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**Kentucky Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission (CAC) and  
Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board (CDCAB) Meeting  
Summary of Action Items and Discussions  
Sept. 15, 2022  
Eastern Kentucky University  
Richmond, Kentucky**

**Attendees**

**CAC:** David Davis (online, for Jeremy Slinker), Diane Kerby, Dr. Doug Hindman, Harry Moberly, George Ridings, David Stipes, April Webb (for Tammi Hudson) and Craig Williams

**CDCAB:** Steve Bullard, Dr. Candace Coyle, David Davis (online, for Jeremy Slinker), Jim Davis, Joe Elliott (for Col. Brett Ayvazian), Jeanne Hibberd, Dr. Doug Hindman, Ron Hink, Leslie Kaylor, Diane Kerby, Tara Long, Darcy Maupin, Lt. Col. Tyler McKee, Harry Moberly, Randy Neeley, Stephanie Nelson (for U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell), Craig Shockley (for U.S. Rep. Andy Barr), Mica Sims (online, for U.S. Sen. Rand Paul), David Stipes, Judge Executive Reagan Taylor, April Webb (for Tammi Hudson), and Craig Williams

**Media Attendees:**

*The Richmond Register:* Blake Vickers  
*WEKU-FM:* Stu Johnson (online)

**Meeting Synopsis**

The meeting provided information on the following:

- Remarks from the Program Executive Officer
- Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) Project Update
- Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (KDEP) Permitting Updates

## **Meeting Summary Structure**

This meeting summary is not intended to be a verbatim record of conversations; instead, it will provide an overview of the discussions and action items of government representatives and various members of the CAC and CDCAB. Key action items identified in the meeting and a synopsis of the major questions and comments discussed during the various updates are noted below. Copies of slides and documents presented during the meeting can be obtained from the Blue Grass Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office (ORO) at (859) 626-8944 or bgoutreach@iem.com.

## **Action Items**

None.

## **Outline of Key Issues and Discussions**

### ***Welcome and Introductions – Sarah Marko, Communications Manager, ORO***

Marko performed a roll call, welcomed the attendees, provided live streaming information and reviewed the meeting agenda.

### ***Opening Remarks – Doug Hindman, Chair, CAC, and Reagan Taylor and Craig Williams, Co-Chairs, CDCAB***

Hindman welcomed attendees to the meeting and welcomed David Stipes as an official member of the CAC.

Taylor thanked meeting attendees and those who were involved in the annual Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program exercise. He said he loved seeing all the different entities coming together to make sure the community is prepared.

Williams said he was glad to see everyone and provided an update on U.S. Rep. Andy Barr's amendment to the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). He said the amendment will direct the Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD) to do a feasibility study for future uses of the BGCAPP footprint. He was on a call with Barr's and U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell's staff and was informed the NDAA has been usurped by a continuing resolution associated with that act. Williams said this means the NDAA will not become effective in its anticipated time frame of late September (fiscal year 2023 begins Oct. 1, 2022) and it may not get passed until sometime in December, so the Barr amendment would not be enforceable until the NDAA is passed. He noted in context of the regulations surrounding a continuing resolution, funds not appropriated in the previous year cannot be expended on anything not contained in the previous year's act, so even if everyone wanted to move ahead with the study it would not be possible due to the funds not being available. He said this pushes back doing the study in a reasonable time frame

to not knowing when it will happen, so they are looking at other ways to execute the study in some form or fashion.

Marko then noted the following action items from the June 8, 2022, CAC/CDCAB meeting:

Action Item	Steps Taken	Date/Status
Provide an update on staffing reduction timeline for coming years.	Ron Hink provided information in the BGCAPP update presentation, below.	Complete.
Assess proposed 2023 CAC/CDCAB meeting dates provided to members in attendance and provide feedback on any conflicts – otherwise, these dates will become final as of the Sept. 14, 2022, meeting.	No comments on the proposed dates were received at the meeting.	Complete.
Explore changing next CAC/CDCAB meeting date to avoid conflicting with Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP) exercise on the same day.	The meeting date was changed.	Complete.

