

TRANSPORTATION WORKING GROUP (TWG) MEETING  
State of Nevada Grant Sawyer Building  
4th Floor Conference Room 4401  
555 E. Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89101  
September 15, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.

TWG Mission – Provide a forum for information exchange for the Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) analysis of low-level and mixed low-level radioactive waste transportation to the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS), formerly known as the Nevada Test Site.

Present:

Marta Adams, NV Attorney General Office (Video)

Kathy Bienenstein, Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board

Nohemi Brewer, National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office (NNSA/NSO)

Roger Buehrer, Southern Nevada Water Authority and Las Vegas Valley Water District

Daniel Burns, NV Division of Emergency Management (Video)

Kevin Campbell, State of Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP)

Andy Chaney, Southern Nevada Health District

Linda Cohn, NNSA/NSO

Frank Di Sanza NNSA/NSO

Sandy Enyeart, Science Applications International Corporation

Randy Fultz, City of Las Vegas

Ish Garza, City of North Las Vegas

Sydney Gordon, National Security Technologies (NSTec)

Vaughn Higbee, Lincoln County

John Klenke, Nye County

Oh-Sang Kwon, City of Las Vegas

Jeff MacDougall, NDEP

Scott Page, NDEP

Gene Pasinski, Clark County Nuclear Waste Division

John Penuelas, City of Henderson Traffic Engineer

Jim Przybylski, Transportation Management, NSTec

Cheng Shih, City of Las Vegas

Mike Skougard, Potomac Hudson Engineering (PHE)

Joe Strolin, NV Agency for Nuclear Projects (Video)

Mike West, PHE

## **Opening Remarks.**

Frank Di Sanza called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. by welcoming everyone and reviewing last month's meeting. Meeting attendees introduced themselves and their agencies.

Frank provided the dates and locations for the upcoming Public Hearings on the Draft SWEIS.

### **1. TWG Review of 1997 Mitigation Action Plan**

Frank Di Sanza identified the handouts that were provided and emphasized the significance of the first paragraph of the Mitigation Plan.

The following update to the commitments listed in the 1997 report was provided:

- A comprehensive study of the potential social and cultural effects on American Indian Tribes from the transport of low-level radioactive waste and low-level mixed waste to the NNSS was completed and consultation was conducted with the Consolidated Groups of Tribal Organizations.
- A safe-haven (secure area) was established inside the NNSS Main Gate in the event a shipment is in distress. A trailer staging area has also been established at the NNSS, which allows carriers to drop shipment trailers that arrive outside the customary NNSS hours of operation so that they can be shuttled into the disposal area on the next NNSS business day.
- An annual waste transportation report, identifying carriers, sources and destinations of each shipment, the number and volume of shipments, highway and rail routes used, incidents/accidents data, and an evaluation of each shipping campaign is prepared and is available on the NNSA/NSO web site.
- The Transportation Protocol Working Group was successful in getting a majority of participant agency concerns and questions addressed through status meetings and personal communication.
- The coordination with local emergency-response agencies and the inability to surplus federal equipment directly to local agencies was the driving force for establishing an emergency preparedness grant program that supports Nevada county emergency agency activities.

Also discussed was the 1996 Transportation Working Group white paper submitted as a comment on the 1996 Final Environmental Impact Statement. This paper was instrumental in the formulation of the Mitigation Action Plan

Frank Di Sanza is hopeful that this review will help organizations to prepare their comments on the Draft SWEIS. Randy Fultz, City of Las Vegas, stated that it was exactly what his organization was looking for and gave a clearer idea of what the mitigations were for transportation impacts.

**Question:** Was the movement of special nuclear material and weapons included in the 1996 study and is that movement primarily to the Site?

**Answer:** The 1996 EIS addressed the transportation of special nuclear material associated with Defense Programs activities. The 1996 analysis was not as integrated as the transportation analysis contained in the Draft SWEIS. The new analysis looks at cumulative and aggregated impacts.

**Question:** What is the difference between the No Action Alternative and Reduced Operations Alternative for special nuclear material shipments?

**Answer:** A reduced number of shipments reflects the lower level of experiments taking place under the Reduced Operations Alternative.

**Question:** Could there be cases where radioactive waste goes through downtown?

**Answer:** Transportation analysis in the Draft SWEIS analyzes multiple waste transportation routes through the Las Vegas valley, but DOE's current policy is to avoid the Las Vegas metropolitan area, Hoover Dam, and the new O'Callahan-Tillman Bridge when shipping low-level radioactive waste to the NNSS. Any change to the current policy on preferred waste transportation routes will be made outside of the SWEIS process. There will be additional meetings with the state of Nevada and the local governmental agencies before any such decision is made.

