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Sent: Friday, February 24, 2023 9:26 PM
To: Kenney, James, ENV; Kerster, Courtney, GOV; Baizel, Bruce, ENV
Cc: LYNNES, KATHRYN D CIV USAF HAF RMG DET 11/IEE; LUSTER, JEFFREY P SES USAF HAF SAF/SAF/GCN
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Key Notes from SAF/IEE and NMED Meeting on 21 Feb 23
Attachments: Key Notes from NMED SAF-IEE Mtg 21 Feb 2023 v2.docx

Jim, Courtney, Bruce, and Sidney

Thanks again for the time we shared virtually on Feb 21st. It was an absolute pleasure to meet all of you and to start our journey together. Please find attached a draft capture of key points from our discussion. Feel free to provide any comments or feedback. I am looking forward to planning our three-day working meeting in New Mexico. I share your optimism that we can work together to find a way to implement our shared goals for being good environmental stewards of DAF installations in New Mexico.

I genuinely appreciated your comment about "no surprises". In that spirit, I would like to bring two time-sensitive issues to your attention regarding Bulk Fuels Facility work plans. I just learned about these today (Feb 24th), even though one of these issues appears to have been raised several months ago.

- The Hazardous Waste Bureau (HWB) issued a letter to Kirtland Air Force Base on September 16, 2022 requesting a revised soil vapor monitoring work plan by March 10, 2023.
- HWB also issued a letter on January 19, 2023 to Kirtland Air Force Base requesting a Revised Groundwater Monitoring Work Plan/Active Pump Installation Work Plan by March 06, 2023.

I understand the two letters seek revisions to the NMED-approved (existing) work plans that would essentially discard all groundwater and soil vapor data collected since 2015. My team believes the HWB's requested course of action would significantly delay cleanup completion, and erode community trust in both the Air Force and NMED since we have been working under the previously approved plans for years while keeping the public informed of progress.

I am confident this is an issue we can resolve over the course of our two upcoming meetings. I would appreciate if you would consider advising your staff to grant extensions to both of these submittals until September 30, 2023 to give us a chance to work together, and ideally find common ground. In the meantime, Kirtland Air Force Base would continue to monitor soil vapor and groundwater under the existing NMED approved work plans and report the data as required.

Please let me know what you think about the request above, and if you have any comments about the attached notes. I am looking forward to getting together in person within the next few months.

v/r,
Nancy

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**Key Points from Meeting between
Secretary Kenney, Director New Mexico Environment Department (NMED); and
Nancy Balkus, Air Force Deputy Assistant Secretary, Environment, Safety and Infrastructure (SAF/IEE)
21 February 2023**

Attendees:

New Mexico

Secretary Kenney, Director NMED
Courtney Kerster, Senior Advisor and Director of Federal Affairs, Office of the Governor
Sidney Lienemann, Deputy Cabinet Secretary of Administration, NMED
Mike Descini, Deputy Director, Federal Affairs for the Office of the Governor
Bruce Baizel, General Counsel, NMED
Christopher Atencio, Deputy General Counsel, NMED

Air Force

Nancy Balkus, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Environment, Safety and Infrastructure SAF/IEE
Jeffrey Luster, Deputy General Counsel, Installations, Energy & Environment
Kathryn (Kate) Lynnes, Senior Technical Adviser, environmental Restoration

Background

After general introductions from attendees, Ms. Balkus described the experience she brings to her position as Deputy Assistant Secretary and cited significant current challenges to the Air Force mission. The Air Force thus needs to ensure that installations are resilient, optimized and operationally efficient to respond to these challenges and permit Airmen and Guardians to effectively execute the mission.

Secretary Kenney acknowledged how New Mexico values the economic investment the military brings to the state and good stewardship of Air Force Bases. He noted there was good progress at Kirtland during the last administration under Colonel Miller's leadership. He expressed optimism that a "less than positive" situation at Cannon and Holloman could be turned around, and the hope we can capitalize on having new people in key positions and new opportunities. Specifically, he noted his desire to sustain relationships and try to be more facilitative of what we can mutually accomplish. We don't disagree on what we want to do – just how to get there.

Common Goals/Interests

Ms. Balkus noted the four key NMED tenets of science, innovation, collaboration and compliance. There are cross-overs between those tenets and core Air Force values of trust; respect (all contributions from diverse and inclusive team); empowerment (to think critically and innovate in quest for evidence-based solution); transparency in communications; and unwavering care for people. We have a shared responsibility and our relationships are interdependent. She would like our goal setting to be more focused and address how the AF and NMED interacts (and how often).

Secretary Kenney emphasized collaboration as a goal, noting NMED does have some nondiscretionary duties in carrying out federal programs. He has genuine optimism we have overlapping goals/interests. The values above should form the norms of how NMED and the Air Force work together.

Ms. Balkus suggested setting up an end state would be good, for example, “efficient and effective cleanup”. Secretary Kenney liked “efficient and effective cleanup”, and noted he wants the stated values to drive what the “runway” looks like. Both recognize this has to be worked in the context of litigation, and think it is still possible. Innovation, potentially with private partners, may play a role in getting to the end state. Getting technical folks into discussions earlier would be beneficial.

Ideas raised for further consideration: EPA role/assistance; how to work this process with DOJ and the attorneys engaged in the litigation (need mutual understanding of what can and can’t be discussed and/or compromised in that context); look at finding examples where we have made progress to apply elsewhere.

Proposed Next Steps

Meetings: Secretary Kenney thinks there are bright spots of things we can agree on. He recommended a productive use of time as having the respective teams meet face-to-face over two 3 day sessions (split into individual camps as needed and then coming back together): one session in New Mexico (of course, accompanied by fabulous food), and one session in DC. Those sessions can include “what went wrong” previously so it can be addressed as well as what is needed to develop/enhance a positive working relationship going forward.

Potential syncs: Albuquerque, NM - April or May (May more likely because of travel commitments)
Washington, DC (by Fall 2023)

Scope: NMED interest is predominantly PFAS at Cannon/Holloman; Secretary Kenney recognizes the commitments made at Kirtland and the need to continue forward momentum there; meetings should have a 3-base focus (some issues arise due to lack of continuity in personnel on both sides). Intent is not for initial discussion to raise other New Mexico sites.

Communication: Key for both is “no surprises”; both are committed to devote resources to this effort because it is important for New Mexico and the Air Force.