

**EM SSAB CHAIRS**  
**Bi-Monthly Conference Call**  
**Thursday, November 20, 2008**  
**3:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.**

**Participants**

**Chairs/Representatives:**

Idaho	R.D. Maynard, Lisa Aldrich
Nevada	Walter Wegst, Rosemary Rehfeldt, Kelly Snyder
NNM	J.D. Campbell, Ralph Phelps, Jeff Casalina, Christina Houston, Menice Santistevan
Oak Ridge	Ted Lundy, Pat Halsey, Spencer Gross, Pete Osborne
Paducah	Bobby Ann Lee, Eric Roberts
Portsmouth	Val Francis, Richard Snyder, Kate Timmons
Richland/Hanford	Susan Leckband, Shelley Cimon, Paula Call, Lori Gamache
Savannah River	Donna Antonucci, Ranowul Jzar, Gerri Flemming, Mindy Mets

**DOE representatives:**

EM-13	Melissa Nielson, Cate Brennan, Michelle Hudson
EM-6	James Fiore
EM-12	Christine Gelles

***OPENING REMARKS***

Cate Brennan welcomed participants to the call and reviewed the afternoon's agenda.

**Transition Update**

James Fiore, Director for the Office of Management Analysis, provided participants with an update on the transition.

The new administration's transition team has arrived at the Department of Energy Headquarters (DOE-HQ). Approximately 14 team members have been identified, including three team leaders: Mr. Elgie Holstein, Ms. Elizabeth Montoya, and Ms. Sue Tierney. EM senior management is pleased that all three team leaders have previously held positions within the Department and are familiar with its organizations; most notably, Mr. Holstein served as former Secretary Federico Peña's chief of staff. DOE is in the initial stages of the transition process and recently began providing briefings to the team on its various programmatic missions. Mr. Fiore offered to provide Ms. Nielson and Ms. Brennan with biographical sketches of the transition team leaders for distribution to the Chairs.

With regard to the transition's impact on the EM budget process, Mr. Fiore explained that the program will operate under a continuing resolution (CR) through the beginning of 2009 and that one of the new administration's first tasks will be to finalize the Fiscal Year (FY) 2010 budget request. DOE General Counsel is in the process of determining what an appropriate level of interaction will be for the transition team with regard to the Department's budget process; transition team members are technically considered members of the public and do not have access to some internal information. Mr. Fiore also noted that the EM SSAB will have an opportunity to provide input on the EM budget process when DOE returns to its standard development procedures in the spring, beginning with the FY 2011 budget.

Mr. Fiore concluded his presentation with a summary of the messages that EM hopes to convey to the transition team. EM feels that the new administration will likely perform a line-by-line review of the program's budget to determine if and/or how EM can be more productive and efficient. In preparation for this review, EM has decided to highlight its budget issues and proactively acknowledge this topic as a high priority. It is important for EM to demonstrate that it is sensitive to the country's current economic situation and convey that it is prudent for management to prepare for an in-depth scrub of the program's budget. Other transition messages that have previously been discussed with the EM SSAB Chairs pertain to program complexity, recent accomplishments, reducing the complex's physical footprint, and viewing EM sites as assets to the nation, rather than liabilities.

### **Waste Disposition Strategies Update**

Christine Gelles, Director for the Office of Disposal Operations (EM-12), provided a status report on EM's waste disposition activities.

Ms. Gelles indicated that she did not have many new updates regarding EM's Low-Level and Mixed Low-Level waste (LLW and MLLW) activities since she last spoke with the Board in September. Most notably, Ms. Gelles reported that EM received a letter from the Nevada Attorney General's office regarding the disposition of off-site MLLW at the Nevada Test Site (NTS). The issue at hand is whether DOE has the authority to conduct waste disposal operations at NTS under the current public land withdrawal that established NTS for use in nuclear weapons testing. DOE is working diligently with the Department of Interior's Bureau of Land Management to resolve this issue, which has the potential to greatly impact LLW and MLLW disposal activities throughout the EM complex.

Walt Wegst, Vice Chair of the Community Advisory Board (CAB) for NTS Programs, indicated that the CAB's Waste Committee plans to develop a letter in support of DOE's position on LLW and MLLW disposal operations at NTS. The Waste Committee may pursue a conference call with EM-12 staff in the future to further discuss the status of this situation.

Ms. Gelles acknowledged that in any event, EM needs to explore alternatives to replace the NTS Mixed Waste Disposal Unit's capacity because that facility is scheduled to enter permanent closure by the end of November 2010. These alternatives include, but are not limited to pursuing the construction of a new, fully RCRA-compliant MLLW facility at NTS; working with Waste Control Specialists to site a disposal facility in Andrews, Texas; and resolving the issues surrounding the use of Hanford as a regional disposal facility.

