



Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board

May 15, 2013

Ms. Kathryn Knapp, Sampling and Analysis Task Manager
Environmental Management Operations Support
U.S. Department of Energy, Nevada Field Office
P. O. Box 98518
Las Vegas, NV 89193-8518

SUBJECT: Recommendation Regarding Nevada National Security Site
(NNSS) Integrated Groundwater Sampling Plan (Work Plan
Item #8)

Dear Ms. Knapp:

The Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board (NSSAB) was asked to provide a recommendation to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) regarding the NNSS Integrated Groundwater Sampling Plan.

The NSSAB reviewed five specific questions related to three key parameters of the NNSS Integrated Groundwater Sampling Plan to determine if the NSSAB supports these parameters. Additionally, the NSSAB was asked from a community perspective to provide recommendations on how the proposed concept of an integrated groundwater sampling plan could be enhanced.

The NSSAB supports the concept of integrating the sampling data under the Underground Testing Area (UGTA), the Routine Radiological Environmental Monitoring Program, and the Community Environmental Monitoring Program (CEMP). The NSSAB concurs that the outcome would be a comprehensive, consistent, and unified NNSS Integrated Groundwater Sampling Plan for collecting and analyzing groundwater samples.

In regard to the five specific questions related to the three parameters, the NSSAB recommends the following:

Parameter #1. The new integrated sampling plan will identify wells selected for monitoring contaminant transport from underground nuclear tests from all DOE monitoring sources.

Question #1. Does the NSSAB support eliminating sampling of upgradient wells? The NSSAB does not support totally eliminating sampling of upgradient wells, but increasing the years between sampling may be appropriate. Continued sampling is recommended until DOE can discern the impact and potential exposure to groundwater from atmospheric fallout and recharge, even for wells that are upgradient from the source of contamination on the NNSS.

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Parameter #2. The new integrated sampling plan will identify the contaminants of concern to be analyzed, as well as the detection levels, and sampling frequency based on well type.

Question #2. **Does the NSSAB support reducing the list of radionuclides to be analyzed to only tritium for Distal and Point of Use wells?** Yes, the NSSAB supports reducing the list of radionuclides to be analyzed to only tritium.

Question #3. **Does the NSSAB support increasing the laboratory detection level for tritium for Distal and Point of Use wells?** Yes, the NSSAB supports increasing the laboratory detection level for tritium.

Question #4. **Does the NSSAB support reducing the frequency of sampling for Distal and Point of Use wells?** Yes, the NSSAB supports reducing the frequency of sampling.

Parameter #3. The new integrated sampling plan will allow for well types to change as UGTA progresses.

Question #5. **Does the NSSAB support DOE changing the well status to reclassify as inactive?** The NSSAB recommends that the sampling frequency be reduced, but does not support DOE changing the well status to reclassify as inactive. The NSSAB feels that valuable sampling data may still be acquired from these wells in the future and that the wells remain available to sample if necessary.

The NSSAB recommends that the Environmental Management be proactive and forthcoming in any community outreach, and use a variety of educational tools, such as, mini-open houses in communities that are most affected, 3D models, water flow overlays on the well types maps, along with posters, to increase public understanding. Lastly, the NSSAB felt that it is important to educate the public on DOE resources shifting to wells that focus on sampling in areas of potential contaminant transport.

The Board wishes to thank Environmental Management for the opportunity to provide meaningful input to the DOE in regards to the NNS Integrated Groundwater Sampling Plan.

Sincerely,



Kathleen L. Bienenstein, Chair

cc: M. A. Nielson, DOE/HQ (EM-3.2) FORS
C. B. Alexander, DOE/HQ (EM-3.2) FORS
M. R. Hudson, DOE/HQ (EM-3.2) FORS
R. F. Boehlecke, EMO, NNSA/NFO, Las Vegas, NV
C. G. Lockwood, EMOS, NNSA/NFO, Las Vegas, NV
K. K. Snyder, EMOS, NNSA/NFO, Las Vegas, NV
S. A. Wade, AMEM, NNSA/NFO, Las Vegas, NV
W. R. Wilborn, EMO, NNSA/NFO, Las Vegas, NV
B. K. Ulmer, N-I, Las Vegas, NV
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