**Question:** Did the risk analysis include nuclear material or only waste?

**Answer:** It included everything. All material was included in the analysis.

**Question:** The purpose of the SWEIS is not to identify preferred transportation routes?

**Answer:** That is correct. The purpose of the transportation analysis is to disclose potential impacts in the Draft SWEIS. Preferred transportation routing decisions will be made in consultation with the state of Nevada and documented in the NNSS Waste Acceptance Criteria.

**Question:** What is the transportation mechanism and security associated with special nuclear material transport?

**Answer:** Special nuclear material is transported by DOE's Safe Secure Transport organization. This type of transportation utilizes robust shipping vehicles and provides an armed escort with each shipment.

## 2. **Discussion of Process Used to Placard Radioactive Waste Shipments**

Frank Di Sanza introduced Jim Przybylski, who manages the National Security Technologies, LLC (NSTec) Transportation Management Organization. Jim spoke about Department of Transportation shipment placarding requirements and pointed out federal transportation language regarding radioactive materials. His presentation can be viewed on the Nevada Site Office Transportation Working Group website at <http://www.nv.energy.gov/emprograms/transportationWG.aspx>.

**Question:** Is there immersion testing for certain types of radioactive material packaging?

**Answer:** Yes, immersion testing is part of the packaging certification process for selected nuclear materials.

**Question:** What about the package that leaked?

**Answer:** The packaging design was correct, but the welding closure on the box was incorrect. As a result, condensation that collected inside the box leaked out of the box. An aggressive corrective action program was put in place to inspect empty boxes, including all welds, and to put absorbent material in all containers to collect any condensation.

**Question:** Labels go on packages, placards go on trucks?

**Answer:** Yes

**Question:** Is there a danger if drums are not labeled?

**Answer:** Yes, drums without proper labels are a safety concern to workers and first responders due to uncertainty regarding the actual contents.

**Question:** The handout mentions high-level waste. What is the difference between low-level waste and high-level waste?

**Answer:** Low-level radioactive waste is defined as radioactive waste that is not high-level waste, spent nuclear fuel, transuranic waste, or by-product material such as uranium mill tailings. High-level radioactive waste is spent (irradiated) nuclear fuel or waste resulting from solvent extraction systems in reactor fuel processing facilities. So, the answer to this question is, if the waste is spent nuclear fuel or waste resulting from solvent extraction systems in a reactor fuel processing facility, then it is high-level waste and not low-level waste.

**Question:** How many shipments came to the NNSS without a Class 7 placard?

**Answer:** In Fiscal Year 2010, 1,461 shipments out of 3,408 had Class 7 placards. So far in Fiscal Year 2011, 1,669 out of 2,413 have had a Class 7 placard.

**Question:** Why is DOE evaluating routes through the Las Vegas Valley if the consequence is severe and impacts are high to the metropolitan area?

**Answer:** The results of transportation analysis indicate that the impacts are extremely low, even if there is an accident. The purpose of the transportation analysis in the Draft SWEIS is to define potential impacts from reasonably projected transportation routes to the NNSS.

**Comments:**

1. Based upon the transportation scenarios, there doesn't appear to be any severe impacts, but stormwater is not addressed. If there is an accident and one of the containers leaks, material could get into the stormwater system, which eventually flows into Lake Mead. If this happens, it could get into the Las Vegas drinking water. This was not addressed in the transportation analysis. Also, impacts associated with accidents involving special nuclear material were not addressed.
2. The County does not agree with the City's assessment. The risk is too high. The population cannot be moved quickly in the event of a major transportation accident.
3. We need to have a separate workshop discussion so impacts can be further analyzed.

4. Public perception will force economic problems; for example, if an accident occurs within the Las Vegas metropolitan area, it will be picked up by CNN and tourists will reconsider coming to Las Vegas.

5. City of Las Vegas agrees with County that the economy would be affected.

3. **Next Meeting**

Frank would like to have the next meeting consist of workshops and panels. Panels would include representatives from the state of Nevada, Boulder City, Henderson, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Clark County, Nye County and Lincoln County. Each member would have approximately ten minutes to provide their thoughts, which would then be followed up with an open discussion. Afterwards, the group would break into workshops to make recommendations. Frank will put together more of an annotated outline and will get it distributed. After input is provided, plans will be made accordingly.

**Suggestion:** Health Physicists should be present at open houses to talk directly with the public.

**Comment:** Have someone familiar with risk analysis available.

**Comment:** The State would like to have representatives on the panel. Irene Navis should also be contacted regarding perceptions of economic terms.

**Comment:** Specific questions can be e-mailed to [NEPA@nv.doe.gov](mailto:NEPA@nv.doe.gov)

The meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.