



Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board

August 21, 2013

Ms. Kathryn Knapp
Environmental Management Operations Support
U.S. Department of Energy, Nevada Field Office
P.O. Box 98518
Las Vegas, NV 89193-8518

SUBJECT: Recommendation Regarding Community Environmental Monitoring Program (Work Plan Item #6)

Dear Ms. Knapp:

The Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board (NSSAB) was asked to provide a recommendation to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) regarding how the Community Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP) could be enhanced to better reflect current missions at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS). In support of this, the DOE provided the NSSAB with a list of questions/ideas for enhancing the CEMP.

As a result of two NSSAB members attending the 2013 CEMP Workshop and thorough NSSAB Full Board discussion, the NSSAB provides the following recommendations to the DOE.

- DOE should continue to fund the CEMP, as it provides peace of mind within communities near the NNSS.
- DOE should continue working with the Community Environmental Monitors (CEMs) to better align the existing CEMP with current National Nuclear Security Administration missions and Environmental Management activities and remediation efforts.
- Regarding CEMP groundwater monitoring, the DOE should :
 - Focus on annual down-gradient water monitoring at the current CEMP stations in Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Tecopa
 - Collect groundwater samples and analyze them with equipment that could detect tritium at levels of 300 picocuries/liter. If tritium is detected, then more sensitive equipment should be used near the station if needed
 - Discontinue monitoring water up-gradient of the NNSS, as water does not flow uphill
- Regarding air monitoring, the DOE should:
 - Eliminate air monitoring at Pioche, Caliente, and Milford and Delta, Utah, for the following reasons:

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Kathleen Bienenstein, Chair
Matthew Clapp
Thomas Fisher, PhD
Arthur Goldsmith
Donna Hruska, Vice Chair
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State of Nevada Division of
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Administration

Barbara Ulmer, Administrator
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Kelly Snyder, DDFO
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- For the past 20 years, CEMP air sampling data have indicated no off-site dose representing a public health threat from past or present NNSS activities
 - Other CEMP monitoring stations are located in closer proximity of the down-wind path of the NNSS
 - Funding could be redirected and utilized by CEMP that provides more value to the community and DOE
- Continue current frequency of monitoring at all other stations even if radioactivity is not detected and activities do not change
- Reevaluate the need for air monitoring every five years
- DOE should not install additional CEMP stations along radioactive waste transportation routes.
- DOE should eliminate the CEMP station in Boulder City as it is inaccessible to the public, not on a transportation route, and provides no benefit to DOE or the community, and relocate this CEMP station to Searchlight, Nevada.
- DOE should replace monitoring equipment with less sensitive/expensive equipment when it needs replacement at active stations.
- DOE should not repair or replace equipment at meteorological-only stations at Nyala, Twin Springs, Stone Cabin, and Medlin's Ranch stations. In the event of equipment failure, the stations should be decommissioned and the parts used for active stations.
- The CEMP website is user friendly for its intended functionality. DOE funds should not be spent to make the CEMP website less "technical-looking." Graphical enhancements are costly and would provide little additional value. Website development would be better spent keeping the website up to date. If QR codes are used in promotional materials for the CEMP website, also include human readable text by the image; therefore <http://cemp.dri.edu> should be printed by the QR code. Metrics should be established to determine a baseline for number of visits to the CEMP website; so the effectiveness of a new program implemented can be determined readily.
- The CEMP brochure is understandable and effectively communicates the program, but should be updated (i.e., email address, number of stations, etc.)
- The CEMP workshop appeared to be at the correct level in terms of training, time, and materials. DOE should reevaluate the workshop format and content every six years.
- DOE should establish performance metrics for the CEMs as a means to measure communication to the public with the goal of increasing public interest and visitations to the CEMP stations.
- DOE should expand the CEMP Workshop audience by inviting local officials, first responders, teachers, and the NSSAB.

DOE asked the NSSAB to provide a recommendation regarding overall funding on the CEMP. The NSSAB does not have enough information to make a recommendation on whether the cost of the CEMP is balanced and funding is well spent.

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The NSSAB appreciates the opportunity for representatives of the Board to attend and observe the CEMP during its 2013 workshop, and provide recommendations on ways to enhance the program to reflect current missions at the NNS. We hope that these recommendations will be beneficial as DOE moves forward in planning for the future direction of the CEMP.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Kathleen L. Bienenstein in black ink.

Kathleen L. Bienenstein, Chair

cc: C. B. Alexander, DOE/HQ (EM-3.2) FORS
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