

To: - Citizen Task Force
From: Melinda Holland, Clean Sites
Subject: Summary of September 3, 1997, Meeting
Date: September 11, 1997

Next Meeting:

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

Date: Tuesday September 16, 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.

CTF Attendees:

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

Agency Attendees:

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)
Jack Krajewski

Attending via video conference:

Washington, DC:

U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)
Jack Parrott, John Hickey, John Greeves, and Rick Weller
Science Applications International Corp. (SAIC)
Patti Swain and Jim Hammelman

San Antonio, Texas:
Center for Nuclear Waste Management
Pat Mackin

September 3rd Meeting Summary:

Tom Attridge began the meeting by addressing administrative issues. Melinda Holland reviewed the agenda with the CTF and requested comments on the August 19th meeting summary. Tom Attridge introduced Murray Regan, Mayor of Springville, who has filled the vacancy left by Dick Timm's resignation from the CTF.

Waste Management Area 3 - High Level Waste Tanks/Vitrification Facility (Revisited)

Joe Price of SAIC and Bob Blickwedehl of Dames & Moore made brief presentations in response to comments and questions raised at the end of the August 19th CTF meeting about the re-engineering of Alternative III for WMA 3. The responses to additional questions raised by CTF members are summarized below.

Mr. Price and Mr. Blickwedehl explained that at the current time the area around the High Level Waste Tanks is being pumped to reduce the level of groundwater in the Tank Farm. If the tanks were closed in place under Alternative III, groundwater would be allowed to rise to its normal level but the majority of groundwater flow would be diverted around the tanks by multiple containment barriers. The tanks would be completely surrounded by multiple barriers on the top, bottom and sides. Some of these barriers would minimize water flow through the waste. The other barriers would adsorb radionuclides if they were released from the tanks. Movement of radionuclides from inside the grouted tanks and the containment barriers to the surrounding area is controlled by diffusion. Corrosion of the tanks structures is not expected to result in a preferential pathway for radionuclide release because the metal is not used as a flow barrier and the corrosion products will adsorb radionuclides. The potential flow rate of groundwater through the barriers and grouted tanks was estimated at 1/3000 of a meter per year.

Bob Blickwedehl explained that liquefaction of the soils around the high level waste tanks is highly unlikely to occur in the event of an earthquake. Liquefaction was defined as a liquid or slurry-like condition of water-saturated soils which can be caused by an earthquake's vibrations. A CTF member expressed concern over the presence of backfill material and other soils near the high level waste tanks that he believes to be prone to liquefaction. The CTF member added that the presence of liquefaction-prone soils creates the potential for an earthquake to cause portions of the tank containment system to shift and degrade the confinement barriers, thereby causing the potential for release of contaminants to groundwater. Bob Blickwedehl explained that because of the high gravel and clay content in the soil, liquefaction of the soils around the tanks was highly unlikely. The CTF member also felt there was a need for additional rigorous technical studies of seismic issues.

Another CTF member expressed concerns over the possibility that the integrity of the top of the containment system could be breached resulting in infiltration from above as happened at Love Canal. CTF members also raised the possibility of terrorist or war-time bombing of the tanks as a concern. Kay Vaughan, Pete Scherer, and Tim Siepel agreed to act as a technical work-group

to meet with site technical representatives at a later date to discuss the unresolved issues. They will report back to the full CTF on the results of that discussion.

Waste Management Area 1 - Main Process Building

The overview of WMA 1 was provided by Dan Westcott of West Valley Nuclear Services (WVNS).¹ There was not adequate time to present the DEIS information for WMA 1; it will be presented on September 16th. The responses to questions and issues raised by CTF members are summarized below.

The grout proposed for use under Alternative JII in the high level waste tanks is less susceptible to radionuclides moving through it than the concrete used in the original floor of the Manipulator Repair Shop because the grout has a higher pH, reducing compounds, and sorbent materials to reduce mobility of radionuclides.

While many areas within the Main Process Building were decontaminated to prepare for their possible reuse, these areas are still not free of contamination and in many cases are not suitable for human entry. A CTF member questioned whether all of the curies (including its daughter products Yttrium and Barium) from the tanks and Main Process Building are accounted for. Dan Westcott said that he thought the daughter products were accounted for in the total curies, but that he would check on this to make sure.

The spent fuel remaining in the Fuel Receiving and Storage area of the Main Process Building is scheduled to be sent to Idaho in 2001 if all goes according to plan. The glass logs stored in the Chemical Process Cell of the Main Process Building will go to the Federal HLW repository once it is available. At a maximum, the glass logs would remain at West Valley in long-term storage until the repository is available.

A CTF member asked for clarification on whether DOE will clean up and close all of WMA 1 under the West Valley Demonstration Project Act. DOE and NYSERDA made it clear that responsibility for cleaning up the Main Process Building has not been resolved. DOE stated that they will approach NYSERDA to begin negotiations on this issue in September. The decision would have to be made quickly if any of the remaining waste in the Main Process Building is to be considered for treatment through the vitrification facility. A DOE representative indicated that there are alternative treatments for this waste besides vitrification. A CTF member also stressed that if DOE is not responsible for parts of the Main Process Building, that NRC regulatory authority would apply to those portions of the facility. However, the CTF was reminded that the issue of responsibility for the Main Process Building should not affect the CTF's ability to develop a recommendation.

Due to lack of time, the CTF did not discuss the WMA 1 DEIS information or the next phase of

¹Copies of presentation materials may be obtained by calling Sonja Allen, WVNS, at [716] 942-2152.

the CTF process. A CTF member requested that a geologist who is an expert in the soils under the Main Process Building be in attendance at the next CTF meeting. Topics for the September 16 meeting will include: reviewing DEIS analysis of WMA 1, presenting the roll-up graphs on data presented for all waste management areas, selecting a CTF member to attend the HLW Tank Conference in Salt Lake City, and discussing the next phase of the CTF process.

High Level Waste Workshop in Salt Lake City, Utah

Tom Rowland distributed a copy of the agenda for the DOE conference on High Level Waste Tanks to be held in Salt Lake City, Utah on October 7 & 8. DOE would like to have one member of the West Valley CTF attend the meeting. A representative of the Seneca Nation is also being invited to attend. The following CTF members are interested in attending: Larry Smith, Blake Reeves, Bill King, Pete Scherer, and Rich Tobe. At the September 16 meeting, those candidates will select one of the members to attend the conference.

Observer Comments

An observer commented that she felt that Carol Mongerson (a non-CTF member) should also be considered for attendance at the HLW Tank Conference and that the CTF meetings should be more open allowing observers to ask questions and comment at any time during meetings.

Meeting Follow-up Activities

- ▶ Revise CTF Meeting Agenda for 9/16/97 meeting
- ▶ Have the expert in the soils geology under the Main Process Building attend the next meeting
- ▶ Arrange CTF technical work group meeting