### Key Updates

***Remarks from the Program Executive Officer – Michael Abaie, Program Executive Officer, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA)***

Abaie said it was great to be with the group online, as he could not be there in person. He noted significant progress since the last meeting in the start of the GB nerve agent rocket destruction campaign, which had a slow and deliberate ramp-up as the team adjusted to a different nerve agent and condition of the GB rockets versus the VX rockets. Abaie said the team has done a fantastic job in the adjustment and has destroyed more than 5% of the GB rocket stockpile. He said the Static Detonation Chamber (SDC) 2000 is also coming up to speed and he hopes to have it operating by the end of the calendar year to destroy overpacked GB rockets. Abaie then said the team continues to do a lot of closure planning and he is looking forward to meeting with the new Closure Working Group (CWG) in early 2023. He said the team is doing tremendous work and he is proud of the progress being made.

**BGCAPP Project Update – Dr. Candace Coyle, Site Project Manager, BGCAPP, and Ron Hink, Project Manager, BPBG**

***Slides of this presentation may be obtained by contacting the ORO at (859) 626-8944 or [bgoutreach@iem.com](mailto:bgoutreach@iem.com).***

Coyle said it was good to see everyone in person and she appreciates everyone coming to the meeting. She said there had been a lot of changes since the last meeting, noting the start of the GB rocket campaign and the destruction of 50% of the chemical agent in the stockpile in Kentucky. She said the team is on track to meet the Sept. 30, 2023, treaty commitment date. Coyle pointed out the plant has gone through four campaigns in fewer than three years and applauded Hink, his team and project partners for the 77-day changeover period from VX rockets to GB rockets when it was originally planned to be 180 days. She said the GB rocket campaign started July 6, with the formal declaration on July 5. She said movement of the first munitions to the plant occurred June 20 to be ready before the Independence Day holiday, and said there was good collaboration and partnering with the Blue Grass Chemical Activity for that action. Coyle noted the slow and deliberate ramp-up and turned the topic over to Hink, who said the first two months were slower than expected due to the use of a lot of caustic solution during the changeover, which caused more damage to the equipment than anticipated, and they had to tune for the GB rockets, which were a little different from the VX rockets and the equipment needed some adjustment. He said they are gaining some momentum, with 185 rockets being processed in one day earlier. He said he thinks destruction of 200-plus rockets a day is achievable, but so far, the challenge is repeat good days. He said they are showing progress toward that goal.

Coyle then discussed the open public comment period for a permit modification request to allow changing the monitoring levels for containerized, drained warheads to 0.5 vapor screening limit (VSL) from 0.25 VSL. The VX rocket campaign also used 0.5 VSL monitoring. She said because of the nature of GB agent they were more conservative with monitoring, and they are still operating within recommended Centers for Disease Control and Prevention monitoring controls. She thanked April Webb, Tammi Hudson and the rest of the KDEP team for their flexibility on this request.

Coyle noted the first delivery of containerized, drained GB rocket warheads to temporary storage to await destruction in an SDC unit, and the first delivery of rocket motors to temporary storage as well. She said a pilot test to see if the motors could be destroyed in the depot's Controlled Detonation Chamber would be feasible was discontinued due to the motors not being compatible with their destruction system — BGCAPP equipment cuts through the threads between the motor and warhead and the depot system required the threads intact to install a thrust adjuster to support destruction.

Hink spoke to the SDC 1200 facility and said it has been delayed a little due to their focus on the SDC 2000 facility, but the craft is now focused on that project, with essentially all concrete work completed, fire alarm systems going in, pipe racks installed and piping being run, and heating, ventilation and air conditioning ductwork underway. He said the SDC 1200 delay is not a problem, just a reprioritization to the other project for a while.

