

Technical Evaluation Report
Naval Research Laboratory, Chesapeake Beach Detachment
Department of the Navy
Docket No. 030-29462/Master Materials License No. 45-23645-01NA

INTRODUCTION

In a letter dated June 3, 2013, the U.S. Department of the Navy (Navy) submitted an alternate decommissioning schedule request for the Naval Research Laboratory, Chesapeake Beach Detachment (Chesapeake Beach) to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) for review and approval pursuant to 10 CFR 30.36(i) (ML13165A300). Additional information was provided by the Navy in letters dated August 9, 2013 (ML13266A234), October 7, 2013 (ML13303A965), and October 30, 2013 (ML13330B611). The Navy has requested an alternate decommissioning schedule that would extend the time frame for completing decommissioning until October 31, 2014, by which time the Navy would submit the Final Status Survey (FSS) Report required by 10 CFR 30.36(j) and document the completion of decommissioning at the Chesapeake Beach.

This Technical Evaluation Report (TER) addresses the review and approval of the extension to the decommissioning schedule for the Chesapeake Beach. The NRC's review was conducted in accordance with NUREG-1757, Volume 3 (Revision 1), "Consolidated Decommissioning Guidance – Financial Assurance, Recordkeeping, and Timeliness."

BACKGROUND

The use of natural uranium, depleted uranium (DU), and thorium for research and development was originally authorized at Chesapeake Beach under Materials License No. SMB-448 issued by the NRC's predecessor agency, the Atomic Energy Commission, on October 6, 1972. After the NRC issued a Master Materials License (MML) to the Navy dated March 23, 1987, the Navy issued a Navy Radioactive Materials Permit (NRMP) No. 08-00173-E1NP to Chesapeake Beach. On June 17, 1988, the Chesapeake Radiation Safety Committee authorized the storage and use of DU in high velocity impact studies in the Building 218C target chamber and Building 227 vault. The last use of DU at Chesapeake Beach was in the fall of 1992. The Navy submitted a Decommissioning Plan (DP) (ML080980180), dated March 4, 2008, for the Hypervelocity Gun Facility (Building 218), at Chesapeake Beach. A Safety Evaluation Report (SER) dated June 19, 2008 (ML14041A338), for the DP for Chesapeake Beach was prepared by the NRC staff, supporting approval of the DP. The DP was incorporated into the Navy's MML on June 18, 2009. The SER for the DP evaluated: (1) the radiological status of the facility; (2) the unrestricted release criteria; (3) the planned decommissioning activities; (4) project management and organization; (5) the radiation safety and health program; (6) the environmental monitoring and control program; (7) the radioactive waste management program; (8) the quality assurance program; (9) facility radiation surveys; and (10) financial assurance.

Decommissioning work at Chesapeake Beach was initiated on January 5, 2011, and site work was completed on February 22, 2012. The contractor responsible for decommissioning work at Chesapeake Beach has experienced financial difficulties and is also in litigation with the employee that performed the FSS. As a result of the financial difficulties and litigation, some of the FSS data was not available to the contractor; therefore, the contractor was not able to provide a complete FSS report to the Navy in the contractually agreed upon timeframe. Although several draft reports were provided, the Navy's review of the information determined

that the FSS draft reports did not provide sufficient documentation of the FSS results in order to demonstrate compliance with the criteria and guidance set forth in the DP and NRC regulations. As a result, the Navy determined that it needed additional data that would then require further evaluation and review in order for the Navy to provide an accurate and complete report to the NRC. The Navy received this additional data in 2013.

