

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force  
From: Bill Logue, Citizen Task Force Facilitator  
Date: May 19, 2011  
Subject: **Summary of the April 27, 2011 Meeting**

## Next Meeting

The next Citizen Task Force Meeting will be:

Time & Date: **6:30 – 9:00 PM, June 22, 2011**  
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.

**NOTE**: The CTF will forgo its May meeting. DOE and NYSERDA will host a Quarterly Public Meeting for the Phase 1 Studies Process on May 25, 2011 at 6:30 PM at the Ashford Office Complex.

## CTF Members and Alternates Attending

Chris Crawford, Gladys Gifford, Mike Hutchinson, Paul Kranz, Lee Lambert, Kathy McGoldrick, Joe Patti, John Pfeffer, Warren Schmidt, Bill Snyder.

## Agency Participants and Observers

*Department of Energy (DOE)*: Bryan Bower, Martin Krentz.

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

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

*Nuclear Regulatory Commission*: Mark Roberts.

*Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board*: Nigel Mote Karyn Severson.

*Observers*: Lynette Bennett, Dave Carlson, Diane D'Arrigo (via telephone), Charlie Hebdon (Cattaraugus County Legislature, Elizabeth Lowes, John Rendell, Bill Schaab, Alan Schuster.

## Introductions and Announcements

The meeting documents were reviewed.<sup>1</sup>

## Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board

The Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (Board) held a meeting earlier in the day in Buffalo and two staff members of the Board were introduced; Nigel Mote and Karyn Severson. Mr. Bembia, Mr. Bower and Mr. Kranz reviewed their perspectives of the meeting. Mr. Kranz noted that a Board member had raised the possibility of keeping the High-Level Waste (HLW) canisters stored in the Main Plant Process Building (MPPB). He expressed concern with this perspective because the source area of the North Plateau Ground Water Plume is below the MPPB.

In response to a question, Mr. Mote stated that several states, including Washington and South Carolina, have filed lawsuits requesting reconsideration of the decision not to open the Yucca Mountain Repository. He noted this was a Congressional issue and it that it is not clear that DOE has the authority to withdraw

---

<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)

Yucca because it was a Congressional Act directing DOE to pursue Yucca as a repository. Ms. Severson noted that there was strong bi-partisan support for the Yucca Repository and that three members of the House Energy Committee recently visited the site to demonstrate their support. The Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future is specifically not addressing Yucca Mountain but is trying to help the country develop a pact concerning this waste.

## **DOE Project Update**

Mr. Bower gave a project update.

**Safety Performance.** As of April 25 the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) has worked 4 years without a lost time work injury and as of April 22 WVDP employees have worked more than 3.8 million hours without a lost-time accident. One first aid was rendered for a knee strain. There were no recordable injuries and the TRC (Total Recordable Cases) is at 0.2 and the DART (Days Away, Restricted, Transferred) has dropped to 0.0.

**MPPB.** Equipment dismantlement is taking place in Extraction Cell-1, the last cell to be decontaminated, with work being done remotely due to high contamination levels. Three vessels have been removed, robotic pipe cutting completed and debris collection is underway. The Nitrocision® decontamination of the Process Mechanical Cell is complete and has been started in the General Purpose Cell. A final report of decontamination for the extraction cells should be finalized in the coming weeks. Initial indicators are that the cells are 75-80% decontaminated with residual material in seams and hatches that, if fully decontaminated using Nitrocision®, could lose their integrity or, due to increased pressure, overcome the negative pressure in the cells thereby increasing the risk of spreading the contamination. In the future, DOE will evaluate options as to whether the cells will be open to the atmosphere during demolition.

**Radioactive Waste Processing.** Radioactive wastes are being prepared for offsite disposal with 91% of Low-Level Wastes (LLW) and 80% of Transuranic (TRU) processed to date. There has been an approximately 80% reduction in the volume of TRU wastes. The volume reduction process results in lower volumes of TRU waste because LLW is separated out; however the remaining TRU waste may be more highly concentrated.

**Waste Tank Farm.** The Tank and Vault Drying system became operational in December 2010. The system has exceeded expectations with 23% of liquids evaporated in the first three months. This has been helped by the work which grout sealed the vault leaks and replaced the external pipes. The evaporation rate will slow during the more humid summer months. After consultation with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the permit is being modified to address the higher rate of evaporation.

**North Plateau Groundwater Plume.** The Permeable Treatment Wall (PTW) monitoring wells have been installed with 60 wells placed in the wall and up and down gradient. Baseline data is being compiled and the trends are promising. Quarterly reports will be produced and summarized in the Annual Site Environmental Report in the fall. Because this is a first use of zeolite for these purposes there is interest outside of WVDP in the effectiveness of the PTW. The transparency of the wall to water will be monitored.

