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NCBC GULFPORT  
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LETTER REGARDING MEETING REVIEWING CONCERNS FOR REPROCESSING AND  
STORAGE OF HERBICIDE ORANGE NCBC GULFPORT MS  
12/29/1976  
U S NAVY

29 DEC 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR Dr. Billy E. Welch, Special Assistant for Environmental Quality, Office of the Assistant Secretary, Department of the Air Force, Washington, D. C. 20330  
Mr. Richard Bruner, Executive Director, Technical and Logistic Services, Defense Supply Agency, Cameron Station, Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Subj: Herbicide Orange

I am enclosing for your attention a letter of 21 December sent to me from Mr. Glen Wood, Jr., Executive Director, State of Mississippi Air and Water Pollution Control Commission. The letter was preceded by a telephone call, and was succeeded by a meeting in Gulfport the following day. In addition to Mr. Wood and myself at the meeting were Mr. Jackson Balch, Office of the Governor, State of Mississippi; Colonel Walter Melvin, Jr., USAF, MC, Director Occupational and Environmental Health, Air Force Systems Command, Brooks Air Force Base; Major James Tremblay, USAF, BSC, Occupational and Environmental Health Laboratory, Kelly Air Force Base; and Captain Gary Hawksworth, USAF, Office of Information, Pentagon.

Messrs Wood and Balch represented the Governor's concern about (1) the slow pace of progress in reprocessing or disposal of Orange; (2) the inability to find a single party in the Federal Government responsible for the project; and (3) the very recent manifold expressions of warning to the Governor by residents of the state about the dangers of reprocessing at Gulfport. The State's letter, somewhat understandably, puts the onus on the Commanding Officer, CBC Gulfport, both as the custodian and the "man on the scene," to take action in the matter.

All items above were dealt with in the meeting. The Memorandum of Understanding between USAF and DSA on Proposed Reprocessing of Herbicide Orange, dated 10 December 1976 was read aloud. The current schedule for contract negotiations, Congressional approval, award and reprocessing (complete by 1 July 1977) was discussed. Dr. Melvin gave a thorough briefing of the real and alleged hazards of reprocessing, redrumming or relocating the Orange. Captain Hawksworth discussed the administrative processes required by NEPA.

Results of the meeting were, in my opinion, as follows:

- a. The State is satisfied that there is an agent in the Federal Government responsible for disposal of Orange.
- b. The State is satisfied that progress toward contract disposal of Orange is being made, albeit slow, and recognizes Congressional involvement in approval of proposals.

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c. The State gained a better understanding of the proposed disposal process.

d. The State expressed dismay that quick removal from State of Mississippi is not an easy alternative to reprocessing.

e. The State indicated agreement that the present course of action (reprocessing at Gulfport), whether right or wrong, appears to be the best course to follow, i.e. a new initiative at this time by Mississippi would undoubtedly delay, if not totally undermine the project.

f. The State expressed concern that in assessing a request from the contractor to grant a permit to reprocess the Orange, they might inadvertently find themselves in the position of holding up the disposal schedule. In this regard, such preliminary work or investigation that the State can undertake now would be desirable.

I would recommend that your office be in touch with Mr. Glen Wood to determine what additional matters or further discussions are desired by the State of Mississippi by the 7 January date mentioned in the letter.

Very respectfully,

Encl:

J. T. TAYLOR  
CAPT, CEC, USN  
Commanding Officer

Copy to:

Captain J. C. Rickels, CEC, USN, Asst Commander for Mil Readiness, NAVFAC  
Mr. Peter McDavitt, Spec Asst to the Asst Sec (Navy I&L)

Blind copy:

CAPT Jim Groff, OP-45, Pentagon  
COL Walter Melvin, Brooks AFB  
MAJ James W. Tremblay, KAFB, Tex 78241  
CAPT Gary Hawksworth, Pentagon  
CBC Codes 12.1 & 15