

**To:** Citizen Task Force  
**From:** Melinda Holland, Clean Sites  
**Subject:** Summary of March 18, 1997, Meeting  
**Date:** March 24, 1997

### **Next Meeting**

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

**Date:** Wednesday, April 2, 1997  
**Time:** 7:00 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Ashford Office Complex  
9030 Route 219, West Valley, NY

The April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting will focus on regulatory issues. At that meeting the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will make a presentation and participate in discussion on these issues.

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:**

Nevella McNeil, Bill King, Elaine Belt, Paul Kranz for Rich Tobe, Blake Reeves, Pete Scherer, Warren Schmidt, Joe Patti, Larry Smith, Ray Vaughan, Paul Piciulo, Tom Rowland, Dick Timm, John Pfeffer, and John Beltz for Pete Cooney.

Absent: Eric Wohlers, Pete Cooney, Lana Rosler, Tim Siepel and Rich Tobe

### **Regulatory Agency Attendees:**

Jack Krajewski      NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)  
Boby Eid              NRC  
John Hickey          NRC  
Kim Gruss            NRC

### **Attendees by Phone (Audio) Link:**

Mike Weber          NRC

### **Tuesday, March 18, 1997 Meeting Summary:**

Melinda Holland began the meeting by opening discussion on the following issues:

**ISSUE:** League of Women Voters membership.

Because the CTF Ground Rules do not contain a provision for adding new members, Ms. Holland asked the CTF members if they would like to adopt a ground rule to establish a procedure on requests for membership. After some discussion, it was clear that the sentiment of group was that they preferred not to admit any new members, including the League of Women

Voters, to the CTF. The CTF encouraged any interested parties to work with existing CTF members to have their concerns addressed by the CTF process.

ISSUE: Ray Vaughan letters.

CTF member Ray Vaughan sent two letters (dated March 10 and 15) to Tom Attridge and Melinda Holland (with copies to the CTF members) raising a number of issues and requesting additional information. The CTF requested that DOE and NYSERDA respond to the issues raised in the letters in writing and, if deemed necessary, discuss the issues at a future CTF meeting. Some CTF members expressed a concern that the group could become too caught up in time-consuming technical issues. Creation of a working group to investigate technical issues was suggested as an option. Because the answers to some of the questions raised will take research, NYSERDA and DOE agreed to give the CTF an update at the next meeting on when responses to Mr. Vaughan's questions/issues will be available. The CTF had also received a copy of an NRC letter responding to two letters from Ray Vaughan. Mr. Vaughan will make the two letters (dated February 1 and February 8) available to members at the next meeting.

### **Waste Management Area 9 - Alternatives Assessment**

Next, Jim Hammelman from Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) presented information on the alternatives and analysis from the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Drum Cell, also known as Waste Management Area #9.<sup>1</sup>

Following Mr. Hammelman's presentation there was a discussion on transportation of wastes off-site and an acknowledgment that the questions about relative costs and risks of truck and rail transport would be answered as soon as possible. There was also discussion about potential closure of local rail lines and the possible need for U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) support to keep the local rail lines open to save money on waste transportation costs later. CTF members again expressed an interest in receiving information on risks from West Valley wastes at an out-of-state disposal facility.

### **Prioritization of CTF Issues**

Melinda Holland and Tom Attridge distributed a summary of the major issues raised by CTF members to date and asked the CTF members to prioritize the issues by a process of voting with dots placed next to the issue categories. The results are as follows:

<u>VOTES</u>	<u>ISSUE</u>
27	Erosion/Geology
27	NYSERDA/DOE Future Roles
20	Transportation
19	Impacts of Out-of-State Disposal
17	Modeling and EIS
16	Future Employment
13	Waste Classification
10	Options for Reuse of Site
1	Data Issues

With this information, NYSERDA and DOE agreed to develop a revised meeting schedule

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<sup>1</sup>Copies of the presentation materials handed out at the meeting may be obtained by calling Sonja Allen of WVNS at [716] 942-2152.

incorporating an approach to cover these issues. The revised schedule will be shared with the CTF at the April 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting.

### **Waste Management Area #8 Overview**

Paul Bembia, Program Manager of Environmental Monitoring for NYSERDA, gave a presentation on the history, construction, and contents of the State-Licensed Disposal Area (SDA), also known as Waste Management Area #8.

During the discussion which followed the presentation a number of issues were raised and questions answered. Highlights of some of the answers to CTF member questions follow.

The plastic cover over the SDA is only an interim solution to control the leachate until a permanent solution is implemented. The plastic cover should last approximately 10 years. There are approximately 2 million gallons of water in the trenches at the SDA. 8,000 gallons were removed from Trench 14 in 1991 and are now stored in a tank on-site. In 1975 leachate seeped from the northern-most end of the SDA. At that time, the trenches were pumped and the radioactively contaminated liquid sent to the Low Level Waste Treatment System on site. The wastes and drums buried in the trenches have become mixed together as the containers have deteriorated. Since the plastic cap has been in place, the water levels in the trenches appear to be stabilizing.

