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Chemical Demilitarization Citizens' Advisory Commission
Chemical Destruction Community Advisory Board
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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
Dec. 6, 2023
Eastern Kentucky University
Richmond, Kentucky**

Attendees

CAC:

Olivia Beasley (for Tammi Hudson), Jerrod Dean (for Dustin Heiser), Harry Moberly, George Ridings (online), David Stipes and Craig Williams

CDCAB:

Olivia Beasley (for Tammi Hudson), Steve Bullard (online), Jerrod Dean (for Dustin Heiser), Jamie Hall (for Lt. Col. Tyler McKee), Jeanne Marie Hibberd, Ron Hink, Leslie Kaylor, Tara Long, Harry Moberly, Stephanie Nelson (online for U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell), Shannon Pendergrass, George Ridings (online), William Ritter (for Col. Brett Ayvazian), David Stipes, Reagan Taylor and Craig Williams

Media:

WEKU-FM: Shepherd Snyder
WTVQ-TV: Justin Walker

Meeting Synopsis

The meeting provided information on the following:

- Remarks from the Interim Program Executive Officer (PEO), Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA)
- Blue Grass Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (BGCAPP) Project Update and Year-in-Review

- Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection (KDEP) Permitting Updates
- Economic Development Working Group Update

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 Item

Action Item: Provide notification to CAC/CDCAB members when the Notice of Deficiency (NOD) reports on Blue Grass Army Depot (BGAD) environmental permitting are available

Responsible Entity: Olivia Beasley, BGAD Section, KDEP

Timeline: By March 6, 2024

Action Item: Draft letter of support for data center, gather input from CAC/CDCAB members and provide letter to Kentucky Congressional delegation

Responsible Entity: Craig Williams, chair, CAC

Timeline: By March 6, 2024

Outline of Key Issues and Discussions

Welcome and Introductions – Sarah Marko, communications manager, ORO

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

Opening Remarks – Reagan Taylor, Co-Chair, CDCAB, and Craig Williams, Chair, CAC

Taylor welcomed everyone and wished them happy holidays and merry Christmas. Williams also wished attendees happy holidays and thanked them for their continued engagement in the process.

Status of Outstanding Action Items

Marko then noted the following action item from the Sept. 6, 2023, CAC/CDCAB meeting:

Action Item	Steps Taken	Date/Status
Confirm 2024 CAC/CDCAB meeting dates.	Proposed dates of March 6, 2024, and Sept. 4, 2024, were presented and approved by membership.	Complete.

Key Updates

Remarks from the Interim PEO – Tamika Atkins, Interim PEO, ACWA

Atkins introduced herself and updated the group on Michael Abaie, the PEO who retired recently, and James Watson, the previous deputy PEO who has taken a new position. She said a new PEO could be named by next spring. She said she looked forward to renewing old acquaintances and making new ones on her next trip to Kentucky.

Williams welcomed Atkins and said he appreciated her communications with him since she took on her new role.

Kentucky Chemical Weapons Destruction: 2023 Year in Review Video

Marko played the *Kentucky Chemical Weapons Destruction: 2023 Year in Review* video recapping the year's accomplishments. The video may be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tVKznU47KNQ>

BGCAPP Project Update – Shannon Pendergrass, Site Project Manager, BGCAPP; and Ron Hink, Project Manager, Bechtel Parsons Blue Grass (BPBG)

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

Hink opened the presentation with a review of BGCAPP's safety numbers, including the plant's recordable incident rate, which is down to .18 from the .23 reported at the September CAC/CDCAB meeting. As of the end of October, workers had put in more than 1,500 days without a lost-time accident.

Pendergrass said the Static Detonation Chamber (SDC) 1200 began operations in late October and as of Dec. 3, 2023, had destroyed more than 1,300 drained containerized rocket warheads (CRWs) containing residual amounts of VX nerve agent. She said the SDC 2000 has destroyed nearly 8,600 CRWs containing residual amounts of GB nerve agent as of Dec. 3, 2023.