Operationally, a few incidents have occurred at NTS where the site received LLW and MLLW waste containers that did not fully comply with established acceptance criteria. Those containers were sent back to their generating sites in accordance with the program's zero-tolerance policy, which was signed into effect by Assistant Secretary Rispoli in September 2007. EM is currently in the midst of a corrective action plan process for these occurrences and is working to identify their root causes. As a result, certain generators have had their shipment programs suspended until the underlying issues are resolved.

With regard to the program's waste treatment efforts, Ms. Gelles stated that EM still plans to close the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) incinerator in Oak Ridge upon completion of the facility's lifecycle burn plan in May 2009. She also reported that EM is identifying alternative disposition paths for the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant's large volume liquid waste streams. The hope is that a lower cost, non-radiological treatment process will be attainable for at least one of the two streams. If not, EM will turn to commercial radiological treatment, such as Perma-Fix's Diversified Scientific Services, Inc. facility in Kingston, Tennessee, which is expected to receive its final PCB liquid mixed-waste permit from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the near future.

The Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) is entering a regular maintenance period and is unable to receive shipments of transuranic (TRU) waste at this time. During the outage, EM plans to utilize available TRUPACT-II's and trailers for inter-site shipments to the Advanced Mixed-Waste Treatment Facility in Idaho. The only definite site scheduled for inter-site shipment is the NTS, which has repackaged a quantity of legacy TRU waste that was originally generated by the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. EM had planned to include a 1,000 drum inter-site shipment from Hanford during the outage, but has since suspended that effort for policy reasons that must be addressed in light of the current major contract transition. Ms. Gelles noted that there will be opportunities for inter-site shipment between Hanford and Idaho in the future as resources become available. In the meantime, EM is evaluating small quantity TRU sites, such as Lawrence Livermore and Argonne National Laboratories, for possible inter-site shipments during the WIPP outage. Lastly, Ms. Gelles added that EPA's approval of Oak Ridge's remote-handled TRU waste baseline is expected in the near future, which will allow the site to begin shipments to WIPP in the spring.

## **Around the Complex:**

### Savannah River – Donna Antonucci

- The Savannah River Site (SRS) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) held a meeting on November 17-18 and approved one recommendation regarding the H-Canyon facility.
  - In the recommendation, the SRS CAB expressed their support for H-Canyon operations, requested status updates on the Nuclear Materials Disposition and Consolidation Coordination Committee, and asked how nuclear materials throughout the complex will be channeled into H-Canyon.
  - The meeting also included presentations on the budget and an overview of the SRS 2007 Environmental Report.
- In addition to the recent board meeting, the SRS CAB held a number of subcommittee meetings throughout October and November.
- The SRS CAB has welcomed several new members to the board and hopes to submit another appointment/reappointment package to DOE-HQ in the near future to ensure a full complement of members before the March Chairs meeting.
- Mr. Manuel Bettencourt was voted Chair of the SRS CAB in the board's recent elections; his term will begin in March 2009.

### Richland – Susan Leckband

- The Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) will hold its next full-board meeting on December 4-5. The meeting will likely produce two or three recommendations, given the increase of activity at the site following the recent transition of two prime contracts on October 1 as well as the recent election.
  - The third major contract has also been awarded but is currently under protest.
- HAB members will participate in a public involvement workshop on December 3 and will use the opportunity to network with other stakeholder organizations.
- The HAB attended a baseline workshop hosted by DOE on November 19. Members were excited about the opportunity to learn about DOE's baseline development process, but disturbed by the information regarding the possibility of milestone delays and decreases in funding.
- Cleanup along the Columbia River continues to progress, with the exception of a few critical waste sites that may contain TRU waste.
  - There are also nine reactors along the river whose final disposition could be delayed up to 75 years. The HAB's technical committees will likely discuss this issue in the coming year in addition to determining how to best incorporate long-term stewardship into current cleanup decisions.
- The HAB is disappointed that inter-site TRU shipments between Hanford and Idaho will be postponed.
- The HAB plans to address a number of critical decisions regarding the Central Plateau in the next month and will work with EPA and the Washington State Department of Ecology to determine how the board and public can provide effective input.

#### Idaho – R.D. Maynard

- The Idaho National Laboratory (INL) CAB is in the process of replacing a member who recently resigned; the new member will likely be appointed in the coming months.
- INL CAB members are drafting a letter for the transition team to introduce the board and show their support for the site's budgetary needs.
- The INL CAB recently issued a letter of support for DOE's decision to ship off-site waste to INL's Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP). Once processed and characterized through the AMWTP, the waste will be shipped to WIPP for disposition.
- Members of the INL CAB had the opportunity to attend the Combined Intergovernmental Groups meeting in Snowbird, Utah earlier in November.
- The INL CAB will hold its next meeting in January 2009.

#### Nevada – Walt Wegst

- One of the top issues for the NTS CAB pertains to the correspondence between the Nevada Attorney General and DOE, regarding the use of NTS for offsite disposal operations. As previously discussed, the board's Waste Committee plans to develop a letter regarding this issue.
- The NTS CAB received an interesting presentation on the flora and fauna at NTS during its November meeting.
- Member(s) have been removed from the board due to low meeting attendance. The board's policy requires that members attend 50 percent of the full board meetings. If this issue persists, the NTS CAB will need to initiate another membership recruitment drive.

