



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

Meeting Minutes

July 11, 2012

The Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Site Environmental Management (EM) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) held its bi-monthly meeting on Wednesday, July 11, 2012, at the Red Lion in Pocatello, Idaho. An audio recording of the meeting was created and may be reviewed by phoning CAB Support Staff at 208-557-7886.

Members Present

Willie Preacher, Chair
Nicki Karst, Vice Chair
Bob Bodell
Herb Bohrer
Sean Cannon
Harrison Gerstlauer
Harry Griffith
Mark Lupher
Betsy McBride
Bill Roberts
Tami Sherwood
Teri Tyler

Members Not Present

Kristin Jensen

Deputy Designated Federal Officer, Federal Coordinator, and Liaisons Present

Jim Cooper, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, U.S. Department of Energy Idaho Operations Office (DOE-ID)
Bob Pence, Federal Coordinator, DOE-ID
Dennis Faulk, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Susan Burke, State of Idaho
Daryl Koch, State of Idaho
Mike Ebben, Idaho Cleanup Project (CWI)

Others Present

Erik Simpson, ICP
Natalie Packer, ICP
Bruce LaRue, DEQ
Chris Henvit, NR-IBO
Bob Homes
M. Hutchison, NRF
Warren Bergholz
Beatrice Brailsford, Snake River Alliance
Susan Skinner
Kelly Galloway, MEI
Dave Bates, MEI
Christina Cutler
Romelia Martinez
Katherine Daly
Nancy Greco

Danielle Miller, DOE-ID

Lori McNamara, Support Services
Bryant Kuechle, Support Services Facilitator
Peggy Hinman, Support Services

Opening Remarks

Willie Preacher, Chairman of the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Site Environmental Management (EM) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB), welcomed the group to the meeting. Jim Cooper, the Department of Energy (DOE) Deputy Designated Federal Official, welcomed the group and the members of the public in the audience. He commented that the upcoming year is an important one with a lot of critical work scheduled for accomplishment.

Dennis Faulk, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10, provided information on his position with EPA and the issues he is dealing with at Hanford and INL. The biggest issue now is budget constraints, which has led to layoffs at Hanford. He thinks years 2013 and 2014 will be tough, and it will be important to keep plugging away at the issues.

Susan Burke, State of Idaho, commented that the tour in May was good. The State will be watching progress on transuranic (TRU) waste this year. Things are looking pretty good from the State's perspective.

Daryl Koch, State of Idaho, commented that he thinks there are some issues with INL cleanup that need to be addressed. He would like to engage in the discussion on those topics. Mr. Koch noted that his responsibility is on the cleanup side, not the hazardous waste or fuel side. He is responsible for the cleanup under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Mike Ebben, CH2M WG Idaho (CWI), was introduced to the group. He will be filling in for Mark Lindholm for the next few meetings. He commented that he was looking forward to participating with the CAB. He enforced the importance of safety in all CWI operations.

Recent Public Involvement

Mr. Cooper provided a summary of recent public involvement activities.

Betsy McBride asked what types of questions DOE is receiving from the public when it conducts outreach. Mr. Cooper responded that progress on decontamination and decommissioning is of interest. She asked what new missions INL is looking at. Cooper replied that nuclear energy research and radiation protection are areas of work that INL is building.

Progress to Cleanup

Mr. Cooper provided a presentation on progress to cleanup including American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) work. The presentation addressed Safety Performance, TRU Waste Disposition, the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Project (AMWTP), CERCLA Remediation, the Idaho CERCLA Disposal Facility (ICDF), Decontamination and Decommissioning (D&D), the Integrated Waste Treatment Unit (IWTU), Spent Nuclear Fuel, and Calcine Disposition. The presentation is available on the INL Site EM CAB website: <http://inlcab.energy.gov/>.

Discussion

Mark Luper asked about the plans to move fuel from wet to dry storage and why such movement was necessary. Mr. Cooper replied that wet storage poses a risk that the storage pool would leak and cause a release to the environment. It is safer to store the fuel in a dry environment.

Willie Preacher asked what had been done at the AMWTP to involve the employees in safety. Mr. Cooper replied that AMWTP had engaged in a safety stand down that sought input from employees and then initiated a careful start up process.

