

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force
From: Melinda Holland
Subject: Summary of July 16, 2003 Meeting
Date: August 12, 2003

Next Meeting

The next full Citizen Task Force (CTF) meeting will be held as follows:

Date: Wednesday, August 20, 2003
Time: 6:30 -9:00 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 (828) 894-5963, or Tom Attridge at (716) 942-2453.

CTF Attendees

: Pete Scherer, Alice Williams, Bill King, John Allan, Lee Lambert, Paul Piciulo, Warren Schmidt, Mark Mitskovski (for Larry Rubin), Eric Wohlers, Gayla Gray (for Lana Redeye), Ray Vaughan, and Mike Hutchinson.

: Bill Kay, Joe Patti, Tim Siepel,
John Pfeffer, John Beltz, and Nevella McNeil.

Regulatory Agency Attendees

Denise D'Angelo - New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

Meeting Highlights

Topics discussed during the meeting included:

- ▶ U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) - Licensed Disposal Area updated waste characterization results;
- ▶ State-Licensed Disposal Area (SDA) updated waste characterization results;
- ▶ Congressional developments; and
- ▶ CTF Workgroup reports.

Meeting Summary

Tom Attridge opened the meeting by briefly describing the written materials that were disseminated at the meeting (see the list at the end of the summary) and Melinda Holland reviewed the agenda.

The discussion began with a general overview of the NDA given by John Chamberlain, WVNSCO. During the question and answer session, the following items were discussed:

- ▶ The spent fuel recovery process used was basically the same for both ceramic fuel elements and metallic military fuel elements, which was to chop up the fuel elements and leach them with acids.
- ▶ It is believed that standard 55-gallon carbon steel drums were used to hold wastes disposed of in the

NDA.

Next, Ralph Wild, URS Corporation, gave an overview of his work on the recently updated NDA waste characterization report. During the question and answer session, the following items were discussed:

- ▶ A batch process was utilized to process the fuels, and that the material was similar (physically), but varied in radioactivity so the activity numbers were averaged.
- ▶ Radioactive inventory numbers were reconciled using the worker dose numbers because they were more accurately recorded to track worker health (for safety reasons) than the other transfer records. Mr. Wild agreed to find out what dose units (i.e., R/hr.) were typically recorded in worker dose reports. He also noted that the methodology for calculating dose-to-activity numbers was provided in a 1982 Science Applications International Report report.
- ▶ The waste from the ruptured fuel rods shows up in the report as Greater-Than-Class C (GTCC) and Category 1 waste. A very detailed analysis was done on this waste using the weight data to calculate the activity. This waste is not referred to as HLW in the report, as Mr. Wild was most concerned with the inventory numbers, not the classification.
- ▶ Regarding Actinides, the ORIGEN computer model was used to determine percentages, NFS reports showed .2% uranium and .19% plutonium concentration as measured values. The Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) felt NFS had done enough measurements to allow the AEC to extrapolate. Mr. Wild believes this to be trustworthy data because the company had an economic incentive to keep good records. Dose-to-curie conversion was performed whenever there was a discrepancy between dose rate and activity.
- ▶ Mr. Wild was not sure of the life expectancy of the rail car and tractor trailer that were disposed in the NDA, though he did say that the dissolver would be a Category 2 waste and its steel casing might last hundreds of years. The physical life expectancy of other containers would be based on the corrosion rates for the various metals.
- ▶ Thirty-gallon steel drums were used to contain the fuel assembly components (Category 1 waste). The fuel assembly components contain activation products, though Mr. Wild was not certain of the half-lives of the radioisotopes in the drums.
- ▶ Mr. Wild was unaware of whether any of the wastes had been dug up to confirm the data and would not recommend this due to the difficulty and worker exposure hazard. A CTF member noted that two holes were dug in the NDA, and Mr. Wild said that this data was included in the inventory.
- ▶ In his two year project to analyze the data and write the characterization reports, Mr. Wild said that he used conservative numbers, relied on his extensive experience in doing this type of work, and feels he did the best possible job on this analysis.

The discussion of the State-Licensed Disposal Area (SDA) began with a general overview of the SDA by John Chamberlain, WVNSCO. Next, Ralph Wild, URS Corporation, gave an overview of his recently completed updated SDA waste characterization report. During the question and answer session, the following items were discussed:

- ▶ The SDA calculations do take into account the entire decay chain for each radioisotope.
- ▶ Trench #7 waste was put in a concrete vault because the newer regulatory standards required higher activity material to be solidified or put in approved containers.
- ▶ Trench #6 is a series of holes with one reactor component per hole with concrete poured around each.
- ▶ There were documents for some of the radium disposed at the SDA, though the paperwork for radium was not usually good. If the shipping papers for radium existed that waste was treated as an 'add-in' to the database.
- ▶ Other sites which operated during the same time period (at the time when NRC's Part 61 regulations were being developed), such as Barnwell, could be used as a good comparison for the SDA. Mr. Wild added that he could not say for sure without thorough analysis of the data for those sites.