Hink told the group the SDC 1200 completed its Operational Readiness Review and Integrated Operations Demonstrations leading up to the start of destruction of drained CRWs. He said SDC 1200 operations continue on a steady ramp-up plan approved by KDEP with emissions testing scheduled in January.

He said workers have encountered what he called standard challenges for a start-up operation like this one, including some of the same seal failures the unit experienced when it was used to destroy projectiles containing mustard agent. He said workers continue to adjust to get the longest life from the seals and maximize efficiency. Overall, he said performance is on track to reach the desired rates.

With the SDC 2000, he said some challenges that were discussed at the September meeting with the vent path clogging have been reduced, leading to longer run times. He said an unexpected issue has been the cradle that feeds the rocket into the chamber getting misaligned. That has led to unplanned outages which are a problem because the unit must be cooled down and then started back up, which takes seven days. Hink said the goal is to get 30 days of operations followed by seven days of planned outages to optimize processing rates. He said crews continue to make improvements and are getting closer to that operating level.

Regarding the main plant, he said KDEP has approved the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act closure plan. He said teams have made progress removing equipment from the Explosive Containment Vestibules and Rooms, Agent Neutralization System Room and Munitions Washout System Room, which are the areas where the munitions were processed.

Workers are processing metal materials from equipment through the Metal Parts Treater rather than shipping the products offsite. He said sampling for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in Enhanced On-site Containers (EONCs) has been completed and the EONCs are being dispositioned.

As for the workforce, Hink said the current 1,361 employees is about 100 people less than the number he reported in September. He said the next drawdown likely will come in February. He said a job fair is planned in the spring involving local employers who need skilled workers. A networking event in October focused on the BPBG partner companies.

He also explained the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification (WARN) Act, a

federal law designed to protect communities, workers and companies during employment reductions. It requires large employers to give workers 60 days' notice when 50 or more jobs are being cut. He said BPBG has not reached the threshold but may choose to give the notice to the workers and the state anyway. Hink said he was mentioning the possibility so stakeholders do not think BPBG schedules have changed or do not get a false sense of alarm if they hear about the notice.

Pendergrass said the closure schedule has not changed with the end of agent-contaminated secondary waste destruction still estimated to be in the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2025.

Before opening the floor for questions, Marko thanked members of the group who attended the Oct. 11 End of Destruction Operations event which was attended by nearly 400 people.

CDCAB member Jeanne Marie Hibberd then asked Hink whether PCBs were a byproduct of chemical weapons destruction. He replied the testing was done because the M55 rockets transported in the EONCs contained PCBs in the shipping and firing tubes. The EONCs were tested as a precaution, but none were detected.

Williams asked if the challenges that have arisen with the SDC operations have impacted the long-range schedule. Hink said the SDC 1200 has not been impacted because it continues in the planned ramp-up phase, and the SDC 2000 has been pushed back by about four months although he said he expects some of that time to be recovered.

In response to another question from Williams, Hink said the employment drawdown would likely occur in February and be about 60 people.

Williams also thanked and congratulated everyone who was involved for their work organizing the Oct. 11 event. He said it drew accolades from everyone, including Gov. Andy Beshear and U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell.

KDEP Permitting Updates – Olivia Beasley, BGAD Section Supervisor, KDEP

The handout referenced during this presentation may be obtained by contacting the ORO at (859) 626-8944 or bgoutreach@iem.com.

Beasley referenced a handout provided in the meeting information packets. She said KDEP has issued approximately 17 Class 1 permit modifications since the last meeting. She said BGAD had remedied a Notice of Violation for Controlled Detonation Chamber emissions testing and is awaiting a final report from the contractor. She said the agency is awaiting a response from BGAD on a NOD for spring groundwater testing. She said KDEP closed out a portion of the permit transferring igloos from Blue Grass Chemical Activity to

ACWA. She also said a member of the KDEP team retired in October and another resigned in November.

