

Allen, Pam, NMENV

From: Maestas, Ricardo, NMENV
Sent: Wednesday, June 25, 2014 3:51 PM
To: Allen, Pam, NMENV
Subject: FW: WIPP
Attachments: TO NMED 031214.doc; CARD WIPP Concers for Sec Flynn,3,14.docx

Email and att. for March

-----Original Message-----

From: Kieling, John, NMENV
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2014 12:28 PM
To: Kliphuis, Trais, NMENV; Smith, Coleman, NMENV; Maestas, Ricardo, NMENV; Holmes, Steve, NMENV
Subject: FW: WIPP

FYI...

-----Original Message-----

From: Kendall, Jeff, NMENV
Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2014 10:25 AM
To: Kliphuis, Trais, NMENV; Kieling, John, NMENV
Subject: FW: WIPP

Trais,

Can you and John coordinate comparing our questions to the first attached list? It seems to me that these are very similar to the questions we have been asking.

Also, can either of you inform me as to the dates that were decided on for the first report. That is, what dates will we be getting data for in the first report due Saturday.

Jeff

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-----Original Message-----

From: Flynn, Ryan, NMENV

Sent: Thursday, March 13, 2014 10:19 AM

To: Kendall, Jeff, NMENV; Kliphuis, Trais, NMENV; Kieling, John, NMENV; Skibitski, Thomas, NMENV

Cc: Tongate, Butch, NMENV; Blaine, Tom, NMENV

Subject: FW: WIPP

All,

Attached is information I received from the NGO groups. I would like you to parse through these requests and determine what we should forward along to DOE. If we have already requested information that they are requesting, then we do not need to duplicate that request. In addition, if the information they are requesting is not germane to the present issues or will not be productive, then we should discuss whether or not we want to pass it along. For all other information, we should pass this along to DOE.

Is this OK?

-Ryan

Ryan Flynn

Secretary

New Mexico Environment Department

-----Original Message-----

From: Don Hancock [<mailto:sricdon@earthlink.net>]

Sent: Wednesday, March 12, 2014 9:16 PM

To: Flynn, Ryan, NMENV

Cc: Janet Greenwald; Scott Kovac

Subject: WIPP

Thanks very much for the meeting yesterday and your willingness to continue discussions.

Thank you also for agreeing to pass on or support information requests.

Attached are my requests and CARD's concerns from Janet Greenwald.

INFORMATION REQUESTS

1. Description and diagram of the ventilation flow in the underground at 11 p.m. on Friday, November 14.
2. Monitoring data in the Waste Handling Building on February 5 before the fire, during the fire, and after the fire was determined to be out and on February 14 at 11 pm, during the radiation event until 15:00 on February 15, on February 16 and on March 11.
3. Location(s) on February 14 and early February 15 of the 13 workers on the site.
4. Location(s) on February 15 of the additional four workers that have tested positive for internal radiation contamination.
5. For any workers that in the future test positive, the location(s) they were in on the surface.
6. Where were the locations that workers “sheltered in place” on February 14-15 (and if there have been subsequent sheltering in place).
7. Description of the specific data and testing that was done on February 14 and 15 that were the basis for the statements that:
“no personnel contamination has been identified;”
“employees were cleared by radiological control technicians prior to departure;”
“Multiple perimeter monitors at the WIPP boundary have confirmed there is no danger to human health or the environment;
“no surface contamination has been found on any equipment, personnel, or facilities;”
“WIPP’s system of air monitors and protective filtration system continue to function as designed.”
8. Data on the range of amounts (highest and lowest) of internal contamination in urine samples and fecal samples of the 17 workers that have tested positive.
9. Data on the locations of and types of materials that are estimated to generated the 200 cubic meters of derived waste
10. Data on sampling for VOCs and RCRA constituents on February 14 and since.
11. Information on the most recent testing of the HEPA filters and when they were last changed before February 5.
12. The results of thorough screening of the vehicles, residences, and family members of the 17 workers that have tested positive for internal contamination, and for those of any workers that test positive in the future.

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CARD Concerns Surrounding WIPP Radiation Accident for Secretary Flynn

As a number of other representatives of watch dog groups have, I have watched over a period of time as safety features at WIPP and at the generator sites have been sacrificed to expediency while WIPP takes on more projects such as the underground experiments concerning high level waste and attempts to expand its mission. I have spoken out against these tendencies. Now, my main concern is the safety of the workers and the surrounding communities and the safety of the waste that remains at WIPP above and below ground. I believe that these safety issues deserve all of our attention and therefore I would like to see the current permit modifications proposed by DOE put off or denied until we can make sure that no more harm to people or the environment will occur at WIPP.

My first concern is the exposure of workers and the spread of that contamination. I do not think that it is possible that workers breathed in radio nuclides without having their skin, hair, clothes and shoes contaminated; if the detection equipment at the WIPP site is not showing this contamination then something is wrong with the equipment or the calibration of the equipment. Unless workers showered and changed clothes leaving their contaminated clothes and shoes to be washed at the facility, they have taken contamination into the community. My priority would be to test the environment and internal contamination of pregnant women and young children in the homes of those workers; the next would be to check the environment and internal contamination of pregnant women and children in any places where contaminated workers might have gone. The fetus and the young child are more susceptible to the effects of radioactive contamination than adults (IEER, Healthy from the Start). New Mexico has a rising birth death rate, a third coming from birth defects, among mostly the white population according to a NM Health Department press release last autumn. The birth death rates in the states around us are falling. Though there is no known connection to radiation exposure, we should err on the side of caution while the Health Department looks into this issue.

My second most pressing concern is the waste itself. When I first became interested in WIPP in the early 1980s and visited the Environmental Evaluation

Group, the independent, technical WIPP watchdog, I was shown pictures of waste drums which had exploded in transit. The action of radio nuclides on organics results in production of hydrogen and methane gases, as I am sure you know. I followed the process which mandated the venting of drums and then an unvented over pack and then the number of days that the vented drums could stay in the unvented over pack. I urge you to oppose any variation to the 60 day limit now allowable without vacuuming and to encourage more frequently vacuuming if possible. Since it is not possible to keep the waste safe in its over pack without vacuuming, workers will continue to work in the waste handling building. I urge you to do everything in your power to determine whether the WH building is a safe environment for workers and if not to make sure that it will become so. If that takes workers wearing protective gear then they should be mandated to do so. Workers should not be given a choice as to whether they should or should not wear protective gear if the situation calls for protective gear; subtle management and peer pressure could lead them to a non conservative course of action.

Since there has recently been an unexplained fire at WIPP with a possible failure of fire suppression systems and also since in the original risk analysis process it was determined that fire is the greatest risk factor at the facility, drums should not be left for long periods of time in the WH building. The office building, a few feet from the WH building is a possible fire hazard according to expert testimony during WIPP's original permitting process with a possibility of flash over, again according to expert testimony. Waste is more safely kept in over packs in the parking lot (if the over packs are vacuumed out in a timely manner).

I receive calls from the communities surrounding WIPP and also calls from as far away as Lubbock, Texas. Community members, and/or reporters are concerned about the spread of contamination to their communities. We need accurate meteorological data during the 15 hour 'incident' coupled with realistic estimates of contaminant levels. Lastly, what would give watch dog groups such as my own and community members more confidence in the investigation of the extent and content of the contamination would be a New Mexico Environment Department presence in Carlsbad during the upcoming months.