

To: West Valley Citizen Task Force  
From: Melinda Holland, Facilitator  
Subject: Summary of the September 17, 2003, Meeting  
Date: October 8, 2003

### **Next Meeting**

The next Citizen Task Force meeting will be held as follows:

Date: **October 21, 2003**  
Time: 7:00 - 9:30 p.m.  
Location: West Valley Demonstration Project Site  
10282 Rock Springs Road  
West Valley, NY

**NOTE:** All participants must bring photo identification to enter the site.

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**

Attending were: Elizabeth Lowes, Tim Siepel, Pete Scherer, Lee Lambert, Bill Kay, Paul Piciulo, Mark Mitskovski (for Larry Rubin), Ray Vaughan, and Eric Wohlers.

CTF Members not attending (nor represented by an alternate) were: Joe Patti, Gayla Gray (for Lana Redeye), John Beltz, John Allan, Warren Schmidt, John Pfeffer, Bill King, Mike Hutchinson, and Nevella McNeil.

### **Regulatory Agency Attendees**

Denise D'Angelo, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

### **Meeting Highlights**

- ▶ Presentation on the principles of radiation science;
- ▶ Presentation on dose from the WVDP to potentially affected populations (public and biota);
- ▶ CTF discussion of a draft letter commenting on the DOE Headquarters Implementation Plan for DOE Policy 455.1, Use of Risk-Based End States;
- ▶ Finalization of CTF comment letter on Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (WIR); and
- ▶ Discussion of Congressional developments and next steps.

### **Meeting Summary**

Tom Attridge, NYSERDA, reviewed the documents distributed at this meeting, then Melinda Holland reviewed the agenda.

### ***Principles of Radiation Science***

Lora Winkler, WVNSCO, gave a presentation on radiation science. During the question and answer period, a CTF member pointed out that internal contamination may occur from inhalation of dust particles which contain alpha emitting radiation. He also noted that there are many more sources of alpha emitting materials at the site than listed in the presentation. Task Force members questioned what is the source of

radiation found in tobacco materials and asked Ms. Winkler to share additional information on this issue. In response to a CTF member question about studies of areas in Mexico with very high background radiation which show low life expectancy, Ms. Winkler stated that she was not aware of the Mexico study, and referred to a study she knew of an area in Iran that showed high levels of exposure to background radiation, yet the effects of cancer and shorter life span were not as expected. A Task Force member requested a copy of information about that study. In response to another question, she responded that the level where exposure is dangerous varies according to whether it is chronic or acute exposure and other factors. She stated that acute exposure to more than 500 rem is considered a fatal dose, but the effects depend on the individual's health and how quickly they receive medical attention. Another CTF member stated that the Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation (BEIR) V report shows that while the risk of cancer decreases as exposure decreases, there is no "safe" level below which no health effects will occur.

In response to a question about WVDP worker exposure levels, Ms. Winkler responded that the past standard had been 500 mrem/year, but WVNSCO determined that the standard for a specific site population has been raised to 1000 mrem/year based on increased radiological work needed to facilitate the cleanup of more contaminated areas at the site. WVNSCO obtained DOE's approval for the increase. NRC's current standard is 5000 mrem/year. A Task Force member requested that WVNSCO provide a copy of the application to DOE to change the worker standard to 1,000 mrem/year. Another CTF member stated that the worker dose at the Nuclear Fuel Services site during operations in the 1960s and 1970s was 5 rem or more, as documented in a report prepared by Battelle-Columbus.

#### ***Dose from the WVDP to Potentially Affected Populations (public and biota)***

Next, John Bleech, WVNSCO, gave a presentation on dose from the WVDP to potentially affected populations and reviewed data from the latest WVDP Annual Site Environmental Report (ASER). A Task Force member questioned why dose to the potentially effected population was not addressed in adequate detail as that topic is of more interest to the CTF. The CTF member stated that the radius of potential exposure should extend to include Canada, and that the modeling should be used to identify who the potentially effected population includes. Mr. Bleech explained that the potentially affected population discussion will be given at the CTF meeting which will cover performance assessment. Another Task Force member questioned why the allowable dose to biota is much higher than for humans. Mr. Bleech offered to provide the answer to that question after this meeting.

#### ***CTF Comments on DOE's Implementation Plan for Risk-Based End-States***

Lee Lambert explained the background for the letter she drafted for the CTF to transmit their comments on DOE's Implementation Plan for the Risk-Based End States (RBES) Policy to Dave Geiser of DOE. A Task Force member suggested attaching the CTF's Report to the letter as the CTF's end-state vision for the site. A conference call was scheduled for September 23, 2003, to finalize the letter.<sup>1</sup>

#### ***CTF Letter Regarding Waste Incidental to Reprocessing***

Lee Lambert and Ray Vaughan prepared a draft letter to the Congressional delegation giving the CTF's comments on DOE's letter to U.S. Representative Dennis Hastert requesting legislative changes to clarify DOE's authority to designate high level radioactive waste as Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (WIR). As there were no CTF comments on the draft, the letter was mailed on September 18, 2003.

#### ***Out-year Funding Levels for the WVDP***

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<sup>1</sup>Several CTF members participated in a conference call and finalized the letter to Mr. Geiser. The letter was mailed on September 26, 2003.