In response to a question from Williams, Beasley said some of the duties of the staff members will be distributed among existing staff and that a geologist may be hired. Hibberd asked Beasley to provide more information about the BGAD NOD on groundwater sampling. Beasley said it could be anything from language adjustments or items the agency would like to see done to address deficiencies. As for the warning, Beasley said the agency was not satisfied with the way the analysis was reported by the contractor who was doing the work and wants corrections.

Williams asked if the issues are associated with open burn/open detonation (OB/OD) and if data is available to the public. Beasley said the information is available to the public and the agency will let the CAC/CDCAB and the community know when the reports are completed.

CAC/CDCAB member Harry Moberly asked if BGAD reports findings to KDEP, procedures for water sampling and if NODs have been issued in the past. Beasley explained how the process works, including the involvement and reporting of subcontractors, how wells are used for monitoring groundwater and how notices are issued and for what reasons. Ramesh Melarkode, environmental manager, BGAD, provided information about BGAD OB/OD environmental permitting, operations and compliance. Moberly asked if OB/OD contaminates groundwater and Melarkode said if compliance issues arise, mitigation efforts are ordered.

Rebecca Proudfoot, a member of the public who lives near the depot, asked about air-quality monitoring for OB/OD activities. Beasley said her department works with state air quality control inspectors to monitor those operations and that the records are available to the public. Melarkode said no violations have been reported by inspectors. Moberly also asked what agency might be responsible for monitoring damage to houses adjacent to OB/OD. Beasley said no state agency monitors or tracks those incidents if they occur.

Williams provided information about an upcoming meeting with KDEP to discuss the OB/OD permit process and said he will discuss the issues raised at the CAC/CDCAB meeting at that time.

Economic Development Working Group Update – Craig Williams, Chair, CAC

The handout referenced during this presentation may be obtained by contacting the ORO at (859) 626-8944 or bgoutreach@iem.com.

Referencing a presentation included in the meeting information packets, Williams reviewed a possible data center to be developed on as much as 170 acres leased from BGAD. He said the project, which Bechtel Enterprises has been working on for more than two years, would involve an investment of more than \$500 million and create

hundreds of construction jobs and as many as 70 well-paying information technology jobs. He said Bechtel already has partners and users in mind and is working on a similar facility in another state. The BGAD operation, which would not involve any federal tax dollars, is one of five Bechtel hopes to develop, he said. The BGAD site is ideal because security and infrastructure, including abundant electricity, already are in place.

Williams said Richmond, Berea and Madison County officials have been discussing the idea with state and federal officials for several years as a way to broaden BGAD's reach and mission while expanding Department of Defense capabilities.

Williams noted a recently released feasibility study about future uses and missions for BGAD included the data center as one of the options although it was well outside the top five rated by the study. Williams said the data center is the readiest, possibly being operational by late 2026 if approved, and would not detract from the other options.

Williams introduced Mike Costas, general manager and principal vice president, Bechtel National Inc., and Kevin Carter and Daniel Chi, both of Bechtel Enterprises, all of whom joined the meeting online. The three provided additional information about the data center concept. All three said the center also would attract similar operations and jobs. The area around Dulles Airport in northern Virginia is an example, they said.

Williams proposed drafting a letter of support for the project to be sent to the state's congressional delegation and appropriate state agencies to support the project. Williams said he hoped to have the letter in the hands of state and federal officials by early February.

CDCAB member Leslie Kaylor asked if other areas are competing for the project and, if so, local support should move forward quickly. CDCAB member Steve Bullard, who joined the meeting online, provided an online chat message expressing his support. Bullard said it will work well with a statewide cybersecurity center already being discussed by a coalition of state officials and businesses.

Closing Remarks – Craig Williams, Chair, CAC

Williams again thanked Atkins for joining the meeting and congratulated her. Williams said he also is working on getting a historical marker to be placed in Madison County, possibly at the courthouse, commemorating the destruction of not only the Kentucky chemical weapons stockpile but also the nation's.

Next CAC and CDCAB Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 6, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.