types of waste) which were generated by the reprocessing plant at the site. DOE and NYSERDA have not reached agreement on which agency is responsible for the wastes which remain after vitrification is complete. A CTF member mentioned that 30 to 35% of the wastes in the State-Licensed Disposal Area (SDA) came from federal defense projects. It was classified and called low-level waste, but in reality some waste is greater than class C waste or worse. Congressman Houghton agreed to investigate the issue of responsibility for wastes remaining at the site and get back to the CTF. Another CTF member also asked Congressman Houghton to look into the North Plateau Groundwater Plume and which agency should be responsible for its cleanup.

Congressman Houghton agreed to hold another video conference with the Task Force and May 19 was selected as a target date. The date will be confirmed and CTF members will be notified. Congressman Houghton left the video conference at this point.

The CTF continued its discussions and decided to draft a letter to Congressman Houghton giving him a brief summary of the issues the CTF is focusing on and to provide him with the cost estimates for the proposed cleanup alternatives. The CTF will also continue to forward revised drafts of their report to Congressman Houghton. John Pfeffer, Tim Siepel, Pete Scherer, and Eric Wohlers agreed to work with Melinda Holland to draft the letter to Congressman Houghton.

A NYSERDA representative mentioned that additional technical reports are available on the North

Plateau Groundwater Plume and other site technical investigations. This information can be made available to the CTF at a future meeting.

The CTF next discussed Section IV of the March 24 version of the draft report (this section was not discussed at the last subcommittee meeting). The attached draft report reflects the changes to Section IV which were agreed to on April 21, 1998. Unresolved issues are listed below.

### **Unresolved Issues (Parking Lot)**

- ◆ Restructure paragraph 9 in Section IV. Issues include the meaning of the phrases “monitor the success” and “trigger.”
- ◆ Need to have brainstorming session on what triggers are desired. Some ideas mentioned include: 1) a standing CTF to meet periodically to review conditions at the site, evaluate new technologies, and make recommendations to the government when action is needed; and 2) build something into the NRC license.
- ◆ Add a paragraph explaining what the term institutional controls includes.
- ◆ Add something on the role of NYSDEC and NYS Department of Health (NYSDOH).

### **Observer Comments:**

An observer asked the NRC representatives when the Commission paper will be issued. NRC responded that the draft paper is in the agencies’ concurrence chain for approval and that they hope it will be in the Commission’s hands within a month. However, they do not know how long it will take for the Commission to issue a recommendation.

Another observer also encouraged the CTF to press now to get monies set aside for the best possible cleanup. This observer commented that the word “assure” in Section IV, paragraph 9 should be “ensure”~~“insure.”~~ This observer also suggested to use “progress toward” achieving the goal rather than “success at” achieving the goal in paragraph of Section IV. She also stressed that an answer is needed to the question of who owns the low-level waste at the site, especially in the burial grounds.

### **Next Steps**

- ◆ On May 6, the Recommendations Report subcommittee will meet and focus on resolving parking lot issues and incorporating those issues into the draft Recommendations Report.
- ◆ On May 19, Congressman Amo Houghton is tentatively scheduled to join the CTF discussions via video conference.