



RHODE ISLAND
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908-5767

TDD 401-831-5508

4 December 1998

Al Haring
U.S. Department of the Navy
Northern Division
Naval Facilities Engineering Command
10 Industrial Highway
Code 1823-Mail Stop 82
Lester, PA 19113-2090

Mary Sanderson, Chief
Federal Facilities Section
Office of Site Remediation & Restoration
EPA – New England, Region 1
1 Congress Street Suite 1100
Boston, MA 02114-2023

RE: Naval Education and Training Center, Newport, Rhode Island

Dear Ms. Sanderson & Mr. Haring,

On February 12th of this past year, our Agencies held an informal partnering session in RIDEM offices for the purpose of resolving several issues that we were facing at the NETC Superfund Site. One of the issues discussed during this session was communication. We all recognized that proper communication between our Agencies was deteriorating and that it needed to be addressed in order to facilitate progress at NETC. As a result of that session, the parties made the following commitments aimed at improving communication:

- Documentation – At the Navy's request, EPA and RIDEM agreed to put comments in writing and reduce the number of comments conveyed verbally. As you may recall from our formal partnering session held in August 1995, the Navy requested that our agencies reduce the amount of paper generated in an effort to facilitate actual site cleanup. Unfortunately, two years later we recognized that this was not working as planned and was leading to disputes over what was agreed to verbally.
- RPM Meetings – Both the Navy and the EPA expressed concern over their inability to reach RIDEM's RPM on a regular basis. A problem directly attributable to our RPM's workload on numerous other hazardous waste sites and our commitment to overseeing field activities at NETC. As a direct result of this concern, we suggested that a predetermined time period be selected for our RPMs to hold weekly telephone conferences to discuss site issues.

Page Two

A. Haring & M. Sanderson

4 December 1998

While I believe that these telephone conferences are beneficial, I am still not satisfied with the progress of remediation at the NETC facility and the ongoing communication problems between our RPMs.

If we all had an infinite amount of time, I would propose that we personally participate in these weekly conferences to oversee the dialogue and act as catalysts for progress. Obviously, given our other obligations, that is not possible. Further, as you are aware, the local TAG group has requested on several occasions that they be allowed participate in these meetings, because they are also concerned about site progress and they would like to be more intimately involved in the process. While RIDEM is the only agency that formally denied their participation in these meetings, we recognize the value and importance of their role in the process and of public participation in general.

In an effort to address these issues, RIDEM is proposing that we take advantage of modern technology and replace the weekly conference calls with an exchange of email. Under our proposal, the Navy as the lead agency would forward an issues and status report similar to the agenda that is currently followed during the telephone conferences. The EPA, RIDEM and the Navy would then follow-up as necessary to the issues outlined. At a later date, the RPMs can discuss the appropriate frequency of these transmittals.

This would accomplish the following:

1. Increased Oversight: By putting concerns in writing (email), we as managers could easily be copied on all exchanges of email and maintain a real time knowledge of site concerns before they become a crisis (e.g., Old Fire Fighter Training Area).
2. Increased Public Participation: The local TAG representative would also be copied on the emails and they too could have real time knowledge of the issues. They would also be welcome to respond to the weekly "agenda".
3. Timely and Consistent Responses: Both the Navy and EPA have historically expressed concern regarding the inability of RIDEM to make instantaneous decisions during meetings regarding Department positions on all matters effecting the site. A matter that we have informed you is impossible to resolve to your satisfaction given the numerous DEM Offices that have jurisdiction on any given operable unit issue (Air Resources, Water Resources, Wetlands, UIC, USTs, Groundwater, etc.). Under our proposal, RIDEM would have an opportunity to consult with the appropriate Division(s) prior to replying.

Page Three

A. Haring & M. Sanderson

4 December 1998

With regard to consistency, RIDEM has long been frustrated by technical positions that have changed based largely upon budgetary issues and schedule demands rather than on technical merit. The demolition of tanks at Tank Farms 4 and 5 exemplify this issue. Under this proposal, we have a more accurate Administrative Record.

Eventually, we may want to explore communication options that allow parties to conduct on-line meetings using various "chat" technologies (i.e., NetMeeting). Using such technologies may also have the added benefit of providing the parties with a transcript of the meeting. I am raising this option now only as something to consider as a potential next step and to further reflect RIDEM's willingness to entertain all options that have the potential to improve communication at this site.

After you have had an opportunity to review our proposal and discuss it with your staff, please contact me with your reply. If acceptable, we are proposing that the transition occur in January, so your prompt attention to this proposal is appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact me at (401) 222-2797 extension 7137 or by email at wangell@dem.state.ri.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. S. Angell II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent "W" and "S" at the beginning and a stylized "II" at the end.

Warren S. Angell II, Supervising Engineer
Office of Waste Management

cc: Terrence Gray, Chief, DEM OWM
Richard Gottlieb, DEM OWM
Paul Kulpa, DEM OWM
David Dorocz, NETC
Mary Philcox, AICAB Coordinator