Coyle said the SDC 1200 delay is not a treaty issue, as it will be destroying the containerized, drained rocket warheads, which are considered secondary waste.

Williams asked about the status of the off-gas treatment system components. Hink said they were all there and being connected.

Hink then said the SDC 2000 facility is in the start-up phase, with construction being completed in August and only a punch list of smaller items remaining. He said all power distribution is done, the Thermal Oxidizer is lit and the Stand-by Diesel Generators are being tested. Coyle said the Electronic Security System (ESS) lines are up and running, they finished the final verification test on Sept. 14, and a 60-day endurance test is planned to start the following week. She said the hard lock-down of the facility is anticipated around Oct. 10, and it will be a good test for the ESS system. Coyle said this is a good track to get the SDC 2000 started up on schedule.

Hink then addressed closure and said the plant is not in closure but is planning for closure. He noted actions such as work on decontamination and decommissioning plans and Individual Health Based Risk Assessments for each room of the main plant, decommissioning sampling plans and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act closure plan are ongoing and the team is well on the way to putting that information together. Coyle said the Process Working Group will be transitioning to the CWG in January.

Williams asked if BPBG was under contract for the entire closure phase. Hink said only Phase 1 of closure so far, which is decontamination and decommissioning work up to unventilated monitoring (safe for standard demolition, considered Phase 2), and late 2024 is estimated for Phase 2 to begin. Williams noted his concern with the contract's integration with the delayed 2023 NDAA and the BGAD feasibility study in case facilities were demolished before the chance to find out about reuse. Abaie said the reason why closure is a two-phase plan is to allow the team to get to a point where they can decontaminate and demilitarize the facility without tearing out any structures. Phase 2 will be on contract in late 2023, which gives some time to work with the local community and lets everyone work together. Williams said this had been a point of concern for him and he appreciates that time for the local community to integrate.

Coyle moved to the supercritical water oxidation (SCWO) system study and said there have been some good technical exchanges on repurposing the SCWO for treating per- and polyfluoroalkyl (man-made chemicals known as PFAS). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is in the final process of evaluating treatment technologies for PFAS. A subject-matter expert is also doing small-scale testing and demonstrations. She said this report will provide inputs to possible longer-term testing and potential use of the SCWO system. She noted Williams has been involved in some visits on this topic and the study is scheduled to be complete in March 2023. Williams said there are other studies on PFAS applications being performed by such institutions as Northwestern University. As a topic for thought, he said as the studies occur, if they are successful, the question is if the SCWO will stay here with PFAS material coming into Madison County for destruction. He noted the fish consumption advisory has been upgraded beyond mercury and

polychlorinated biphenyls to include PFAS. He said if the SCWO is deemed an appropriate technology for this use, he thinks it will be important for this group to analyze if Madison County will become a reception site for large quantities of PFAS. Abaie asked if it might be appropriate to include this question in one of the feasibility studies covered by U.S. Department of Defense Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) or NDAA amendment grant money, as this is above and beyond what ACWA will do. Williams said he thinks that situation would be captured in the stipulations in the NDAA amendment to be included in that feasibility study. Abaie said he hopes the group will take the lead on this.

Hink then spoke about safety and said there were two recent recordable incidents, a trip and a bee sting, both very low-severity incidents. He said there have been more than eight million hours without a lost-time accident, which shows the low severity of incidents with the high-hazard work. He noted COVID-19 has not been very impactful, but they are still doing a lot of separation, meeting via online platforms, and more, and are watching closely. He provided a table on the BPBG staffing reduction timeline for coming years (2022 – 1,455; 2023 – 1,440; 2024 – 1,274; 2025 – 911 and 2026 – 536) in answer to Williams' request from the last meeting and noted 2024 and 2025 are when the facility will be decontaminated to the unventilated monitoring state. The team will be getting into closure activities that will be more commercial, so they will not need a higher level of staffing then. Hink provided current open positions and said attrition is still rather high and they are taking preventive measures to offset that. He said the program has benefited in the past from having future missions to move to but that is not the case here. They are taking a look at things they might do from increased incentives to training programs to prepare people to move into available positions in the county. There is a lot of growth in the area and BPBG may need to adapt the workforce from being chemical workers to be more tuned for what is available in the community. As for recruitment, Hink said BPBG was holding a job fair Sept. 13 and 15 and they had about 75 interested attendees on Sept. 13, and provided several other opportunities to gain personnel through outside recruiting events.