#### Northern New Mexico – J.D. Campbell

- The Northern New Mexico CAB (NNMCAB) held a meeting on November 19
  - Ms. Brennan and Michael Graham, the new Environmental Manager for Los Alamos National Security, LLC, were in attendance.
  - Members passed two recommendations and reviewed the board's draft annual report that will be submitted to DOE-HQ in December.
  - Jeffrey Casalina, the NNMCAB Deputy Designated Federal Officer, will provide a status report on the implementation of the board's recommendations during its next meeting in January 2009.
- The NNMCAB has requested clarification regarding deadlines for certifying official meeting minutes and will work with DOE-HQ to best meet the Department's requirements. Certification within 45 days is a difficult task for the NNMCAB because members meet every other month and require time to review and provide meaningful input.

#### Oak Ridge – Ted Lundy

- The Oak Ridge Site-Specific Advisory Board (ORSSAB) is pleased that Assistant Secretary Rispoli signed Critical Decision-1 for the Integrated Facility Disposition Project.

- Oak Ridge completed its first shipment of contact-handled TRU waste to WIPP on September 24. Plans to ship remote-handled TRU waste are currently under review and awaiting approval by the EPA.
- The ORSSAB's EM Committee will be working with a technical advisor in the spring to study the focused feasibility study and proposed plan for the remediation of 40 million pounds of depleted uranium in the Bear Creek Burial Grounds.
- The ORSSAB's Public Outreach committee continues to provide presentations and involve the local media in its efforts to educate the public about Oak Ridge cleanup activities. The committee also works with local high schools and recently took 100 students on a tour of the site.
- The ORSSAB recently seated one new member, bringing the board to its full capacity of 20 people.
- Vince Adams, Director for the Office of Groundwater and Soil Remediation, attended the ORSSAB's November meeting. Dr. Adams is the DOE-HQ lead for long-term stewardship issues and the ORSSAB expects to work closely with him in the future.

#### Paducah – Bobby Ann Lee

- The Paducah SSAB previously proposed that DOE involve board members in scenario planning for the site's future use. Interest in this effort has grown as site operations begin to move to Ohio.
- The Paducah SSAB recently welcomed two new members and a new Federal Coordinator, Robert (Buz) Smith.
  - The board has expressed concern with regard to the lengthy membership appointment approval process at DOE-HQ, especially as community interest in the board increases.
- The Paducah SSAB's primary focus remains to be deactivation and decommissioning (D&D) issues as well as waste disposition.
  - The site is developing a standardized engineering and cost analysis process to simplify and expedite the evaluation of facilities for D&D.
  - The site will also issue Requests for Proposals for infrastructure and environmental remediation in the near future.
- The Paducah SSAB has continued to dialogue with DOE about alternative waste disposition methods for the site. The board produced two recommendations regarding community involvement, attended the DOE public meeting, and hosted a joint open house with the Department that featured exhibits on the site, cleanup issues, and the Paducah SSAB.

#### Portsmouth – Val Francis

- The Portsmouth SSAB (PORTS SSAB) held an off-site retreat in October that was well attended and featured presentations by DOE and the Ohio EPA.
- The PORTS SSAB recently held its first round of committee meetings.

#### **Planning Committee for the Spring Chairs Meeting (Savannah River)**

The next EM SSAB Chairs meeting will be hosted by the SRS CAB on March 17-19, 2009.

The planning committee will hold its first conference call at 3:00 p.m. EST on Tuesday, December 9. Volunteers include Shelley Cimon, Susan Leckband, J.D. Campbell, Ted Lundy, Donna Antonucci, Ranowul Jzar, Manuel Bettencourt, and the SRS CAB officers and staff.

### **Closing Remarks**

Ms. Nielson encouraged the Chairs to review the National Governors Association's brochure titled, *Cleaning Up America's Nuclear Weapons Complex*. She suggested that this brochure could be used as a tool for the boards' new member orientations and noted that it had been distributed to the EM SSAB Chairs via email.

Ms. Brennan asked for feedback regarding strategies for sharing lessons learned amongst the boards. She asked the Chairs to relay what types of best practices they would like to learn more about and how DOE-HQ could help facilitate those discussions and exchanges. In particular, she has received requests for information from various boards regarding new member orientation, recommendations tracking and reporting, public service announcements, and membership recruitment.

Ms. Lee suggested that it would be helpful for DOE-HQ to explore ways to make lessons learned and best practice resources available electronically, perhaps on a website or online portal. Ms. Leckband indicated that the HAB could provide advice from a process perspective and share recruitment methodologies that have proven successful.

Ms. Brennan encouraged the Chairs to continue providing input on these topics and thanked the participants for their time.

The next EM SSAB Chairs call is scheduled for Thursday, January 22, 2009, at 3:00 p.m. EST.