Dennis Faulk commented that from his perspective, the CERCLA work at INL is moving along. The remaining issue is cleanup of groundwater at the Test Area North (TAN). He clarified that the treatment system for the groundwater at TAN is not performing as planned. Also, Mr. Cooper noted that the plume is moving in an unexpected direction, and that the presence of a continuing source is now going to be investigated.

Herb Bohrer asked about the readiness process for starting up a new unit of the Accelerated Retrieval Project (ARP). Since the operations are similar, how much review is needed to move into a new unit? Mr. Cooper replied that a major activity is to review lessons learned from previous exhumations and incorporate these lessons into revised procedures. Safety is also reviewed and procedure changes made as needed. Training is then conducted on the revised procedures to make sure employees understand what is to be done. He commented that repetitiveness can bring complaisance among workers, but there is a benefit of having certainty with the work processes.

Ms. McBride asked what entity would be receiving the EM program's spent nuclear fuel. Mr. Cooper responded that the fuel would be transferred to the DOE Nuclear Energy (NE) program for its future use.

Mr. Lupher asked what type of dry storage would be used for spent nuclear fuel. Mr. Cooper clarified that the fuel could be stored in casks on an asphalt or concrete pad, or it could be stored in a bunker-type storage building.

Harrison Gerstlauer commented on what he saw at Oak Ridge where buildings were not demolished as carefully as at INL, and that this created more waste to be disposed. He felt the approach at INL was quicker and more efficient.

Aquifer Impacts and Well Analysis

Nicole Hernandez, DOE-ID, provided a presentation on groundwater levels and monitoring at the INL Site. She addressed the variation of groundwater levels across the INL and efforts to understand these changes and their effects on the INL Site groundwater monitoring network. The presentation is available on the INL Site EM CAB website: <http://inlcab.energy.gov/>.

Discussion

Harry Griffith asked if the water rights adjudication taking place in Idaho affected INL. Ms. Hernandez replied that INL does not have control of the water that may move across the site as this water is governed by the water master. Dennis Faulk commented that INL has an adequate water right, but noted that dropping water levels is a concern across Idaho. Ms. Hernandez described the effects of changed irrigation practices on the aquifer level.

Mr. Gerstlauer asked which facility at the INL used the most water. He thought it might be at the Advanced Test Reactor (ATR). Ms. Hernandez did not know immediately, and she committed to find an answer.

Mr. Griffith asked how significant the financial impact would be if wells needed to be deepened or if new wells needed to be drilled. Ms. Henandez replied that a well can cost between \$200,000 to \$1 million. She will be starting to plan for this and will assume that some wells will be replaced. Mr. Cooper noted that funding for groundwater monitoring was at a bare minimum and that money will have to be found. DOE's budget planning looks ahead three years, and this will help.

Mr. Griffith asked about the monitoring wells operated by the Naval Reactors program and whether citizens should be interested in that. Ms. Hernandez replied that she accounts for interactions between the Naval Reactors facility and other INL areas. Chris Henvit, DOE Naval Reactors, commented that Naval Reactors has its own program that is supported by CWI. All results are shared with the State of Idaho.

Tami Sherwood asked about the plume at TAN. There is a rebound test going on there. She asked if monitoring continued while the rebound test was going on. Ms. Hernandez replied that the area around the hot spot of the plume is monitored quarterly. She cannot say she has seen improvement, but during the test this is not expected because the pump and treat system is not being operated. The test is to find out what happens to the radionuclide concentrations when the system is not being operated.

Ms. Sherwood asked if any other wells were planned or needed at TAN. Mr. Cooper replied that budget plans for 2014 include the need for changes to the wells.

