



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION I

J.F. KENNEDY FEDERAL BUILDING, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02203-2211

December 12, 1992

Commander Oliver Barfield
Public Works
Box 400 Code 800
Naval Submarine Base - New London
Groton, CT 06349

Dear Commander,

I want to commend you and your staff for facilitating perhaps the best Technical Review Committee meeting I've attended at the Subase. While there is still considerable friction on several issues among many of the members, Wednesday's productive exchange of information and viewpoints will help move this process forward and incorporate community concerns.

One aspect of the meeting I found particularly useful was your willingness to deviate from the agenda in light of input from TRC members. This flexibility is crucial in maintaining an effective committee. As I mentioned on Wednesday night, if the TRC is not meeting the needs of the members, it is not worth keeping.

My role as Community Relations Coordinator is to make sure that the TRC adequately facilitates communication between the Navy and the community. While EPA has no official requirements with regard to the TRC, the Region I office has had extensive experience with these forums at federal facilities throughout New England. Keeping this in mind, I would like to echo some of the suggestions made at the December 2 meeting and offer a few of my own.

1. I concur with the suggestion that the committee should meet at least quarterly. The important point here is not necessarily the frequency, but the regularity. If members can count on meetings at specific, regular intervals meetings will run smoother and possibly even shorter. I do favor some coordination with project milestones, but a meeting should not be neglected due to the lack of a major deliverable.
2. TRC member input into the agenda was perhaps the best suggestion I heard. This could be accomplished at the end of the meeting for the next meeting, by phone in the interim, or simply at the beginning of a meeting.
3. On a similar note, perhaps a 15-30 minute section at the beginning of the agenda could help tie up unfinished business or simply "clear the air" before preceding with presentations.
4. One suggestion I make for virtually all public forums is to shorten the presentations and devote more time to questions and answers. This may or may not be possible given the amount of



work that the contractor has to present. More frequent meetings may help mitigate this problem.

5. Based on what I know about their role, I believe Northern Division should play a larger part in the TRC meetings, especially during the question and answer period when methods and results are taken into question by the members. North Div ordered the work, paid for the work, and approved the work. The contractor should not be forced to defend the work, at least not without support from Northern Division or the Subase.

6. The fact sheet prepared for the meeting, while long overdue, was excellent. The basic descriptions of the cleanup process and the and definitions of the technical terms were helpful for both TRC members and the public. Our office has produced hundreds of these over the years, and we would be happy to assist with future fact sheets on Remedial Investigation results, risk, cleanup technologies, etc. This offer is my subtle way of indicating that we would like to review these before they go out.

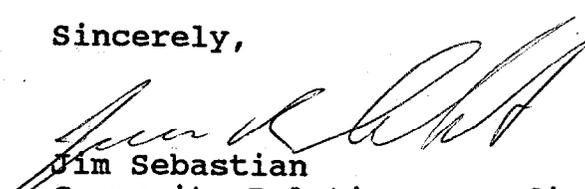
7. The timing of the meetings is somewhat problematic. The difference in background and expertise between the general public and the TRC members is significant enough that two separate meetings may still be warranted. I also understand the efficiency involved in combining the two. In any case, both should remain open to the public. EPA would appreciate being involved in the final decision as to the format of the TRC/public meetings.

8. Several members suggested having a meeting just to discuss the purpose of the committee and the format of the meetings. We would certainly be willing to participate in such a meeting. Similarly, we could help with the suggestion for a basic explanation of Superfund.

Once again, these suggestions are not legal requirements, but simply ideas based on what I heard and my experience at other sites.

The December 2 meeting was a real breakthrough in community relations, and I hope EPA can help you continue in this positive direction.

Sincerely,



Jim Sebastian

Community Relations Coordinator

cc: Ruth Ann Noonan, Subase Public Affairs
Bill Mansfield, Subase Project Manager
Deborah Stockdale, Project Manager, Northern Division
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