- ▶ Mr. Wild did not feel that any of the records for the SDA had been falsified.
 - ▶ If liquid wastes were sent to the SDA they were either returned to the generator to be solidified or packaged in absorptive material sufficient to contain all liquid.
 - ▶ No evidence of military wastes going to the NDA was found.
 - ▶ The records reviewed are all on microfilm.
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A Task Force member reported that Senator Schumer introduced the same amendment on the Senate Energy Policy Bill that was attached and passed as part of the House Energy Policy Bill. This amendment requires DOE to conduct a study of the options for transferring the site to DOE. It was also noted that there has been no response to the last letter sent by the CTF to Congressional representatives. Additionally, there has been no activity on the original House and Senate bills regarding the transfer of title of the West Valley Demonstration Project site to DOE. The Task Force decided to wait until September to pursue these issues due to the summer Congressional recess.

The Future Site Use Workgroup of the CTF reported that Southern Tier West (STW) is still seeking additional grant money to begin the regional redevelopment study process. STW has a signed contract with Erie County for \$25,000 and are close to finalizing a similar contract with Cattaraugus County. The U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration (EDA) recently told STW to submit the final application to EDA soon for a \$50,000 grant.

The CTF Technical Workgroup reported that they have not met recently. At their last meeting, the workgroup reviewed the NDA/SDA characterization work and found it difficult to recreate the data tables.

A DOE official reported that current budget projections for West Valley for 2005 show a decrease of 25 percent from current funding levels (FY2003 – DOE \$96M, NYSERDA \$10M). More information will be available in a few weeks on the budget. When asked about the reason for the decrease, a DOE representative said it might be an effort to seek greater efficiency from the new site contractor, as the contract is up for bid in 2005.

CTF meetings will be held on:

- ▶ Wednesday, August 20, 2003
 - ▶ Tuesday, September 16, 2003
 - ▶ Tuesday, October 21, 2003
 - ▶ Tuesday, November 18, 2003
 - ▶ Tuesday, December 16, 2003
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Alice Williams, DOE Director for West Valley, told the Task Force that she has been asked to transfer to DOE Headquarters in Washington D.C. this summer as an Associate Deputy Assistant Secretary. Elizabeth Lowes will be the acting Director at West Valley until the decision is made on a new site Director.

Action	Assigned to	Due Date
Provide the CTF with dose rate units typically provided in worker dose reports (e.g. R/hr)	Ralph Wild	08/20/03
Provide a copy of the 1982 SAIC report detailing the dose-to-curie methodology for calculating radioactivity inventories	Ralph Wild	08/20/03

Document Subject	Document Description	Generated by–Date (if applicable/known)
July 16, 2003, CTF Meeting Agenda	Agenda items listed for July 16, 2003 CTF Meeting	M. Holland–7/2/03
Overview of NDA	Presentation slide	J. Chamberlain–7/16/03
NDA	Presentation slides covering waste characterization of the NDA	R. Wild–7/16/03
Overview of SDA	Presentation slides	J. Chamberlain–7/16/03
SDA	Presentation slides covering waste characterization of the SDA	R. Wild–7/16/03
“Judge Voids Cleanup Plan for Wastes at Bomb Plants”	Newspaper Article - <u>New York Times</u>	M. Wald–7/4/03
U.S. District Court of Idaho - National Resources Defense Council (NRDC, plaintiffs) vs. Spencer Abraham, DOE Secretary (defendants)	Judgement - regarding civil lawsuit on Waste Incidental to Reprocessing rules	7/3/03
U.S. District Court of Idaho - NRDC (plaintiffs) vs. Spencer Abraham, DOE Secretary (defendants)	Memorandum Decision - regarding civil lawsuit on Waste Incidental to Reprocessing rules	7/3/03
Energy Department Reclassifies High-Level Waste to Avoid Cleanup	National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) Web Site - Information on the Waste Incidental to Reprocessing rules	NRDC–2/03
June 18, 2003, CTF Meeting Summary	Summary of discussions at the June 18, 2003, CTF meeting	M. Holland–7/1/03
CTF comments on the Waste Management EIS	Letter with CTF comments to DOE on the EIS	L. Lambert (on behalf of CTF members)–6/30/03

For copies of any of the above documents, please contact Sonja Allen at (716) 942-2152.