

Citizens Advisory Board Committee Minutes



INL Site Environmental Management
C I T I Z E N S A D V I S O R Y B O A R D

Committee: Full Board
Date: August 11, 2009 – 2:00 pm. (MT)

Participants

Board Members: John Bolliger R.D. Maynard
Tami Sherwood Willie Preacher
Bruce Wendle

DOE-ID: Bob Pence
Jeff Perry
Bill Levitan (HQ)

Liaisons: Susan Burke

Support Staff: Lisa Aldrich
Ceri Chapple

Objective(s) for the Committee Call

- Presentation of the Public Scoping Meeting for the Long-term management and storage of Elemental Mercury Environmental Impact Statement (Mercury Storage EIS)

Mr. Levitan introduced the topic of mercury storage by explaining the history behind the Mercury Export Ban of 2008. He explained that the Act requires that DOE provide a storage facility for the long-term management of mercury generated in the United States. Mr. Levitan outlined the groups behind the bill: the Nation Mining Association, the American Chemical Council, the Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Environmental Council of States. He explained that Idaho along with six other locations, in accordance with NEPA, is being considered for the long-term mercury storage facility. The other locations are: Grand Junction, CO; Kansas City, KS; Richland, WA (Hanford); Savannah River, SC; Hawthorne Army Depot, Reno, NV; Waste Control Specialists, Andrews County, Texas. The criteria for the locations is as follows: must have no significant conflict with existing site mission, must have an existing facility or the capability for building or expansion, the facilities must be RCRA compliant, must have supporting infrastructure, must be compatible with local or regional land use plans, must be accessible to major transportation routes, and must have sufficient information on hand to adequately characterize the site for analysis in the EIS.

The Public Scoping Meeting will be held on August 11, at the Shilo Inn at 5:30pm. The DOE will receive comments from the community and will have a court reporter present record the meeting. Mr. Levitan explained an example of the mercury storage facility can be viewed on their website (<http://www.mercurystorageeis.com/>) along with other information regarding long-term mercury storage. He said that the Department of Energy will establish a fee for the mercury. The process includes the comment period (i.e. public meeting and emails), which ends August 24th. Then DOE Headquarters will complete a draft by November, notifying the field offices which in turn will notify interested stakeholders. Public hearings will commence in January to evaluate the alternatives, environmental impacts, cultural resources, and transportation.

Mr. Wendle inquired what a metric ton was and what the storage containers made of. Mr. Levitan answered that it is 2200lbs and the storage container are 3liter canisters of steel. The canisters are industry standard flasks and are approved by DOE, which as Mr. Levitan explained, was a very important factor in the consideration of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Mr. Levitan expounded by explaining that the Procedures and Standards document will have a vital role in dictating how the mercury will managed in a long-term storage facility, referencing RCRA in accordance with state issued permits.

RD Maynard asked about the “No Action” Alternatives, wondering if it is an actual choice. Mr. Levitan explained that the EPA requires DOE to consider a No Action Alternative, not designating a facility at all.

Citizens Advisory Board Committee Minutes

Secondly, Mr. Maynard inquired about why the Nuclear Energy division at the Idaho National Laboratory turned down the opportunity for a long-term mercury storage facility, citing that it didn't coincide with their site mission, when they will be ultimately responsible for long-term mercury storage. Mr. Levitan explained that that NE was selected by the deputy secretary as having the expertise to handle such materials. The DOE mission is to find a location at a site that will have long-term stewardship responsibilities and NE is the agent bestowed that responsibility by DOE. Mr. Maynard then asked if any of the other sites had openly expressed interest in the long-term mercury storage facility. Mr. Levitan explained that there hasn't been anyone directly saying they want the facility, there have been some to say that they didn't see any problem with it, but by and large the response has been "Not in My Backyard".

Tami Sherwood inquired when DOE would be determining the fees that would be associated with taking the mercury and the possibility of job opportunities. Mr. Levitan explained that DOE is currently engrossed in the process of designating a facility and hasn't reached the point of discussing numbers in regards to fees. Secondly, the facility would probably create a few jobs, but not many. The facility may however preserve jobs in the chosen area.

Finally, Mr. Maynard inquired if DOE has taken into account the legal issues and permitting issues that may be associated with the long-term mercury storage facility. Mr. Levitan answered, that yes DOE, like any federal agency that produces Environmental Impact Statements takes into account the possibility of the project being halted on NEPA issues. DOE is prepared to withstand a lawsuit.

To review the details of this meeting, call 1-888-284-7564, playback code 215587.