



Department of Energy

Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office
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OCT 16 2008

Ms. Bobby Lee
Citizens Advisory Board
111 Memorial Drive
Paducah, Kentucky 42001

PPPO-02-659-08

Dear Ms. Lee:

RESPONSE TO PGDP CAB RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OF DISPOSITION OF RADIOACTIVELY CONTAMINATED NICKEL AT THE EAST TENNESSEE TECHNOLOGY PARK, OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE AND THE PADUCAH GASEOUS DIFFUSION PLANT, PADUCAH, KENTUCKY FOR CONTROLLED RADIOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is in receipt of Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) Consensus Recommendation 08-06, dated July 18, 2008. The CAB recommended the following with regard to the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) and the potential solicitation of nickel:

1. If de minimis levels of nickel contamination can be achieved, it is recommended the moratorium on nickel release be rescinded.
2. DOE should proceed with a Request for Proposal (RFP) for nickel processing. Based upon responses to the RFP, existing technology for nickel decontamination should be assessed and demonstrated.
3. We suggest that DOE release the RFP in draft form and the RFP should incorporate weighting factors to encourage nickel processing in the communities of Paducah and/or Oak Ridge areas.
4. Three alternatives were provided in the Draft EA. It is recommended a fourth alternative be evaluated: Decontamination to Internal Recycle/Storage. DOE should store processed nickel with de minimis levels of contamination, until the moratorium is lifted or until future internal use is identified. The following advantages to this alternative include:
 - a) Nickel is no longer a radiation hazard.
 - b) Storage quantity requirements are reduced: more convenient form (powder, pellet, ball, etc.) for compact storage.
 - c) Addition of valuable nickel stores to National Metals Reserve.
5. If DOE proceeds with the RFP and a specific technology is offered by a successful bidder/vendor, it is recommended a more detailed Environmental Impact Assessment be prepared and submitted for public/community consideration.

In response to CAB recommendation # 1, DOE appreciates your input and recognizes that unrestricted nickel release may be taken under consideration in the future. However, at the present time, unrestricted release of the nickel is not currently considered to be a viable option. As previously communicated, a diverse range of factors affect the feasibility of unrestricted nickel release, including regulatory impacts and approvals; stakeholder reactions (e.g., comments

from the environmental groups); industry concerns (including market price and conditions), and Departmental policy.

In response to CAB recommendation # 2, DOE's proposed action, as discussed with the CAB during previous CAB meetings, is to proceed with the sale/solicitation of the nickel, as outlined in the recently published EA. The final decision on disposition of the nickel must await finalization of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

In response to CAB recommendation # 3, if sale of the nickel is selected at the conclusion of the NEPA process, DOE plans to issue a draft sale/solicitation agreement, including weighting factors, to the public for review in early calendar year 2009.

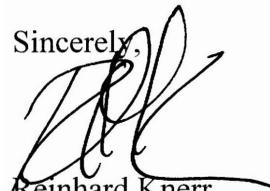
In response to CAB recommendation # 4, DOE believes that the advantages listed for a fourth alternative are not supported. Specifically, the nickel does not currently present a radiation hazard due to the current storage arrangement for the material, and the nickel is already in the form (ingots) that allows for the most compact storage.

In response to CAB recommendation # 5, DOE will review the selected process and sites to ensure that they are adequately covered by the scope of the existing EA.

DOE appreciates the continued interest and support by the CAB for the nickel disposition project and will continue to keep you apprised of any significant developments in the project. We thank you for your input and for your continued support as we continue our efforts to remediate PGDP.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Rob Seifert at (270) 441-6823.

Sincerely,



Reinhard Knerr
Paducah Site Lead
Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office

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