Some of the discussion raised issues which need to be addressed. For example, A CTF member requested additional information on promising soil washing technologies and what technologies are available for digging up and removing buried wastes. Another member requested information on the levels of radioactivity of the leachate in the SDA.

### **Waste Management Area #7 Overview**

Laurene Krieger, Senior Environmental Engineer for West Valley Nuclear Services, gave a presentation on the NRC-licensed Disposal Area (NDA), also known as Waste Management Area #7. During the discussion which followed the presentation, a number of questions were answered and issues raised. Highlights of some of the answers to CTF member questions follow.

Due to concerns regarding solvent migration from NDA disposal holes, a 12 to 16 foot deep and 875 foot long groundwater interceptor trench was installed. Although wastes are buried much deeper than 12 to 16 feet deep, the interceptor trench was designed to intercept contaminant migration through the more permeable upper weathered till. The soil directly below the weathered till is a very dense material which acts as a barrier that limits movement of contaminants. The solvent (primary contaminant of concern) floats on top of the groundwater and then migrates through the upper weathered till. A monitoring well network exists all around the NDA interceptor trench to detect anything escaping. To date no radioactivity has been detected in the deeper unweathered till or kent recessional wells that has been associated with operations at the NDA. Some wells in the upper weathered till around the NDA show radioactivity levels above background, but this has been connected to residual contamination from prior operations at the NDA. The trench is an interim solution until the final closure approach is implemented. Groundwater is routinely collected from the interceptor trench and routed to the Low Level Wastewater Treatment Facility for treatment prior to discharge pursuant to the site's State Pollution Elimination Discharge System permit. The buried fuel assemblies are in the area known as Nuclear Fuel Services (NFS) deep holes (hole #48) and comprise approximately 12 cubic feet in volume and is contained in three, 30-gallon drums. Water levels are not monitored in the caissons used during West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP) waste disposal activities.

At the end of the discussion a CTF member suggested that this might be a good time to form a working group of CTF members to work at more depth on technical issues such as modeling, DEIS assumptions and data issues. The DOE representative of the CTF responded that a technical working group might be a good way to address the technical issues while not tying-up the entire CTF process. He felt it was not quite time to form a working group, but that it was up to the CTF to decide on that action. The DOE representative also reminded the CTF of DOE's need for the CTF to complete its process before the end of the year to avoid delaying the site closure schedule which could cause problems with DOE's ability to obtain the appropriations it needs to do the work.

### **Observer Comments:**

One observer stated that there were some significant things left out of the meeting presentations and that there was more significant, more difficult, material yet to be covered. Furthermore, the observer said that it is not possible to cover the burial grounds in such a short period of time. This is very complex, technical information and the CTF needs time to assimilate it. The observer also stated that the tritium levels measured in the SDA monitoring wells is still rising as the 1994 and 1995 well readings are up. Also, the observer believed that Trench 14 might still have water coming in. In regards to the NDA, the observer stated that the solvent has radionuclides in it and there were several holes that contained solvent which were not exhumed. Solvent has not shown up in the interceptor trench, so there is a question as to where the solvent is. The Annual Site Environmental Report (ASER) shows increasing levels of uranium. A CTF member reminded the group that there will be an additional meeting to cover information from the DEIS on the SDA and NDA.

A League of Women Voters representative expressed regret at not being able to argue in favor of their addition to the CTF and stated that she favored a more open meeting approach.

Another observer questioned why NYSDEC did not submit comments on the DEIS to DOE and NYSERDA regarding the lack of a preferred alternative in the DEIS. The observer also questioned whether the State Environmental Quality Review Act required the DEIS to contain a preferred alternative and why NYSDEC's comments on the absence of a preferred alternative were not made earlier when NYSDEC had reviewed preliminary drafts of the document prior to public release. The NYSDEC representative stated that he would look into the issue and get back to the person.

### **Action Items:**

Respond to member inquiries about:

- ▶ Levels of radioactivity in the leachate from the SDA
- ▶ Provide proposed revised schedule of meeting topics to CTF members for consideration at the 4/2/97 meeting
- ▶ DOE/NYSERDA to provide status on the written responses to Ray Vaughan's letters at the 4/2/97 meeting

### **Parking Lot Issues:**

- ▶ Erosion of Drum Cell contribution to total dose
- ▶ Need information on soil washing technologies for treating contaminated soil
- ▶ Need information on what technologies are available for successfully digging up the buried wastes
- ▶ Need information on risks from WV wastes sent to off-site disposal locations
- ▶ Rail vs. truck transport issues need to be addressed