During the period from February 4 through March 6, 2013, the NRC conducted a routine inspection of the activities authorized by the Navy MML. Based on the results of the inspection (documented in the Inspection report dated April 9, 2013 (ML13101A109)), the NRC determined that the Navy was not in compliance with the requirements of 10 CFR 30.36(h)(1) as it had failed to complete decommissioning at the Chesapeake Beach site within the specified time limits. As part of the proposed corrective actions to address the violation (ML13135A063), the Navy requested an alternate decommissioning schedule extending the date to document the completion of decommissioning until October 31, 2014, to provide them time to evaluate and restructure the FSS Report before submitting it to the NRC. In addition, as part of the corrective actions, the Navy developed a Standard Operating Procedure to programmatically address decommissioning timeliness for Navy and Marine sites undergoing decommissioning.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The decommissioned site is located against a hillside approximately 1,000 feet from the Chesapeake Bay near Chesapeake Beach, Maryland. At the facility, various metallic projectiles were fired against DU shapes and DU with explosives (targets) in a completely enclosed containment system. Various parts of the containment system and the environmental room, where the targets were inserted and removed from a steel chamber, were contaminated with residual DU on surfaces.

TECHNICAL EVALUATION FOR ALTERNATE DECOMMISSIONING SCHEDULE

NRC staff has reviewed the Navy's request to extend the time period established in 10 CFR 30.36(i), using guidance contained in NUREG 1757, Volume 3 (Revision 1), "Consolidated NMSS Decommissioning Guidance: Financial Assurance, Recordkeeping, and Timeliness," Section 2.6.

The NRC staff concludes that a review of the radiation safety and health program, financial assurance, and environmental monitoring and control program was not required because they had been previously approved during review of Chesapeake Beach's DP. The Navy has requested an extension in its decommissioning completion due date from June 2011 to October 31, 2014, because its contractor has experienced financial difficulties resulting in a delay in providing the FSS Report to the Navy. The requested extension would provide the Navy with the time it needs to evaluate and restructure the FSS data provided by its contractor, and would permit the Navy to submit an accurate and complete FSS Report to the NRC in order to demonstrate that the site was decommissioned in accordance with the DP.

10 CFR 30.36(i) states:

The Commission may approve a request for an alternative schedule for completion of decommissioning of the site or separate building or outdoor area, and license termination if appropriate, if the Commission determines that the alternative is warranted by consideration of the following;

- (1) Whether it is technically feasible to complete decommissioning within the allotted 24-month period;
- (2) Whether sufficient waste disposal capacity is available to allow completion of decommissioning within the allotted 24-month period;
- (3) Whether a significant volume reduction in wastes requiring disposal will be achieved by allowing short-lived radionuclides to decay;
- (4) Whether a significant reduction in radiation exposure to workers can be achieved by allowing short-lived radionuclides to decay; and
- (5) Other site-specific factors which the Commission may consider appropriate on a case-by-case basis, such as the regulatory requirements of other government agencies, lawsuits, ground-water treatment activities, monitored natural ground-water restoration, actions that could result in more environmental harm than deferred cleanup, and other factors beyond the control of the licensee.

The NRC has considered the five factors identified above and determined the following:

- (1) It is technically feasible to complete decommissioning within the allotted 24-month period considering the decommissioning activities approved for the site. In fact, on site activities, including the performance of the FSS have been completed. However, due to the financial and legal issues experienced by the contractor, which resulted in the contractor not providing the Navy with the FSS data, the Navy has not been able to submit an FSS report to the NRC.
- (2) As part of the decommissioning activities that the Navy has undertaken, waste has already been shipped from the site and disposed of in accordance with the DP and there is no waste remaining at the site. Therefore, there are no waste disposal issues that would impact the Navy's ability to complete decommissioning.
- (3) The decommissioning wastes generated for disposal from the remediation activities at the Chesapeake Beach site do not contain short-lived radionuclides. Therefore, there are no volume reduction benefits that would be achieved by allowing short-lived radionuclides to decay.
- (4) The decommissioning wastes generated for disposal from the remediation activities at the Chesapeake Beach site do not contain short-lived radionuclides. Therefore, there is no significant reduction in radiation exposure to workers that would be achieved by allowing short-lived radionuclides to decay. Waste has already been removed from the site.
- (5) One of the site specific factors that the NRC considered at Chesapeake Beach is the financial difficulties and litigation involving the Navy's decommissioning contractor. The contractor responsible for decommissioning work at Chesapeake Beach, due to financial

