COPY

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL MEETING

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RE: Occidental Chemical Corporation

DATE: May 13, 2010 - 6:00 P.M.

LOCATION: Montague Township Hall
8915 Whitbeck Road
Montague, Michigan

APPEARANCES: Mr. Ken Bardo
EPA Project Manager
Corrective Action Section, LU-9J
US Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5
77 West Jackson Boulevard
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Mr. Rafael P. Gonzalez
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T R A N S C R I P T

of the proceedings had at the above time and place before Vivian K. Keene, CSR-2632, Certified Merit Reporter, Registered Professional Reporter, and Notary Public in and for the County of Muskegon and State of Michigan.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Well, then -- my name is Rafael Gonzalez, and I am with the EPA.

Of course, we all know Ken Bardo.

MR. KEN BARDO: Good evening.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: We were just here -- what? -- April 14, so it's been just about a month ago. So that meeting -- this meeting is going to be a lot different than that meeting. At this meeting -- we sort of alluded to it at the last meeting -- this meeting is really to take comments on what we are proposing to you.

Now, we have received some comments, I think, already, quite frankly, and we do know that some are coming through the mail -- so everything that we say this evening is being recorded, so that we ask that when you want to make a comment, please give us your name -- not because we will be giving that information out, but just so we can identify who is speaking. We do not give that out afterwards to anyone, reporter or otherwise. That stays as part of the file. Your comments will be replied to.

As you probably know, the commentary ends the 15th of this month, which is -- what?

MR. KEN BARDO: Saturday.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Saturday -- so if you

get something in to us postmarked by that date, we will make a comment to that.

We have not come prepared to make any sort of a presentation today. We are not prepared to, quite frankly, discuss what you may be proposing as a comment. Your reply will come in writing from Ken Bardo; and that usually, depending upon how many comments we get -- that can take anywhere from -- as long as 30 days, I know that.

MR. KEN BARDO: Right.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Usually, it does take about that long.

MR. KEN BARDO: Yes -- I think, in this case, about 60 days or so.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Oh. Well, I have been under pressure to move along with the 6-month comments that we haven't replied to because we have gotten so many.

Some of the questions that are raised by the public, quite frankly, are not always that easy to answer, technically or otherwise; so we do our due diligence to get a reasonably good response back within a reasonable time.

So -- have I missed anything, before we start this?

MR. KEN BARDO: I think that covers it -- and if the comments necessarily aren't postmarked by Saturday -- they come in from Monday -- I mean, we will still accept them. It's not a strict deadline. We are not going to ignore a comment because it's a day late.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay. With that, then, we would like to open the rest of the session up to comments that you may have on the proposed remedy for the cleanup at the site.

Who would like to go first?

MR. DAN PARKER: (Indicating.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes, sir?

MR. DAN PARKER: Okay. I --

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Your name, please?

MR. DAN PARKER: Okay. I'm Dan Parker.

Do I just read it to her?

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Go ahead.

MR. DAN PARKER: I live right here in the Township. When I first became involved with protecting the environment, I started out as a "NIMBY" -- a "Not In My Back Yard" person.

In the ensuing battle to save the wetlands on the Grand River behind my house from a marina, I met and worked with a unique character. His name

was Owen Davis.

Owen had been the classic "voice in the wilderness" for many years, and he was happy in his old age to see that the next generation coming up cared. He taught me many things. The saddest was the "I told you so" syndrome of an older environmentalist -- which I am becoming.

Many times he, and he alone, said, "You shouldn't be doing that." Nobody listened.

Years later, when things went the way he predicted, he could say, "I told you so"; but being right was a hollow victory, because, in the meantime, a wetland was gone, a river was polluted, a detention pond had failed, and a sand dune was gone forever.

If I live long enough, I don't want to be like Owen and say one day, "I told you so" about this proposal.

The EPA is only looking at a piece of White Lake here. We who live here look at the lake as a whole.

I will not go into a long litany of historical abuse of White Lake. I will just point out two large ones: the tannery and Ellenwood. The tannery is being cleaned up, which is good. If it is

cleaned up to everyone's satisfaction, only time will tell -- but when it is cleaned up, what do we get? Condos, boats and docks.

With Ellenwood, we lost our most valuable wetlands forever; and, again, what did we get? We got condos, boats and docks.

If, 20 years from now, the plume is smaller and the land between Old Channel Trail and the lake is cleaned up, what will we get? My fear is that some "suit" in a far-away city will say, "This land is now valuable," and, like the case with the tannery and Ellenwood, it will become condos boats and docks.

This wetland is one of the last large, undeveloped pieces of land on White Lake with wetlands. I, for one, would like to see it stay that way. Therefore, I say to the EPA: Thanks, but no thanks.

