

Colorado Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission

June 29, 2005

**To: Program Manager
Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives
and the Department of Defense**
**Re: Design Options for The Destruction of
Chemical Weapons Stored at the Pueblo
Chemical Depot**

Summary

The Colorado Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission (CAC) and the Pueblo community are committed to the safe and effective destruction of chemical weapons. The use of neutralization/biotreatment, with as much of the process completed on site, remains, in the opinion of the CAC and a majority of the citizens in the Pueblo community, the safest and most publicly acceptable method for the destruction of the weapons stored at the Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD). We still believe that if the program can proceed expeditiously that there is a strong possibility that the United States treaty obligations concerning chemical weapons destruction will be met. We appreciate the efforts of ACWA and Bechtel Pueblo Team (Bechtel) to work with the community toward these goals. We also support the efforts of ACWA and Bechtel to contain the costs of the facility without jeopardizing the safety of the workers, the community or the environment.

The CAC and the Design Options Working Group (DOWG), established by the CAC, have reviewed numerous options proposed by ACWA and Bechtel to reduce the costs associated with the construction, operation and closure of the PCAPP facility. The DOWG met weekly from mid-April through June 2005 to study and discuss these options and ultimately to make recommendations to the CAC. The full report of the DOWG is attached to this letter. In addition, numerous meetings were held throughout the Pueblo community to discuss the options and answer questions. The recommendations of the CAC and the DOWG reflect the comments that were received from the community and have been incorporated into this report.

The CAC, in consultation with ACWA and Bechtel, continues to support cost savings measures that have and will continue to increase the safety and efficiency of the facility and program while decreasing costs

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These are:

1. Revised acquisition strategy/contracting approach.
2. Accelerated environmental permitting.
3. Local recycling of metal parts.
4. Support for Bechtel to incorporate numerous trade studies into their design. These trade studies include:
 - Trade Study #5: "Reduce Energetics Neutralization Reactor to Two Holding Tanks"
 - Trade Study #6: "Optimize Agent Neutralization Reactors and Tankage"
 - Trade Study #7: "Optimize Space in Munitions Washout System Area"
 - Trade Study #8: "Eliminate Hydrolysate Cooling System"
 - Trade Study #9: "Eliminate Forklift Operation from Energetics Processing Building to Agent Processing Building"
 - Trade Study #11: "Replacement of Induction Heating by Resistance Heating"
 - Trade Study #13: "Cascading Off-Gas Treatment System Condensates"

The Colorado Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission, in consultation with the DOWG and the community, are persuaded that while there may be viable options that should be explored further for off-site shipment as described in the DOWG recommendations, the transportation of hydrolysate off-site is not an option that the CAC and the community can recommend at this time due to many unresolved issues. We respectfully request that the Program Manager for Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives and the Department of Defense adopt and follow the recommendations of the CAC and the Pueblo community to implement the options proposed in this report.

Background

In July 2003 the CAC made several recommendations to ACWA and DoD that are very similar to the current recommendations. The 2003 recommendations supported the off-site shipment of non-agent contaminated dunnage, and the off-site shipment of propellant provided that suitable methodologies could be developed to prove that the dunnage was non-agent contaminated and that the propellants were non-agent contaminated and stable. Ample evidence was available at that time to justify the conclusion that off-site management of these wastes would result in improved worker safety, reduced pollution and/or improved process reliability when compared with on-site management. The CAC did not support the off-site shipment of agent hydrolysate. The CAC continues to support these recommendations in 2005. The DOWG and the CAC have heard several new proposals for off-site shipment of additional waste streams, but have been given insufficient information about these options and their impacts to justify expanded off-site shipment recommendations at this time. The CAC has received preliminary information about a methodology for determining agent contamination in dunnage and energetics that has been developed and is in the process of being verified.

Concerns about Off-Site Shipment

The off-site shipment of any of the potential waste streams resulting from the design options developed for PCAPP is problematic and of concern to the CAC for several reasons.