Mr. Lupher asked if there was any opportunity for synergy with the Idaho Department of Water Resources and their studies on recharge and aquifer effects. Ms. Hernandez commented that this may be addressed during upcoming reviews of INL CERCLA activities. It may be something to consider. Mr. Lupher noted that INL is uniquely situated over the drainage systems into the aquifer, and there may be more information available from INL to assist the State in assessing aquifer levels. She will take this suggestion back to her colleagues when they plan their five-year CERCLA review. Mr. Lupher commented that it might be an area where the State and INL can work together. Mr. Koch commented that the agencies' role under CERCLA is to return the groundwater to drinking water standards, and this is a primary concern. Drilling a well on INL is a costly proposition. However, over the years, some wells have had to be abandoned because of their condition, and more wells may be needed. The State hydrogeologist has pointed out the trend of decreasing levels. Mr. Koch commented on the difficulties and cost of cleaning up groundwater.

Ms. McBride asked about five-year planning for CERCLA. When budgets change, how does this affect decisions or negotiations with the regulators? Mr. Faulk and Mr. Koch replied that it is a process of negotiation and making joint decisions based on risk. Ms. McBride asked if it was risk or regulatory drivers? The regulators indicated it was primarily risk, since risk drives CERCLA decisions.

Mr. Cooper commented that it is difficult to juggle priorities. DOE evaluates the risk of delaying a project to allow acceleration of other projects. This is always a complex undertaking. Mr. Faulk emphasized that the end goal of cleanup is not compromised due to budget. Cleanup may be delayed, but it would still be conducted.

Ms. McBride commented that the public may not understand the choices that are being made, that choices are made, and that there are effects from these choices. Ms. Hernandez noted that the tank farm is a good example of how changes to the strategy have been made to avoid unnecessary costs of monitoring.

Bill Roberts asked about nitrates in the groundwater. Mr. Koch replied that at Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center (INTEC) and Central Facilities Area (CFA), the sources of the nitrates are not known for sure, but they may be from the old sewage treatment plants. Mr. Roberts asked if the remedies being put in place were improving the environment. Ms. Hernandez replied that she felt that improvements were being realized. Evaluations are conducted every year and every five years to assess changes. Mr. Roberts asked if any of these groundwater issues were an emergency. She replied that they were not. He asked why it was so expensive to drill a well on the INL. Ms. Hernandez noted that there is a lot of basalt to drill through and there is contamination. Mr. Lupher noted that wells for drinking water can often cost \$1 million.

Mr. Gerstlauer asked if the plume at TAN was moving toward potable water. Ms. Hernandez replied that it was not. If the plume was moving toward water, then the drinking water well would be treated to make sure it met drinking water standards.

Mr. Bohrer asked if the groundwater monitoring program was meeting requirements and was adequate today. He further asked if there was anything the CAB should be doing on this issue. Mr. Faulk commented that he felt that

the biggest challenge was TAN groundwater. He felt the program was adequate but that additional work would be needed in the future.

Nicki Karst asked when more information on the TAN test would be available. Ms. Hernandez responded that it would be about one year.

Beatrice Brailsford, Snake River Alliance, noted that Mr. Cooper had identified that DOE was looking for a potential source in the vadose zone that was causing the contamination. Ms. Hernandez replied that there is one well that has had results over drinking water standards. There is a potential vapor source which was not evaluated in previous studies. There is also a radionuclide source that has not been identified. The rebound test is intended to provide information on the response of contamination when the system is not operating. Ms. Brailsford asked if DOE knows where the contamination came from. Ms. Hernandez replied that the presence of the source in the vadose zone was not evaluated in the past.

AMWTP Proposed Modifications to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Regulatory Requirements, Integrated Project Teams Mission/Objectives

Jim Malmo, DOE-ID, provided a presentation on the Integrated Project Team (IPT) organized with membership from DOE sites that ship waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) to pursue potential improvements to the shipping process. The IPT has come up with objectives to modify the process that it believes will result in efficiencies without sacrificing environmental protection and safety. The presentation is available on the INL Site EM CAB website: <http://inlcab.energy.gov/>.

Discussion

Ms. Karst asked about the limit of 1% liquid to waste volume. Mr. Malmo explained that the plan at WIPP is to emplace the containers in salt that will eventually encapsulate the waste. Minimal water is desired to promote the salt encapsulation. The limit is 1% in each drum. Several drums are in one container or payload. The IPT is looking at ways to achieve the 1% limit but to allow some averaging of this limit on a payload basis instead of an individual drum basis.