Harry Moberly asked where the drained warheads are stored. Coyle said within the Chemical Limited Area (CLA) at the Blue Grass Chemical Activity (BGCA), where igloos have been turned over to ACWA for this purpose. Moberly asked about the level of danger with the movement of the warheads to the igloos and back to the SDC units. Coyle said that is a joint effort with BGCA. Lt. Col. Tyler McKee said once the drained warheads are overpacked they are monitored down to a certain level, then put on skids or pallets and brought to the CLA. Moberly asked if they are overpacked for storage. Coyle said they are punched and drained within BGCAPP, then containerized, placed 25 per skid and monitored to the 0.5 VSL requirement, then sent to the igloos at BGCA. Moberly asked if they were still treated as hazardous. Coyle said yes. Moberly then asked how often hydrolysate is being shipped for the GB campaign. Coyle said it is shipped on an as-needed basis (a certain amount needs to accumulate before it can be shipped). Hink provided information as to the number of hydrolysate shipments that have occurred thus far.

Williams asked about the status of the Pueblo plant. Abaie said the plant is on the last campaign, 4.2-inch mortars, and they have done about 10,000 of the approximately 97,000 in the stockpile. They are using three SDC units permitted by Colorado regulators and the main plant will come online late this calendar year as they are changing over from the 105mm rounds to the 4.2-inch mortars with updated equipment. They should complete the campaign in the summer of 2023, probably before BGCAPP mission completion. He noted the Pueblo mission is slightly different from the BGCAPP mission, due to the sheer volume of munitions they have to destroy. He said they are getting close to the end and doing very well. Williams noted the only chemical agent Pueblo had to destroy is mustard, which makes their throughput rate easier than BGCAPP's. Abaie said the Blue Grass mission has always been more challenging, with three chemical agents and five munitions types, with VX and GB rockets even being slightly different, and there has to be a changeover each time between munitions types.

***KDEP Permitting Updates – April Webb, Hazardous Waste Branch Manager, KDEP***

Webb provided an update page in the meeting handouts for reference (the update may be obtained by contacting the ORO at (859) 626-8944 or bgoutreach@iem.com) and said she would cover a few high points from it in the meeting. She said the KDEP team has processed 14 permit modifications since the last CAC/CDCAB meeting and they continue to have a lot of items to review. She said they are getting ready to do a facility certification site visit Sept. 20 for both SDC units, and they are looking forward to the main plant emissions testing, scheduled for the first week of November.

***Closing Remarks – Doug Hindman, Chair, CAC; Reagan Taylor and Craig Williams, Co-Chairs, CDCAB; and Michael Abaie, Program Executive Officer, ACWA***

Hindman thanked everyone.

Taylor noted community activities this weekend such as homecomings and the Spoonbread Festival.

Williams said the Blue Grass Area Development District study funded by OLDCC is near completion, they have fulfilled all obligations under the grant agreement, and the report will come out before the next CAC/CDCAB meeting. He said they have made significant progress and he feels comfortable in doing the job outlined in the grant.

Abaie thanked the community for the support and said he looks forward to briefing on significant progress in the future.

Marko noted the current meeting has been video-recorded and can be found on the PEO ACWA YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gjj7sg-yp0A>.

***Next CAC and CDCAB Meeting***

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.