Elizabeth Lowes, DOE, explained the current context for the budget discussion. Given the unresolved issues such as WIR, finishing the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Decommissioning and Long-Term Stewardship, and impasse with NYSERDA, the accelerated schedule for decommissioning will not occur by 2012 as hoped by DOE Headquarters. She is not sure what the impact of a budget cut in 2005 will be on long-term decommissioning plans because there is no decision on the final outcome for the site. DOE will continue with its plans to complete the Remote Handled Waste Facility (RHWF) and other short-term cleanup activities. The decommissioning EIS will likely not be completed by 2005.

A NYSERDA representative clarified that DOE is currently recommending the future reduction in WVDP funding and that it is not a result of the appropriations language that threatened the Project two years ago. DOE and NYSERDA have been unable to resolve the issues of the High-Level Waste Fee and Long-Term Stewardship for the WVDP. A Task Force member suggested that the CTF should work with DOE's Ohio Field Office and Headquarters this fall while they are finalizing the 2005 budget. He also suggested that the CTF make another trip to Washington D.C. in February to visit the Congressional delegation and DOE Headquarters.

A Task Force member and DOE disagreed over whether Class B and C waste may be shipped off-site before completion of the Decommissioning EIS based on the Stipulation of Compromise between the Coalition on West Valley Nuclear Wastes and DOE. The Task Force member stated that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that the big-picture decisions be made before implementing piecemeal actions. A DOE representative responded that DOE's complex-wide Programmatic EIS provides for WVDP use of existing storage capacity at other DOE facilities. She also stated that DOE plans to move ahead with shipping waste off-site because it reduces risks at the site.

A DOE representative told the CTF that DOE and NYSERDA met with the regulatory agencies on September 16, 2003, where the DOE described their preferred alternative for site decommissioning. DOE offered to have Bob Warther, Manager of the Ohio Field Office, attend the October 21, 2003, Task Force meeting to explain his vision for the site and preferred alternative. NYSERDA commented that Peter Smith, Acting President of NYSERDA, would like to meet with the CTF at the next meeting. NYSERDA also offered to describe its near-term and long-term vision for the site. A Task Force member reminded the agencies that they will need to address the points raised in the CTF's Report in their presentations. The DOE representative said that they will do their best to address the points they can, at this point in time. The CTF agreed to hear this information at the October 21, 2003, meeting and shift the performance assessment/risk assessment topics to November, and the Risk-Based End States and Long-Term Stewardship discussion until December.

### **Observer Comments**

There were no observer comments.

### **Next Steps**

Future meetings will be held on October 21, November 18, and December 16. A conference call is scheduled for September 23 at 7:00 p.m.

<b>Action Items</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Provide information on the source of radiation from tobacco products.	Lora Winkler WVNSCO	10/10/03
Provide information on area in Iran that showed higher exposure levels of background radiation.	Lora Winkler WVNSCO	10/10/03
Provide a copy of the application to DOE to change the worker standard from 500 mrem/year to 1000 mrem/year.	Lora Winkler WVNSCO	10/10/03
Provide information on why the allowable dose to biota is much higher than for humans.	John Bleech WVNSCO	10/10/03

<b>Documents Distributed</b>		
<b>Document Subject</b>	<b>Document Description</b>	<b>Generated by–Date (if applicable/known)</b>
September 17, 2003, meeting agenda	–	M. Holland; Holland & Associates
Presentation “Principles of Radiation Science”	–	Lora Winkler, WVNSCO
Presentation “Dose from the WVDP to Potentially Affected Populations (Public and Biota)	–	John Bleech, WVNSCO
List of WVDP Radionuclides and their half lives	–	WVNSCO, September 2003
Draft letter from CTF to David Geiser, DOE-HQ	Subject: Implementation Plan for Risk-Based End States	CTF
Draft letter from CTF to Congressman Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the US House of Representatives	Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (WIR)	CTF
Sample DOE budget time line	Flow chart of typical DOE budget cycle	John Chamberlain, WVNSCO, September 2003
E-mail correspondence from Elizabeth Lowes, DOE, to Mike Hutchinson, CTF	DOE’s 2005 budget cycle	M. Holland; Holland & Associates
Letter from Peter Smith, Acting President of NYSERDA, to DOE Secretary of Energy, Spencer Abraham, dated September 11, 2003	WIR	Tom Attridge, NYSERDA
Letter from Kara Colton, NGA Center for Best Practices to David Geiser, DOE-HQ, dated September 12, 2003	Risk-Based End States	Tom Attridge, NYSERDA
E-mail correspondence between Bob VanWicklin, US Congressman Houghton’s office, and Eric Wohlers, CTF, dated September 2, 2003	WIR, West Valley legislative activities, 2005 budget for the WVDP	Tom Attridge, NYSERDA

<b>Documents Distributed</b>		
<b>Document Subject</b>	<b>Document Description</b>	<b>Generated by–Date (if applicable/known)</b>
Response to questions posted at the August 2003 CTF meeting	North Plateau Groundwater Plume and the Construction and Demolition and Debris Landfill	Bob Steiner, WVNSCO
Summary of CTF conference calls held September 3 & 10	–	Melinda Holland, Holland & Associates
Energy Communities Alliance Bulletin	–	Lee Lambert, CTF August 2003
Proposed CTF meeting topics for Calendar Year 2004	–	Melinda Holland, Holland & Associates