difficulty, litigation, and lack of complete FSS data, was not able to provide the FSS report to the Navy in the contractually agreed upon time. Although several draft FSS reports were provided, the Navy determined that the draft reports did not comply with the criteria and guidance set forth in the DP and NRC regulations. The Navy has now been able to obtain the missing data and is working to develop the final FSS report for submission to the NRC. Prior to the Navy obtaining the necessary data, the NRC asked whether the Navy would consider hiring another contractor to perform the FSS again and provide a data report. The Navy indicated that given Federal procurement laws and regulations, it would take longer for it to bring in a new contractor than the extension in time the Navy has requested. The NRC staff considers the performance issues of the Navy's contractor and sub-contractor that led to the unavailability of the FSS data to not be reasonably foreseeable and, as such, to be beyond the Navy's control. As previously indicated, the Navy has developed a programmatic solution that should address future decommissioning timeliness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the considerations discussed above, the NRC staff concludes that there is reasonable assurance that the health and safety of the public will not be endangered by the alternate schedule for completion of decommissioning activities regarding the submittal of the FSS Report, as the removal and disposal of the radiologically contaminated material has already occurred. The staff further concludes that it is in the public interest to grant the extension of time to allow the Navy to fully review the FSS survey data provided by the contractor and to develop an accurate and complete FSS Report that is acceptable to the NRC in order to demonstrate that decommissioning activities were satisfactorily completed in accordance with the approved DP. The NRC will amend the Navy's MML extending the decommissioning completion due date until October 31, 2014 for the Chesapeake Beach site.

REFERENCES

- A. NUREG-1757, Volume 3, (Revision 1), "Consolidated Decommissioning Guidance – Financial Assurance, Recordkeeping, and Timeliness" (ML12048A683)
- B. Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*, Section 30.36(i)
- C. Final Decommissioning Plan, Hypervelocity Gun Facility (Building 218), Naval Research Laboratory, Chesapeake Bay Detachment, Chesapeake Beach, Maryland (ML080980180)
- D. Safety Evaluation Report, Approval Of Department of The Navy Decommissioning Plan, Naval Research Laboratory, Hypervelocity Gun facility, Chesapeake Beach, Maryland, Docket 03029462 (ML14041A338)
- E. Notice of Availability of Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact for License Amendment to Materials License No. 45-23645-01NA, to Incorporate the Decommissioning Plan for the Hypervelocity Gun Facility at the Naval Research Laboratory in Chesapeake Beach, MD, *Federal Register* notice dated January 13, 2009 (74 FR 1710)
- F. NRC Inspection Report No. 03029462/2013001, Department Of The Navy Biennial Inspection And Notice Of Violation, dated April 9, 2013 (ML13101A109)

- G. Department of the Navy, Reply to a Notice of Violation, Letter dated May 6, 2013 (ML13135A063)
- H. Navy letter dated June 3, 2013, "Alternate Schedule Request for Submission of Final Status Survey Reports" (ML13165A300)
- I. Navy letter dated August 9, 2013, "Response to NRC Request for Additional Information (Docket No. 03029462) Concerning Navy's Alternate Schedule Request for Submission of Final Status Survey Reports of 03 June 2013" (ML13266A234)
- J. Navy letter dated October 7, 2013 "Update Concerning Navy's Alternate Schedule Request for Submission of Final Status Survey Reports on 03 June 2013" (ML13303A965)
- K. Navy letter dated October 30, 2013, "November Update Concerning Navy's Alternate Schedule Request for Submission of Final Status Survey Reports on 03 June 2013" (ML13330B611)
- L. Navy e-mail dated February 25, 2014, "RE: New Final Status Survey" (ML14064A064)