

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force  
From: Bill Logue, Citizen Task Force Facilitator  
Date: January 14, 2010  
Subject: **Summary of the December 15, 2010 Meeting**

## Next Meeting

The next Citizen Task Force Meeting will be:

Time & Date: **6:30 – 9:00 PM, January 26, 2010**  
Location: Ashford Office Complex  
9030 Route 219  
West Valley, NY

Note: Participants must be U.S. citizens and have photo identification. Please contact Bill Logue (860-521-9122, [Bill@LogueGroup.com](mailto:Bill@LogueGroup.com)) with questions or comments concerning this summary or future meetings.

## CTF Members and Alternates Attending

Deb Aumick (by phone), Chris Crawford (by phone), Chris Gerwitz, Mike Hutchinson, Steve Kowalski, Paul Kranz (by phone), Lee Lambert (by phone), Kathy McGoldrick, Joe Patti, Warren Schmidt, Ray Vaughan.

## Agency Participants and Observers

*Department of Energy (DOE)*: Bryan Bower.

*New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)*: Tom Attridge, Paul Bembia, Andrea Mellon, Paul Piciulo.

*West Valley Environmental Services, LLC (WVES)*: Sonja Allen, Charles Biedermann.

*Observers*: Elizabeth Lowes, Patsy Lane.

## NSYERDA Public Meeting

Prior to the CTF Meeting, Andrea Mellon, NYSERDA Senior Project Manager for Source Inventory, RCRA and Waste Management, made a presentation on the NYSERDA Corrective Action Permit Application. (The presentation is available online with the meeting materials.) The application will be submitted to the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in January 2011. The permit application is for the NYSERDA controlled portions of the site and addresses hazardous (non-radioactive) wastes.

## Introductions and Announcements

Bill Logue welcomed the group and reviewed the meeting documents.<sup>1</sup> Warren Schmidt will continue to serve on the CTF as a volunteer representing Assemblyman Giglio. Mike Brisky will serve as his alternate. The CTF had no comment or discussion of the Corrective Action Permit application process and deferred any additional discussion until such time as NYSDEC and EPA release the application for public comment.

## CTF Letter to Federal Representatives

The CTF finalized and signed letters to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Congressman Reed. The purpose of the letters is to solicit interest in having representatives from their offices join the CTF. Warren Schmidt agreed to follow up with calls to the Senators' offices and Deb Aumick to Congressman Reed's office.

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<sup>1</sup> The documents are listed at the end of this summary and may be found at [www.westvalleyctf.org](http://www.westvalleyctf.org)

## Phase 1 Studies Process

Paul Bembia of NYSERDA reported that DOE and NYSERDA have come to agreement on the process for the Phase 1 studies and are now ready to move forward on the Second Supplemental Agreement which will set in place the mechanisms for contracting for the facilitator, the subject matter experts and the independent review panel. The first public meeting will be scheduled in the near future. Mr. Bower stated that the agencies hope to be able to have it coincide with a CTF meeting or a Quarterly Public Meeting but need to ensure that neither the CTF nor the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes have objections. The CTF will discuss this at their January meeting.

## WVDP Project Update

Bryan Bower of WVDP presented a brief update on activities at the West Valley Demonstration Project.

**Safety.** Mr. Bower noted that as of December 10, 2010 WVDP employees had worked more than 3.6 million hours without a lost-time accident or illness and there were no recordable injuries and three minor first-aids since August. The WVDP was awarded Safe Project of the Year for URS. URS WVDP employee Dave Emerling created the company wide safety slogan "Success Begins with Safety."

### Main Plant Process Building (MPPB).

- **Asbestos Removal.** After the contamination event during the summer caused by a severe rainfall and fan shutdown, the cleanup of the Lower Extraction Aisle is complete with installation of a glove bag on the vent duct and roof repairs. Balancing the decisions on necessary maintenance for safety and what can be foregone given the ultimate demolition of the MPPB in Phase 1 is difficult. While these activities were undertaken, crews were moved outside to perform other work during good weather. On returning inside crews began removal of asbestos containing material in steam lines. This work will be completed in the spring when the system is cool. In the meantime work will continue in the Chemical Operating Aisle.