**Mutual Support.** Various organizations provide support to WVDP thereby reducing the need for onsite services and support. In appreciation for this, the WVDP and NYSERDA presented the West Valley Fire

District 1 with a check for \$70,000, Bertrand Chafee Hospital with a check for \$10,000 and Mercy Flight with a check for \$5,000.

## **Information on Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request**

Bryan Bower presented on the Fiscal Year 2013 budget request. Sites with citizen stakeholder groups, including West Valley, have been directed to engage the groups in dialogue about site priorities. He started by reviewing the DOE Environmental Management (EM) Program Priorities set in Washington. In general the priorities are ordered by risk level (e.g., addressing liquid radioactive HLW as a top priority and deactivation and decommissioning as lower priorities) and the goal is to keep sites safe and secure at a minimum. In response to a question, Mr. Bower noted that groundwater is prioritized where it is an immediate threat to an aquifer, lake or river.

Mr. Bower noted how the WVDP Phase 1 Decommissioning relates to the EM priorities. For FY 2013 the priorities established to date are: Maintain essential activities for safe, secure, and compliant site (Min-Safe), support of HLW activities at the WVDP, continue efforts to relocate 275 HLW canisters to a new on-site dry cask storage facility, maintain the waste tanks in a dry and stable condition, continue preparation for the demolition of the MPPB and Vitrification Facility, ship and dispose of LLW, and ensure the on-going performance of the PTW.

The WVES contract will be concluded in June and a new contract awarded in the near future. There will be some transition work and the new contractor's plans will need to be reviewed and approved. For 2012 there will need to be some infrastructure upgrades to maintain Min-Safe. This may include erosion control at the NRC-Licensed Disposal Area and lake spillway repair of damage from the 2009 rain event.

For 2013 the Min-Safe cost is \$15-20 million per year. The priorities as identified above will use the most of the remainder of the \$60 million in proposed base funding. One goal is to ship and dispose of LLW waste as it is generated from work thereby avoiding the need to construct new storage facilities. DOE hopes to engage the CTF in discussion as to whether the priorities are the appropriate ones. Mr. Bower cautioned that, because the new contractor will determine how to achieve work, there may be limited opportunity for DOE and the CTF to influence some of the work priorities. In addition, there will be times and topics related to the budget process that DOE will not be able to discuss with the CTF. DOE-WVDP's plans have been based on a stable budget of \$60 million/year. At this level, the WVDP 2020 Vision cannot be achieved as scheduled.

A CTF member asked if there was any opportunity to influence the method of transportation of LLW. Mr. Bower stated that the prime contractor would be responsible for this and that methods would include truck and rail and agreements existed with communities on the routes. As an aside, he noted that in the coming weeks some shipping by truck would occur because funds were available from other cost savings.

Mr. Bower stated that DOE and NYSERDA are committing an additional approximately \$1million each toward Phase 1 studies. Paul Bembia replied to a question noting that the Phase 1 studies process was behind schedule due to the complexities of contracting but that the final decision date would not change.

## **Greater-Than Class-C Waste DEIS**

Warren Schmidt provided a brief overview of the comment letter he drafted with assistance from Paul Kranz, Lee Lambert and Kathy McGoldrick. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Greater-

Than-Class C waste did not select a preferred alternative. The comment letter recommends selection of the Waste Isolation Pilot Project Geologic Repository because it appears to be the safest. The CTF approved the letter which will be formatted on letterhead, electronic signatures affixed and sent in about a week.

### Comments on Waste Incidental to Reprocessing

The CTF caucused to review and discuss possible comments proposed by Lee Lambert and Ray Vaughan of the Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (WIR) determination. The proposed comments expressed concern that the WIR determination does not comply with the law and reiterates concerns expressed in a letter to NRC from the CTF in June of 2006. Several members expressed reservations with the tone of the comments. Other portions of the discussion included concerns that the determination could set precedent regarding other portions of the site, such as the HLW tanks, and for limited public input. After discussion the group agreed to review a revised draft the following day in time for possible submission. [Note: the comments were not finalized for submission on April 28; however, the CTF submitted a comment letter on May 6, 2011.]

### Observer Comments

There were no additional observer comments.

### Action Items

Action	Who; Date
WIR Evaluation: incorporate edits to proposed comments and circulate to CTF for possible approval	Logue; 3/28/2011
GTCC DEIS: Format and finalize, submit comments of CTF	Logue; 4/6/2011

### Documents Distributed

Document Description	Generated by; Date
Meeting Agenda	Logue; 4/27/2011
DOE Presentation – Project Update	DOE; 4/27/2011
DOE Presentation – Information for FY 2013 Budget Request	WVES; 4/27/2011
Letters concerning funding to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Congressman Reed and Higgins	CTF; 4/7/2011
US Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board Informational Handout	NWTRB; 4/27/2011
Newspaper clippings distributed at the meeting	NYSERDA; 4/27/2011