To: Citizen Task Force

From: Melinda Holland, Clean Sites

Subject: Summary of September 16, 1997, Meeting

Date: September 23, 1997

Next Meeting:

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

Date:	Wednesday, October 1, 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, Paul Piciulo, Tom Rowland, Murray Regan, Larry Smith, Rich Tobe, Bill King, Elaine Belt, Pete Cooney, and Warren Schmidt. Not attending were: Lana Rosler, Nevella McNeil, Blake Reeves, and Eric Wohlers.

Regulatory Agency and Technical Support Attendees:

Jack Krajewski - NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

Attending via video conference:

Jack Parrott, John Greeves, and Tim Johnson - U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)

WMA 1 - DEIS Analysis

The presentation and discussion of the DEIS analysis for WMA 1 was completed by Dan Westcott, WVNS, using materials distributed at the last meeting. The responses to questions raised by CTF members are summarized below.

A CTF member stated that placing low-level waste (LLW) in the Process Building during its closure under Alternative III would be in violation of NRC's Part 61 regulations. An NRC representative responded that Part 61 is not directly applicable to this situation, but NRC could use the performance objectives of Part 61 in evaluating an Alternative III closure of WMA 1. NRC is currently evaluating these legal issues. The CTF member encouraged NRC to resolve the outstanding legal and regulatory issues before the CTF has completed its work. In response to another CTF member's question, it was stated that placing LLW in an area which has contained high-level waste (HLW) does not make the LLW become HLW.

As discussed in the WMA 1 and WMA 3 presentations, robotics applications are being evaluated for use at the West Valley site. A CTF member requested more information on the potential for robotics to be used in the Process Building and the HLW tanks. He also requested information about which robotics technologies are ready to use "as-is" at West Valley and which would have to be modified and tested before use.

Alternatives IIIA and IIIB, the close-in-place alternatives, are being redesigned to improve overall performance for WMA 1. In response to a question about the potential for water seeping through the backfilled and grouted Process Building, Mr. Westcott showed the CTF an illustration of the new Alternative IIIB closure design features for the Process Building (copy attached). The new design will use physical barriers to redirect groundwater movement, a multi-layer cap, reducing grout, and sorbent materials similar to that proposed for the HLW tanks (WMA 3). Mr. Westcott stated that the new design approach should minimize the potential for transfer of radioactive materials into water which might eventually find its way into the grouted structure. The physical barriers (slurry wall) to be installed in the ground around the building should also divert groundwater to prevent further migration of the contamination from soils under the Process Building (the source of the North Plateau Groundwater Plume). A slurry wall could also be used to contain the contamination under the building under Alternative IV.

There was discussion about the analyses of future site performance and how far into the future to take the analyses. Joe Price of SAIC stated that for the purposes of the DEIS analysis, potential doses were analyzed beyond 1,000 years. However, under DEIS conditions, the year of "peak dose" for each WMA occurred within 1,000 years. As such, this information was presented only to the 1,000 year period. Joe Price of SAIC added that for some of the updated analyses currently being conducted, the new engineering designs will decrease the radionuclide release rates and, thus, delay the year of "peak dose" beyond the 1,000 year period.

CTF members were reminded that the dose calculated for the "maximally exposed off-site individual" from WMA 1 would be 0.15 mrem/year (under Alternative III) which is small

compared to the 360 mrem/year people in this area currently get from background radiation. Intruders (i.e., people inadvertently occupying the site in the future), on the other hand, could receive unacceptably high doses from WMA 1, which could happen if institutional controls failed. Some CTF members expressed concern with the need for institutional controls for thousands of years to maintain the site if closure involved leaving wastes at the site. The concerns included movement of Buttermilk Creek from erosion, seismic activity, and failure of the government to continue adequate institutional controls. The November 5th CTF meeting is scheduled to further address the issue of institutional controls.

A CTF member requested additional clarification on which agency (DOE or NYSERDA) will be responsible for which portions of the Process Building and the rest of the WMAs. DOE and NYSERDA made a presentation to the CTF on this subject on June 4th and will also be making a presentation on this issue at the September 23rd WVDP quarterly public meeting. DOE and NYSERDA offered to provide the CTF with the presentation materials presented at the WVDP quarterly meeting (copy attached). The CTF was reminded that while this information might be interesting, it was not necessary for them to provide recommendations to DOE and NYSERDA.

CTF Technical Work Group Report

Next, Tim Siepel gave a brief summary of the September 15th meeting of a technical work group comprised of Pete Scherer, Ray Vaughan, and himself. The technical work group was formed at the last CTF meeting to explore issues related to impacts from potential earthquakes on the HLW tanks if they are closed in place. Dr. Siepel reported that while a good educational discussion was had, the work group did not resolve many issues and raised numerous additional questions, some of which may be unanswerable at this time. Other work group members added that the meeting gave them a much better understanding of the close-in-place technology proposed, for example, the grouts and barriers will result in a non-rigid, plastic mass, instead of high-density, hard concrete. The issue of length of time for analysis was resolved satisfactorily at the work group meeting by SAIC stating that their analysis will look forward in time to discover the period of maximum impact.

A CTF member raised a concern over the lack of retrievability of the waste if a structure is filled with concrete under Alternative III. It was pointed out that, under the new design the facility would be filled with a flexible grout which could be removed more easily than concrete. A CTF member expressed the concern that the designs being used in the EIS as the basis for selecting a closure approach do not contain enough detail. He would like to see the detailed engineering before the Record of Decision is made. Bob Blickwedehl explained that the EIS, mandated under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), is a strategy document and not intended to provide detailed engineering. The detailed engineering is provided after the strategy decision is made. If the detailed engineering design work later reveals that the decision is not workable, then additional NEPA review may be necessary. For example, the vitrification process for HLW at the site was not developed until after the solidification approach was chosen through the EIS process. The development of the detailed engineering after this EIS will also be subject to a great deal of scrutiny by the regulatory agencies.

WMA Roll-up Charts

Tom Attridge discussed the roll-up charts and tables summarizing the information presented for each waste management area. He explained that the charts are compilations of information presented at previous CTF meetings. The charts allow comparisons to made of the performance of each WMA for each alternative, for the parameters analyzed in the DEIS (e.g. total cost, long-term population dose, etc.). He emphasized that these charts are just one tool that the CTF can use to help them in making their recommendations to DOE and NYSERDA. An error was noted in some of the graphs, so a corrected version will be distributed at the next CTF meeting.