- **Off Gas Cell and Off Gas Cell Blower Room.** The Off Gas Cell has very high levels of contamination that remote scabbling (chipping) of the walls has not sufficiently removed. The area is being prepared for shielding about 29 feet above the floor to allow workers to safely enter and perform further work. The floor was leveled with grout. In the Off Gas Blower Room some process lines were removed and work will be completed in January.

- **Head End Cells.** The Nitrocision® Process is working well at removing contamination from cells and producing a very limited amount of waste. Crews are using the 2" head on the equipment and are becoming much more efficient with experience. Wall decontamination is complete in the Process Mechanical Cell which is now being prepared for vacuuming and walls are 80% complete in the General Purpose Cell.

- **Extraction Cell-1.** The gutting of the cell using a robotic arm is proceeding with cutting of piping, removal of the first vessel and preparation for removal of the second vessel. The first vessel was sprayed with fixative and placed in a container fitted into the top of the adjoining cell. Once the remaining in-cell pipes are cut, they will be retrieved from the bottom of the cell and packaged for disposal.

**Waste processing.** As of November 30 77,810 ft<sup>3</sup> of legacy (stored) low-level waste and 48,800 ft<sup>3</sup> of Transuranic (TRU) waste has been processed. There are 45-50 drums of high activity waste. Floor levelers have been installed in the Vitrification Facility and a drum closure system for high activity remote-handled TRU waste is being implemented. In January additional improvements will be implemented including a Brokk 180 (small remote Bobcat-like vehicle) in the Remote-Handled Waste Facility and remote plasma cutting in the Vitrification Facility.

**Waste Tank Farm.** The underground and above-ground duct work for the Tank Drying System is complete. The recirculating system through the vaults will be turned on and balanced starting December 16. The single pass system for the tanks will be operational by year end.

**Permeable Treatment Wall (PTW).** The PTW to filter Strontium-90 from the North Plateau Groundwater Plume is fully installed, the wall area was covered and the equipment cleaned and removed. About half of the 60 monitoring wells have been installed. In response to a question, Mr. Bower stated that the PTW was designed such that it would not prejudice the final decision concerning the site. The wall can be exhumed and disposed of as waste if full cleanup is selected. If close-in place or on-site monitoring is selected it can be monitored and other options may exist such as chemical injection to lock the Strontium-90 in place. With monitoring, if the wall becomes saturated with Strontium-90 it could be replaced with fresh zeolite or if a portion exceeds capacity a small wall could be installed. Initial monitoring will be weekly and is likely to reduce to quarterly based on results over time.

**Community Support.** In November, employees, subcontractors, and West Valley Central School students collected 78,000 pounds of food for local food banks. URS Corporation donated \$10,000 to the Western NY Food Bank. Two families were supported with holiday gifts through a program sponsored by the Olean Times Herald. Mr. Bower noted that, as the workforce population has declined at the site, the level of giving has increased.

### **Phase 1 Decommissioning Facilities Disposition Contract – Update**

Mr. Bower presented an update on the Phase 1 Decommissioning - Facilities Disposition Contract Request for Proposals. He reminded the CTF that the contract will cover work specified in the Final EIS for Phase 1 Decommissioning except the disposal areas, tank farm, non-source area of the North Plateau Ground Water Plume and Construction and Demolition Debris Landfill. These items will be the subject of future contracts. Under the proposed scope of work, DOE identifies *what* work is to be performed and the contractor is responsible to perform the work and will determine the *methods*, subject to DOE approval. The contract is a "cost-plus-award-fee" and is to begin July 1, 2011 and the work is not to exceed 7 years.

A major piece of the early work will be relocation of the High-Level Waste Canisters in order to prepare for and complete the removal of the MPPB. All waste with a disposal pathway will be shipped for disposal. Orphan waste will be stored on site until there is a disposal pathway. Mr. Bower noted that when an EIS for Greater-Than-Class-C Waste is finalized a disposal pathway for much of this waste will be created. Maintenance and operational activities will continue and the contractor will be required to support other contractors on site.