Mr. Griffith commented that the 1% limit seems to be the ‘Cadillac’ of standards. It seems DOE is trying to obtain some relief from this. Mr. Malmo agreed. He commented that 1% of water is very small and that most containers have some amount of liquid even when the contents appear dry. DOE is not seeking to change the standard, but how it is measured.

Teri Tyler asked what was done with the liquid from the seemingly dry drums. Mr. Malmo replied that the liquid was solidified and then disposed.

Mr. Preacher asked if the changes planned for head gas sampling would result in eliminating the filters on the top of the drums. Mr. Malmo replied that the filters would still be used.

Mr. Preacher asked about the issue of drums that contained pyrophoric material. Now the plan is to let this material burn before shipping. In response to a question from Ms. Sherwood, it was clarified that the filter on the drum eliminates the concern that an unvented drum could burst from built up pressure.

In response to a question, Mr. Malmo clarified that 1% of the contents of a 55 gallon drum is a few ounces.

Mr. Bohrer asked about the efforts involved in getting the WIPP permit modified. Mr. Malmo replied that what has been discovered is that clarifications to the permit are needed, but no modifications may be involved. Mr. Cooper

provided the example of using the supercompactor to treat aerosol cans. Since the WIPP permit says waste is acceptable if it has been treated, if the INL permit allows this type of treatment, then no permit modification at WIPP would be needed.

Mr. Bohrer asked if there was anything the CAB could be doing to move the process along with DOE Carlsbad and New Mexico. Mr. Malmo noted that the first meeting of the groups was held this week, so it may be too early to identify actions that would be needed to move the process along.

Ms. Tyler asked about the objective of eliminating steps to verify waste codes. Mr. Malmo commented that steps to verify waste codes to look for volatile organics are no longer needed since the drums are now vented. Ms. Tyler commented that this would take care of the safety issue.

Mr. Roberts asked about the contractors and being behind schedule. Mr. Malmo commented that the new contract created a disruption of the work force and a delay to get the work force qualified again. Mr. Roberts commented that he felt this should not have been a surprise, and asked whether lessons learned would be applied. Mr. Malmo commented that the contractor ran into issues it had not anticipated when it began contract transition.

Ms. Karst commented that it was refreshing to see an approach that looked for ways to reduce costs without major changes to the process. Mr. Malmo noted that the IPT was focusing on its first five objectives, but it has others it would like to implement if these five are successful.

Public Comment

Beatrice Brailsford, Snake River Alliance, commented that WIPP was the only deep geologic repository in the planet, and would likely be the only one in the United States for some time. She said she would look at the IPT objectives very carefully, but we must be cautious about making changes to a repository that will be here for a long time.

Idaho Funding Strategies for FY 2013/FY 2014

Mr. Cooper provided a presentation on funding strategies for the Idaho EM program for Fiscal Years (FY) 2013 and 2014. The presentation is available on the INL Site EM CAB website: <http://inlcab.energy.gov/>.

Discussion

Ms. McBride asked about the impact of continuing resolution on EM funding for INL. Mr. Cooper replied that funding is received incrementally when under continuing resolution and it is hard to plan ahead for work. DOE only has one month's worth of funds to use. In addition, funding is usually assumed to be at the level of earlier years, which may be less than what is ultimately received.

Mr. Gerstlauer asked whether DOE could get small business credit for work performed by small businesses for the managing and operating contractor. Mr. Cooper replied that only direct contracts between a small business and DOE count.

Mr. Griffith asked what dialogue was taking place between the state and DOE on utilizing small businesses. Mr. Cooper replied that there was a lot of contact with the state to develop businesses. He also noted that DOE's Centralized Business Center also has small business contract vehicles that can provide small businesses to do work. He noted that small businesses are often not equipped to deal with DOE work, and that DOE supports the businesses to help them. Mr. Cooper noted that DOE was looking at filling some of its project control needs through small businesses.

In response to a question from Mr. Gerstlauer, Mr. Cooper clarified that the pension funds DOE sets aside from its budget are for persons currently receiving pensions as a benefit of their work at INL.