1. Since the host communities and associated transportation routes will not be identified according to current plans until the design is more complete, assessing the potential political reaction from other communities affected by plans to move wastes associated with chemical weapons is impossible at this point. Given the recent experience of the Newport Chemical Depot and other Department of Defense and Energy sites attempting to ship wastes, as well as similar experiences involving high profile private sector wastes, it seems clear that acceptance issues could pose real threats to completing the project in Pueblo if changes in the original design are made presuming that off-site shipment can be accomplished. These issues

need to be considered if off-site treatment options are proposed. The community concerns and delays have the potential to reach beyond the control of the parties currently engaged in the process (DOD, ACWA, the State of Colorado and the Pueblo community), who have the most to gain from an expeditious process. Host communities and communities along transportation routes have little to gain from an expeditious process, and potentially more to gain from delaying the process if they have concerns (legitimate or not) about the waste streams from PCAPP entering or passing through their communities.

2. While it is still not entirely clear how much of the redesign will need to be re-permitted by the State of Colorado as a result of the design changes, there are some aspects of the redesign concept, including early enhanced reconfiguration and major design alterations that may result in significant permitting delays.
3. Pueblo has worked with ACWA and DOD to select an acceptable treatment process that would contain costs, be safe and acceptable to the citizens of Pueblo, and not burden other communities with wastes associated with the project. To consider significant design changes in order to facilitate off-site shipment now would be going back on some of the original principles Pueblo and its stakeholders negotiated, in good faith with DOD and ACWA. It invites problems that neither Pueblo nor the nation deserve and almost guarantees that the chemical weapons stored in Pueblo will not be destroyed in time to meet the extended 2012 Chemical Weapons Convention treaty deadline.

Additional Recommendations

1. Contingency plans need to be developed in the event that planned off-site shipment of any of the waste streams becomes unfeasible for any reason (e.g., cost, budget decisions, political obstacles or legal roadblocks).
2. During the time it will take to redesign a smaller PCAPP facility, ACWA and Bechtel should begin to assess the political feasibility of off-site treatment options. While the CAC recognizes that a final decision on where to ship the wastes cannot be made until the design is more complete and a competitive bid process has taken place, ACWA and Bechtel need to work with the CAC to determine if there are current, proposed TSDFs that may not be viable because of public concerns raised in potential host communities, along potential transportation routes or elsewhere. If there are potential issues with community acceptance, the parties should work to address those concerns up-front. If these concerns cannot be resolved or pose significant delays to the project in Pueblo, the contingency plans should be pursued. In addition, the CAC should be involved in the RFP development process to select the TSDFs to address the concerns of burdening another community with Pueblo's waste.
3. The CAC needs to continue to be involved in the redesign effort, possibly in a manner similar to the CATT process used in the ACWA Dialogue.

Conclusion

The CAC and the Pueblo community are grateful to ACWA and Bechtel for their long-standing commitment to transparency and cooperative decision-making, and for their willingness to work with the public concerning design options that could result in cost savings at the PCAPP facility. We understand that ACWA is currently operating under funding constraints that require the program to consider a design that includes off-site shipment, although many in the community do not agree with those constraints. We pledge that we will continue to work with ACWA and Bechtel in the future as designs are finalized and decisions are made. The CAC and DOWG have carefully reviewed these options and believe that we have made thoughtful recommendations that are in the best interests of the community and the ACWA program, especially given the lack of detail available on the proposed design changes. We realize and understand that it is important that all parties involved in the destruction of the chemical weapons stored at PCD work together to understand their mission in this important national program. This goal continues to be uppermost in our minds, as we work together.

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Pueblo is unified in its desire to support the Depot in completion of its final mission, the destruction of the chemical weapons stored at PCD. This is a mission of national and global importance that will make this country and the world a safer place for all of us. We pledge our cooperation with the ACWA program and Bechtel throughout the destruction process so that the Pueblo community will become a better place in which to live and work.

Sincerely,

John Klomp, Chair
Colorado Citizens' Advisory Commission