Potential proposers have presented questions, attended meetings and toured the site. Four amendments to the request have been issued and proposals are due December 28.

In response to questions, Mr. Bower stated that DOE staff on site and in Headquarters would each independently monitor work with regard to cost, schedule and safety. Amendments to scope are possible should funding be available. As an example, he noted how the CTF had influenced DOE to reprioritize some activities in recent years and the PTW was installed with additional funding.

## **Funding Discussion**

The CTF and agencies discussed funding issues. A member noted the projected cost in the Final EIS as about \$1.16 billion and how the projected \$60 million under the contract did not seem to meet the level of funding necessary to complete the Phase 1 work. Mr. Bower reminded the CTF that the EIS estimates were not fully analyzed cost estimates and that the contract scope did not include the soil work which has significant variation and uncertainty. He believes the funding level specified in the contract aligns with the scope of work and is achievable.

Mr. Bembia stated that NYSERDA has requested that DOE fund at the level of \$85 million annually in order to address all aspects of the Final EIS work within the 10 years. He said that the 10 year timeframe for the Phase 1 decommissioning work was based on an annual appropriation of \$75 million, and if the Project is funded at \$60 million or less, Phase 1 will take longer than 10 years. Mr. Bembia also said that all of the DOE sites will be pressed for funding in the current economic environment. He encouraged the CTF to continue requesting adequate funding. American Resource and Recovery Act funding, which will sunset soon, helped hire 60 employees to work on hands-on waste processing and in the Remote Handled Waste Facility. He also noted that in the Phase 1 work includes significant waste shipping and disposal which is costly and therefore will reduce funds available for local workers. Mr. Bower stated that operations and maintenance costs are about \$20 million per year and have been reduced as much as possible. Further operations and maintenance cost reductions are likely only when additional facilities are decommissioned and removed. A member noted that with this level of expense for each two years the cleanup is delayed a year of cleanup is lost.

A CTF member asked how the Phase 1 studies will be funded if the entire \$60 million appropriation is directed to decommissioning work. Mr. Bower stated that, in addition to the funding by DOE, New York State will match its 10% bringing the total to \$66 million. The match is likely to increase in future years with adjustments to the cost share pursuant to the Consent Decree. Mr. Bower said that the matching funds provide adequate funding for the Phase 1 studies.

A CTF member suggested that the CTF send members to Washington to visit legislators to encourage their engagement and/or meeting with federal representatives when they are in the district. Another member suggested that a letter on funding to federal representatives would be appropriate. The CTF agreed to address these strategy issues at the annual organization meeting in January.

## **Other Business**

A member suggested that a future agenda item be long-term decisions and the balancing of risk level, cost, sequence and the desired outcome of full cleanup. Specifically they mentioned that an analysis of selective exhumation of the most radioactive and hazardous materials in the nearer term be discussed in order to enhance immediate safety and reduce costs. Another member agreed but asked that for, any options where wastes remain for longer period of time, that the long-term costs and impacts on the Great Lakes be part of the analysis.

As part of the discussion the group discussed the use of modeling to predict potential outcomes and risks. Mr. Bower noted that models are tools to inform decision makers but do not make the decision. A member stated that he was looking into opportunities to run scenarios on the CHILD landscape evolution model to help understand the assumptions because of the need for transparency in modeling. He also noted the benefit of models to stimulate discussion and analysis.

### Observer Comments

There were no observer comments.

### Action Items

Action	Who; Date
Follow up calls to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Representative Reed	Aumick & Schmidt; 1/14/2011

### Documents Distributed

Document Description	Generated by; Date
Meeting Agenda	Logue; 12/15/2010
DOE WVDP Project Update	DOE; 12/15/2010
DOE Phase 1 Decommissioning Facilities Disposition Contract Update	DOE; 12/15/2010
NYSERDA Corrective Action Permit Process Public Meeting Presentation	NYSERDA; 12/15/2010
NYSERDA Corrective Action Permit Process Public Meeting Notice	NYSERDA
Newspaper clippings distributed at the meeting	NYSERDA; 12/15/2010