Ms. McBride asked if there was a cogent argument to support the desire to retain employees despite budget issues. She asked if there was data that could demonstrate the harm that could result if qualified workers were lost. Mr. Cooper gave the example of the protests of the AMWTP contract. During the protest time, the key incumbents moved on. As a result, there were difficulties in continuing the project and then transitioning it to the new contractor. Safety issues increased.

Ms. McBride commented that the \$389 million may be the highest amount INL will receive for the EM program. Mr. Cooper replied that the base funding Idaho needs to maintain the site in standby condition is \$189 million. He does not see how cleanup can continue with less than \$389 million. The focus is on how much progress can be made with money over the minimum standby condition. Mr. Cooper discussed the negotiations and discussions that have taken place between the DOE EM sites to deal with the challenge. Ms. McBride commented that these issues should be shared among the larger community. Mr. Koch commented that from the CERCLA perspective, the goal is to clean up the site so no more funding is needed for cleanup. In the bigger picture, the INL will be doing research, but there will be no more cleanup. There will be fewer employees at the state, contractor, and federal level. Mr. Koch noted that Mr. Cooper is a people person who is constantly concerned about the workforce and trying to keep it viable.

Ms. Brailsford commented that WIPP seems to always get its budget. Mr. Cooper noted that WIPP was facing cuts in FY13.

Ms. Brailsford asked about the new plan to cap INTEC early. Mr. Cooper replied that the ARRA funding received in the past two years allowed acceleration of cleanup. An interim cap had been planned over the tank farm; however, if the remaining work can be accelerated, then a final cap could be accelerated to as soon as 2018. This means an interim cap may not be needed. This would result in a savings of \$8 - \$10 million. The activity to tear down the New Waste Calcining Facility would have to take place earlier than planned in order to place the cap.

Blue Ribbon Commission Implementation Plan Update

Ken Whitham provided a presentation on DOE's activities involved in addressing the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future (BRC). The presentation is available on the INL Site EM CAB website: <http://inlcab.energy.gov/>.

Discussion

Ms. McBride asked whether DOE was changing its plan to have the spent fuel removed from Idaho by 2035. Mr. Whitham responded that until the policy changed, DOE was still working toward its commitment to remove the fuel by 2035. Mr. Faulk replied that it is important to find a place to put the fuel after 2035.

Ms. McBride asked if DOE could change its mind within the current Settlement Agreement and bring more fuel into Idaho. Mr. Whitham replied that this would not be allowed under the Settlement Agreement. One of the penalties under the Settlement Agreement is that no more spent fuel can be shipped.

Mr. Preacher asked whether the fuel must be road ready or out of the state by 2035. Ms. Burke clarified that the spent fuel must be out of the state; the high-level waste must be road ready by 2035. The high-level waste is calcine and sodium-bearing waste.

Mr. Gerstlauer asked why high-level waste and spent fuel were addressed differently. Mr. Faulk replied that Idaho was intent on having spent fuel that did not originate in Idaho leaving sooner than the high-level waste that was a result of processing at Idaho.

Ms. Karst asked how many years it took to start looking at Yucca Mountain before it was shut down. Mr. Whitham replied that it was at least 20 years. Ms. Karst pointed out that the process takes a long time, and 2035 is not that far away in the big picture. Mr. Cooper pointed out that Yucca Mountain is not yet dead. However, there are a lot of hurdles. Ms. McBride also commented there were physical limitations with the site related to geological activity and water penetration. The problems were not just political. Mr. Whitham commented that the BRC approach was to avoid the problem in Nevada of the people feeling that the repository was forced upon them. Ms. McBride noted that only one county in Nevada supported the project because of the jobs.

Mr. Roberts asked if DOE felt the spent fuel would leave Idaho or would it stay. Mr. Whitham replied that a decision was in process. DOE is taking a look at the BRC recommendations and trying to figure out how to implement them. He knows that DOE is looking at the potential for using WIPP. However, at this time, there is not enough information to make good decisions. DOE is working toward this.

Mr. Faulk noted that he believes there will be an interim storage facility somewhere by 2035. This will allow other sites to ship the fuel to a central location. He thinks there are communities interested in hosting a storage facility.

Ms. Sherwood commented that the Settlement Agreement is 20 years old. There are some aspects that could be reconsidered. Dry storage seems safe.

