

Board requests cleanup plan delay

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The Paducah Citizens Advisory Board is pushing the U.S. Department of Energy to request a time extension on waste disposal plans at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant site. The CAB — a stakeholder group providing advice and recommendations to the DOE on environmental remediation, waste management and related matters at the PGDP site — met Thursday and decided to request an extension of 90 to 180 days past an Oct. 20 deadline to submit a plan for waste disposal options.

Thursday's meeting came on the heels of a burial ground subcommittee meeting held Monday. Subcommittee members discussed their desire to extend the deadline with the Environmental Protection Agency and state Division of Water officials. The request is now going to high-ranking DOE officials, who will decide whether to accept it.

Ralph Young, outgoing CAB chairman and newly elected vice chairman, said board members want more time to hear back on responses to a request for offers for redevelopment or uses of site assets. Members want to evaluate their stance on possible disposal options.

"We are still collecting information," Young said.

Thursday marked the CAB's regular monthly meeting. A variety of options — including construction of a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) Cell — are on the table. A CERCLA Cell is an on-site disposal area that could be constructed as part of the ongoing environmental cleanup at the site.

Other options include shipping the waste, which consists of demolition and construction debris and environmental waste, to a landfill in the western U.S.

The CAB's deadline extension recommendation goes to the DOE. If officials agree, they will take it to the state and federal EPA officials, who will decide to extend the deadline or not.

Young said that once the plan kicks off, approval is lengthy with steps that include public comments and reviews from other agencies.

The CAB has not taken an official stance on a potential CERCLA Cell but a proposal that includes five potential locations within the plant site has been discussed.

The United States Enrichment Corporation, which leases the plant from the DOE for uranium enrichment work, announced May 24 that it would cease operations within the year and lay off the majority of the plant's roughly 1,100 workers. The decision accelerated the need for a solid cleanup plan.