

The Council of State Governments (CSG)
Midwestern Radioactive Materials Transportation Committee (MRMTC)
Thursday, 06 June 2024 | Chasm Creek | Hyatt Regency Denver Tech Centre | Denver, Colorado

Summary

MEMBERS PRESENT

Mitch Arvidson	Ryan Seabaugh	Greg Gothard
Scott Martzke	Tony Schneider	Robert Olszowka
Glenn Goode	Rodney Pitchford	Cheryl Head
Mark Paulson	Mack Johnson	Fernando Flores Carlos
Courtney Eckstein	Melissa Shahzadeh	Tad Rumas
Patsy Razzano	Travis Waack	Swapam Saha

The annual Spring meeting of the MRMTC commenced with a welcome and introduction from Senior co-chair Tad Rumas. Subsequently all members of the committee present were invited to introduce themselves and their affiliations.

The first presentation was by Daniel G. Ogg, Executive Director of the U.S. Nuclear Waste Technical Review Board (NWTRB). The presentation focused on the evaluation of Department of Energy (DOE) Research and Development (R&D) activities on the disposition of commercial spent nuclear fuel (SNF) in Dual-Purpose Canisters (DPC). The presentation began with a review of NWTRB’s purpose and mission as well as the background of the Board’s members. The technical content of the presentation focused on the most recent report issued by the NWTRB in February 2024. The report’s scope presented the historical context of how the nation’s commercial SNF came to be stored in DPC and examined three principal alternative approaches to managing commercial SNF. The presenter noted that the next meeting of the NWTRB will be held 29 August 2024 in Augusta, Georgia.

The second presentation was by Michael Gerle of the Carlsbad Field Office (CBFO) and focused on the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) Legacy TRU Waste Disposal Plan. The Disposal Plan allows permittees to define legacy TRU and TRU mixed waste independently rather than offering a standardized definition. As a result, the Disposal Plan must now answer the following questions for all generator sites:

- How is disposition (removal) of TRU waste prioritized?
- How does each site define legacy waste? Where and why is it documented?
- What is the inventory of legacy waste?
- What are the complexities associated with cleanup activities?
- Whilst there is no established definition of “legacy waste,” WIPP’s Panel 12 is reserved for the disposal of legacy waste to the extent practicable.

The third presentation was from Mark Linsley and provided an update of the Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program (TEPP). This training program is restricted to routes DOE uses to transport waste to WIPP; however, there are mechanisms that will allow training to be brought to non-WIPP route states. In particular, the training of responders prior to the 2027 shipment will be essential to public trust and public perception. If a state is interested in TEPP training, they should contact Celeste Cusack and that state’s regional coordinator. The host agency only needs to provide a training location and ensure a minimum of 15 people to be trained.

Melissa Shahzadeh presented briefly on the project status and directed members to review Project Status Update that is linked to the MRMTC website. Subsequent discussion focused on the location and time for the Annual Fall Meeting. The committee decided that the meeting will take place in North Dakota during the week of 07 October 2024.

NTSF Work Group Reports Included the following updates:

Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) Rail/Routing Transportation

The DOE plans to use rail for the primary mode of transportation. May 2024: pending rename of the group Rail Route / Transportation to embrace the consideration of other modes of transportation. DOE lead suggests that a new work group is not needed if this group can be expanded.

Transportation Emergency Preparedness Program (TEPP) Training

The comments from December 2023 meeting on training materials have been incorporated into the pilot MERRT. The comments are in the new books and those new updated courses will commence after this meeting. Materials are updated on a 4-year basis. The group is considering looking at what FEMA has utilized as distribution mechanism for materials.

Section 180(c)

The last meeting of this group took place in December 2024. They cleared a fact sheet describing the purpose of the group for public distribution following a 2-year exercise process that reviewed the methodology for signing up for a grant and doing a tabletop exercise. DOE lead reviewed the proposed policy exercise and a few things were apparent: the states that have WIPP routes are quicker at completing the tasks than those without, so there is a thought to create modules to provide an understanding of grant application processes. Additionally, there may be an effort to help people understand the funding mechanism, as the current arrangement involves two grant systems, one for assessing needs for training and then a second for assessing paying for training. Section 180c is a section in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) that dictates that when DOE sets up the shipments, states and tribes will receive funding for planning and training (and maybe operations).