Mr. Roberts commented that he has a tough time trusting that the government will carry through on its promises. He is concerned that Idaho would get the fuel and then no further action would be taken.

Ms. Sherwood commented that she believes all parties want to do the right thing. She has great hope that these issues can be resolved and that DOE will follow through on its commitments.

Mr. Cooper commented that he appreciated the great interest and discussion in this issue. However, the group needs to understand that much of this is not within local control. These issues are being considered at the federal level. He is still focused on 2035 and taking the steps he thinks will help get the fuel out of Idaho by that date. Mr. Cooper feels that DOE has been open with its plans and hopes that the public will understand that DOE is working on the issues.

Mr. Preacher commented that the Native American Tribes were not in favor of the decision to pursue Yucca Mountain because of the sacred aspects of the site. He commented that he still thinks Yucca Mountain may be best because of all the work that has been done. He knows that WIPP wants the waste. However, one of the benefits of Yucca Mountain was that the first 20 years worth of fuel would be retrievable. This could not happen at WIPP.

EBR-II D&D Status and Idaho D&D Overall Strategies

Ken Whitham provided a presentation on D&D activities at the INL Site. He specifically addressed D&D of the Experimental Breeder Reactor-II and overall D&D strategies. The presentation is available on the INL Site EM CAB website: <http://inlcab.energy.gov/>.

Discussion

Mr. Gerstlaer asked if the dome over the reactor had been removed. Mr. Whitham replied that it has not yet been removed.

IWTU/INTEC Status

Mr. Whitham provided a presentation on the status of the IWTU and cleanup at INTEC. He related the details of an event that occurred during startup. Incomplete combustion of the coal being fed to the system to bring it up to processing temperature resulted in carbon being released into the system filters. This caused an automatic shutdown. The presentation is available on the INL Site EM CAB website: <http://inlcab.energy.gov/>.

Discussion

During his presentation, Mr. Whitham clarified that the issues with IWTU on startup occurred before any radioactive materials had been processed.

Mr. Preacher asked what type of product would be produced from the IWTU process. He replied that it would be a granular type material that would be placed in canisters for storage.

Mr. Gestlauer asked what the flow rate was for the nitrogen feed. He felt this was the moving force. Mr. Whitham showed the group a process flow diagram and identified that the system was operated under a vacuum.

Ms. Karst asked whether there was a design problem related to the issue with startup. Mr. Whitham replied that it was an issue identified during testing. It is not a design flaw but a processing issue.

Mr. Faulk asked if the system would remain hot once it started up. Mr. Whitham clarified that once the process starts up it will continue running until the waste has been treated.

Ms. Karst asked what was involved in cleaning up from the incident. Mr. Whitham explained what would be done to clean out the carbon. It involves flushing the lines and filtering out the material. Then the filters will have to be replaced.

Ms. Karst asked about the penalty in the event the milestone is not met to treat the waste by the end of 2012. Mr. Cooper replied the penalty would be that no shipments of DOE fuel could come to Idaho until the IWTU project was completed.

Ms. Tyler commented that startup is a long process and that she feels the schedule is ambitious and the contractor is doing a good job. She asked how long it takes to heat up the system if everything goes as planned. Mr. Whitham replied that it takes about eight days. One lesson learned was that the heat was up but that too much feed may have been added to get the heat up.

Mr. Gerstlauer asked where oxygen was introduced into the system. Oxygen goes into the denitration/mineralization reformer (DMR) unit to get combustion. Mr. Whitham clarified that all operations would be remote. The radiological constituents are in the DMR. There should not be radiological carryover into the carbon reduction reformer.

Mr. Cooper explained that the desire to put more coal into the system to increase the temperatures was what led to the issue.

Ms. Sherwood commented that she is glad these issues are occurring during startup and that CWI is going through this process. She prefers that CWI take its time and do it right. Mr. Whitham commented that the attitude of all involved has been one of making sure the job gets done right the first time. Mr. Cooper noted that DOE takes efforts to keep DOE-HQ informed on everything that is happening. The clear message from DOE-HQ is to do the work safely. That is the priority.

