

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-5005

April 14, 2010

Lieutenant General Robert L. Van Antwerp
Headquarters, US Army Corps of Engineers
441 G. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20314-1000

Dear Lt. General Van Antwerp:

I am contacting you regarding the concerns of my constituent, Mr. Bud Spillman of Cheyenne. Mr. Spillman is Manager of the Water Treatment Division of the City of Cheyenne's Board of Public Utilities (BOPU.)

Mr. Spillman raises a number of key concerns. His comments are outlined in the attached letter that he sent to me. Mr. Spillman is concerned about the level of trichloroethylene (TCE) in the city's water supply. More specifically, he does not agree with the Army Corps of Engineer's proposed clean up standard for TCE levels in the city's drinking water supply. He states "While the USACE proposed aeration treatment system provides for some level of TCE removal, we simply think that water from Cheyenne's Borie wellfield should be TCE free after treatment. We believe the basis for design and constructability should be for complete removal of the TCE compound from the groundwater supply."

I have raised the issue with your agency on a number of occasions about TCE contamination in the City of Cheyenne's water wells at Belvoir Ranch in Wyoming. After months of testing, it was confirmed that the contamination in the water wells is directly linked to the former nuclear missile site known as Atlas "D" Missile Site 4. It is my understanding that an aeration basin is to be constructed by the Army Corps, and that the Army Corps will continue cleaning the site. I believe it is essential in completing that job that the aeration basin clean the City of Cheyenne's drinking water so that there is no detectable trace of TCE.

Wyoming has an important legacy to the defense of this country. We have been the "tip of the spear" in terms of providing a nuclear deterrent to foreign adversaries such as the former Soviet Union. Nuclear missile silos have been in Wyoming since the early days of the Cold War. Wyoming residents are proud of this legacy, but we also believe that the federal government has a responsibility to leave Wyoming as clean as when they found it.

I hope this situation gets resolved soon for the betterment of Cheyenne residents. I would appreciate a response to this letter no later than April 30, 2010.

Sincerely,



JOHN BARRASSO, M.D.
United States Senator

April 5, 2010

Senator John Barrasso
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Barrasso,

I am writing to update you on the status of the efforts of the US Army Corp of Engineers' Omaha Office (USACE) to treat the TCE plume emanating from the former F. E. Warren Air Force Base Atlas "D" Missile Site 4 in Laramie County, Wyoming (Site 4) located on the City of Cheyenne's, Belvoir Ranch.

I also write to request your assistance in providing Mr. Jeff Skog, USACE Project Manager, appropriate direction in declaring that the aeration system about to be designed and constructed for the City of Cheyenne be designed and constructed in a manner that results in TCE-free water after treatment through the USACE proposed ground water treatment plant.

As you might recall, the USACE has determined that "... *Site 4 is contributing TCE contamination to groundwater in the Borie Well Field...*" (DRAFT FOCUSED FEASIBILITY STUDY, Atlas "D" Missile Site 4, Laramie County, Wyoming, June 2009). The Borie wellfield wells (Borie, Elkar 7, Finnerty and Weber) were drilled and began providing drinking water to the community of Cheyenne in the late 1940s. These wells have been and continue to be an integral source for drinking water to the community.

On March 11, 2010 the USACE held a telephone conference call with the City of Cheyenne through its' Board of Public Utilities (BOPU) and Black & Veatch to review a recently released DESIGN REPORT (December, 2009), issued by the USACE.

The USACE DESIGN REPORT represents a basis of design for the USACE's solicitation to conduct a Design/Build Project for an aeration facility to remove TCE from Cheyenne's Borie wellfield groundwater supply. During the conference call, a number of issues were reviewed and a better understanding was reached on several items that previously had been unclear.

One item that did not receive consensus or agreement was the level of contaminant removal that the USACE DESIGN REPORT proposed aeration system should achieve for the Borie wellfield supply.

Previously and including the USACE DESIGN REPORT dated December 2009, the USACE reported, their intent to reduce TCE concentration through treatment would be to a level below 5.0 µg/L (parts per billion), the current EPA Maximum Contaminant Level for TCE in Drinking Water. Then in an amended DESIGN REPORT dated January 2010, the USACE proposed that TCE would be reduced to a level below 2.0 µg/L after treatment.

The BOPU is appreciative of the USACE attempt to finally budge from their steadfast intention to provide treatment to below 5.0 µg/L, however below 2.0 µg/L is still not TCE-free water.

The USACE's contention has been that the 5.0 µg/L concentration drives their mitigation and compliance program. Since 2005, the BOPU has consistently expressed its expectation that the USACE provide an aeration treatment system that provides TCE-free water for municipal use. (By the way, diluting the groundwater supply with a TCE-free source, in order to achieve a TCE-free supply is also not an acceptable option.)

We also note, that the EPA Maximum Contamination Level Goal (MCLG) for the compound TCE is 0 (zero) and the BOPU's expectations have been and continue to be TCE-free; not 5 µg/L and not 2.0 µg/L; but consistent with the EPA MCLG, 0 µg/L.

Mr. Skog indicated during the telephone conference call of March 11, 2010 that he was not able to make the determination that the proposed aeration treatment system for the City of Cheyenne be designed to provide treatment that results in the treated water supply being below 2.0 µg/L TCE.

I am writing you to request your expertise and assistance in providing the USACE Project Manager appropriate direction in declaring that the aeration treatment system about to be designed and constructed for Cheyenne be designed and constructed in a manner that results in TCE-free water after treatment.

TCE-free water is technically achievable; will result in a minimal cost increase to the proposed USACE project when compared to providing below 2.0 µg/L; and will allow Cheyenne to once again provide drinking water from the Borie Wellfield groundwater supply to the residents of Cheyenne that is TCE free, the same quality provided from the Borie Wellfield supply, prior to the contamination from the Site 4.

It is our understanding, through conversations with a company that supplies aeration equipment similar to that proposed in the USACE DESIGN REPORT that TCE free water is technically achievable.

While the USACE proposed aeration treatment system provides for some level of TCE removal, we simply think that water from Cheyenne's Borie wellfield should be TCE free after treatment. We believe the basis for design and constructability should be for complete removal of the TCE compound from the groundwater supply. Jeff Skog, USACE Project Manager indicates that there might be some "*operational procedures*" that could be implemented that might "*enhance*" the proposed equipment system. If that is true then we would ask that the DESIGN REPORT and the Project Scope be revised to reflect a level of treatment that results in complete TCE removal. Unless the treated water TCE concentration requirements are identified to be less than the currently proposed 2.0 µg/L (amended DESIGN REPORT), there will be no mechanism for the City of Cheyenne to realize a consistent treated groundwater supply of TCE-free water. We strongly encourage that the USACE DESIGN REPORT and Project Scope be changed to reflect the treatment efficiency to a finished product of a TCE-free water supply.

Thank you for your leadership, time and effort involved in assisting Cheyenne to resolve this matter. This issue is extremely important to the citizens of the community, both current and future. We look forward to a positive resolution of this matter, whereby we can continue to meet our mission of providing safe and high quality drinking water to our customers. If I can be of further assistance in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at my office.

Respectfully Yours,

Bud Spillman, Manager
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Cheyenne BOPU
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cc: Senator Mike Enzi
Representative Cynthia Lummis
Rick Kaysen, Mayor, City of Cheyenne
Georgia Broyles, President, Cheyenne City Council
Gary Carver, President, City of Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities
Timothy E. Wilson, Director, City of Cheyenne Board of Public Utilities