Regional Roundtable

Missouri: First quarter 2024 saw approximately 107 LLW shipments, 7 HRCQ

Michigan: Not on DOE shipping routes, though they do occasionally see Canadian shipments of Cobalt-60. Contacted by the Lansing Chief of Police who discovered trucks containing UF6 and wanted to know whether he should be escorting. People did not know there were trucks in Lansing. Michigan State University has a particle accelerator, which may be the source. Upcoming Consequence Management 2025 is a full-scale exercise with DOE.

Ohio: They are inspecting shipments through the state, coming out of Vermont Yankee, and working with two state inspectors. Shipments come through Midwest territory almost on a daily basis. They are inspecting for full compliance.

Iowa: Escorts most shipments. Since 01 Jan, escorting 4 (2 WIPP, 2 Cobalt-60) shipments with another scheduled this weekend. No incidents, but a close call recently with a jumper on the bridge under which the truck was passing.

Illinois: 14 non-HRCQ, 15 HRCQ, 2 SNF, 4 WIPP, Total activity: 178,000 Tq since 01 Jan. One violation "out of service" due to an air leak in the braking system. No update on legislation or rules. Nothing new for nuclear power stations. No new training. Regarding the Prairie Band Potawatomi reservation expansion: if expansion happens, rail will run through the expanded vicinity. Noridian in talks with port of Houston instead of Philadelphia, as they are having trouble with the NE to move that material. If that happens, it will come straight up through the Midwest.

Kansas: Training exercise in October, first training since 2015. There is interest in the counties, and efforts are being made to secure them training.

Indiana: 16 HRCQ shipments, 89 LLW shipments. There are only two remaining Level VI inspectors for the entire state and one person who can do in-house Level VI training. There is an upcoming Isotopes Crossroads Indianapolis Radiological Transportation Security Tabletop Exercise scheduled Wednesday, 07 August. Participation is welcome.

- Nebraska: Staffing changes within the State Patrol. 2 WIPP shipments from Argonne. A plug for ROSS course held at the University of Nebraska Medical center. It is a free course but registration is time sensitive. They are looking to secure additional training, as I-80 is a WIPP route.
- Wisconsin: Tracking 4 Category 1 shipments and 0 HRCQ, as WI is not on major routes. Kewaunee is accelerating their decommissioning with three days per week of shipments from truck to rail of LLW class 7 waste going to Oskosh. Shipments are then transferred to train for transport out west.
- Ohio: 3 HRCQ shipments. There is an upcoming MERRT two day “train the trainer” class scheduled for 14-13 August. Patsy Razzano is the new alternate for Ohio. There is a ROSS course offering with 5 seats available in Columbus scheduled for the last week of June.

The next presentation was from Jeffrey Moore of the Federal Railway Association (FRA). He discussed the FRA general structure, purpose, and overall regulatory authority including a Hazmat operational review. He compared the original 1998 Safety Compliance and Oversight Plan (SCOP) to the new 2023 Safety Coordination and Compliance Oversight Plan (SCCOP) and the reasons driving the changes and updates. He discussed the elements of the 2023 SCCOP including its purpose as it related to FRA inspections for regulatory compliance and outreach, and he introduced the AAR OT-55, which is the railroad operational industry standards that include the railroads national standards for moving SNF.

The next presentation was from Courtney Eckstein in the Indiana Department of Homeland Security regarding the Terra Haute, Indiana Incident involving a Navy Nuclear shipment and a passenger car. The navy’s official story was that nothing happened, no one was injured, there was no release of material, and therefore it was a textbook example of shipping controls. However, the behavior of the navy escorts was in violation of the TEPP training module describing navy shipments and what local responders can expect. There has been no explanation of why the navy handled the event the way they did, when official training suggests it should have been quite different.

The final presentation was from Greg Gothard who updated the group of the Palisades Nuclear Generating Station near Covert Township, Michigan. Greg provided a brief historical sketch of Palisades and described the proposed path forward, which includes a large expansion to the physical plant to house two new small modular reactors (SMRs). Greg mentioned that the expansion may run afoul of environmental protection of dunes adjacent to the facility.

The meeting concluded with a review of action items.