Mr. Griffith notes that a steam reforming process has been around for many years. He asked if there were other startup attempts that could provide lessons learned. Mr. Whitham agreed that steam reforming was a set technology but that the application to this waste was new. Therefore, it was somewhat unique.

Mr. Griffith asked about the feedstock and the process for the coal. He wondered if the coal was the right type of material. Mr. Whitham noted that there were feed issues early on. The coal had to be sized right to get residence time up. This is needed to get the system up to temperature. Once the system is running, it is anticipated that the coal feed will not be such an issue.

Mr. Griffith asked what DOE-HQ's view was of the situation. Mr. Cooper replied that there was a lot of cooperation between DOE Idaho and Headquarters. This facility is being brought up and running on a fairly aggressive schedule, and Headquarters recognizes this. One thing learned during the review of the startup issue is that a change was made in the feed to the chamber from the prototype facility that was used to demonstrate the technology. This leads Mr. Cooper to think there may have been a design change that affected the process.

Mr. Preacher asked if DOE was anticipating another step before startup. Mr. Whitham replied that when the facility was cleaned up, it would be flushed with water. Then a simulated product would be processed before the facility goes into full production.

Ms. Karst asked what the plan was to communicate to the public the progress on the startup. Mr. Cooper replied that DOE would be sending a letter to the Governor explaining what has happened. DOE is also preparing information that can be available to the public when questions arise or briefings are conducted.

Ms. Brailsford asked when oxygen to the process would be turned off. Mr. Whitham replied that oxygen would be shut off once steam reforming starts to avoid hydrogen buildup. She asked if this issue was the final issue DOE expected to encounter before the facility could be started up. Mr. Whitham replied that they hoped this was the case, but that it could not be determined with certainty now that no further issues would arise. Mr. Cooper stated that he expects additional problems; however, he does not believe they will be as significant as this one. When this incident happened, IWTU was 143 degrees away from switching to the different coal feed. At that point, DOE would have been in processing mode. He thinks now they are so far into startup that they think the problems will be smaller. The issue occurred the first time the plant was heated up. Ms. Brailsford asked if there were recurring problems identified. Mr. Cooper replied there was a problem with the offgas seals. They were sent back to the vendor to be rebuilt. When they came back, one of the seals still was not fixed because it had been rebuilt incorrectly. Therefore, the same problems could arise, but they will most likely be from different causes.

CAB Work Session

Ms. Karst and Mr. Bohrer provided a review of the CAB Chairs meeting. Ms. Karst noted that there were many good ideas raised by CABs about public outreach activities. She provided examples of newsletters, informational posters, and speaking to groups such as the League of Women Voters. She also noted the distinction between when a citizen is representing him or herself and when a citizen is representing him or herself as a member of the CAB. Mr. Bohrer commented that at Hanford, cleanup decisions are still being made. Many other sites are in the same situation as INL, where most cleanup is progressing. For these sites, including INL, future use and economic issues are of the most concern. He noted that this is somewhat outside the EM mission but is an issue of keen interest to the boards. He felt this was one of the common factors shared between the boards. He also commented on budget issues. He would like to have the discussion about when and how budget issues will affect compliance of DOE sites with their cleanup commitments.

Mr. Bohrer asked if there was anything the CAB could do to respond to the small business initiative of the federal government. Betsy McBride and Mark Lupher volunteered to draft a message for the other CAB members to review. The aim will be to review and finalize the message at the September meeting.

The CAB discussed the September planning and education session and the topics it would like to cover. The CAB would like a survey to be conducted in advance of the September meeting. Harry Griffith commented that open ended questions could be asked about subjects such as goals. An updated survey will be prepared and issued.

Topics identified for the September meeting include WIPP "101," long term stewardship, spent fuel long term strategy, risk register overview, Line Commission, Idaho Settlement Agreement History/Overview, Funding constraints/CWI extension, and types of cap technology for final remediation.

I certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the July 11, 2012 meeting of the Idaho National Laboratory Site Environmental Management Citizens Advisory Board.



Willie Preacher, Chair
Idaho National Laboratory Site Environmental Management Citizens Advisory Board
WP/ph