Leave things as they are, and White Lake will be better because of it. I want those wetlands to stay, and not became condos, boats and docks, and I strongly oppose this proposal.

Thank you.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay. Thank you very much.

Who is next?

MR. ROGER SCHARMER: (Indicating.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes, sir?

MR. ROGER SCHARMER: I am Roger Scharmer, Montague, Michigan; and in my comments -- with my comments, I differ a little, because, basically, I think moving the extraction wells -- the purge wells -- back from the bluff on Dowling Street, back to north of Old Channel Trail, is a good idea. It does create a buffer spot between, basically, Old Channel Trail and the White Lake shoreline. There is sort of a failsafe operation in doing that.

Yes, maybe 20 years from now, after the cleanup is done, we will have to face planning commissions' decisions about condos, boats and docks; but, somehow, I will be optimistic and hope that it will turn out all right -- although I am kind of skeptical about that.

I think the other things basically outlined in the EPA proposal -- the continuation of the monitoring of extraction wells and the things on, basically, Page 2 of your bulletin make a great deal of sense; and I think moving the wells back from the bluffline, you know, north of Old Channel Trail, is a good idea, because it's closer to the plume and

the source of the pollution, and you can capture it back there and treat it back there, where the facilities also are, and create that buffer zone between Old Channel Trail and White Lake.

Thank you.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Good. Thank you very much.

Who is next?

THE AUDIENCE: (No response.)

MR. GONZALEZ: Does anyone have any written comments they want to turn in to us?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes, yes.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: You can just pass those down.

I think this gentleman did give us some written comments (indicating).

Does anybody else want to make a comment?

MR. OSCAR KENT: I will go next.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes, sir -- please.

MR. OSCAR KENT: I am Oscar Kent. I am from Montague, Michigan.

I am not opposed to having additional wells. I don't think we need to move the ones that are existing, that are there now. If they want to put in additional wells, I think that might be a good

idea, to move it closer to the source and have a double fields tracing system. That seems to be moving in the right direction.

The other thing is: Information would be nice. As large as this company is, if they could add a website or make a public access website -- there are so many people trying to get information, I think it would actually be economically feasible and make more sense to just, as you update information, put it on the website, so we could all access it. That's it.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes. Thank you very much -- and, before we go on, I just wanted to point out that we are going to -- real briefly, I will make some comments about how we are going to provide better communication between us; and a website for us is a prime example, that we could all go to -- because I don't think we have a website up.

MR. BARDO: No, we don't. We have added websites at some sites, but --

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Oh, yeah. I mean, we have beaucoup websites, or sites where people can go to in communities and go up there and get the latest data on what's going on.

So after we get done with this, we will

briefly touch on that. Let's not talk about that. I probably shouldn't have raised it. I just wanted to let you know we are thinking about that.

All right. Who is next with a comment, then.

MR. ROGER SCHARMER: (Indicating.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes, sir?

MR. ROGER SCHARMER: Roger Scharmer again.

I also agree that somehow we can't think of the lake as just an isolated site -- as cleaning up, basically, like, the Crockery land -- and I would agree that somehow we have to look at the lake as a whole, total entity, and not just an isolated location, as far as pollution goes.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Did you want to comment, sir?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I am going to wait until after the White Lake PAC.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay. All right.

Yes, sir?

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: Norm Ullman. I am the chair of the White Lake Public Advisory Council.

We have submitted to you a three-page statement of our feelings on this issue. I'm not going to read those three pages --

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Ken, you have that -- right?

MR. KEN BARDO: Yes, I do.

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: Ken has it, yes -- and we do have extra copies, if anyone would like to see it. I would just -- I would just state a couple of things.

The PAC recommends consideration by EPA of a number of more cost-effective environmental projects that we believe would address the White Lake area of concern priorities and provide for significant and measurable benefits to the White Lake area.

We realize -- the well system that's there is working, and we realize moving it back from the lake is -- from what little we have seen of it -- probably does have some benefits; but we really question the investment in terms of the fact that the wells that are there are working and doing the job, and there is a significant time period that they -- if one were to fail -- that they would have to address that.

It's all in this report (indicating) -- and, as I said, we have, for those that would care to look at it -- we do have copies here.

We do strongly support the idea of, and

would continue to hope for, additional remediation. Our recommendations -- we have a summary list.

We would like to see OxyChem contribute additional research funds to expand its efforts to identify technology for cleanup of contaminated ground water at the site.

This plan takes one small portion; and, as Mr. Parker stated, you know, you clean that up and you get condos, et cetera.

You know, if they want to give that property to the community, we would be more than willing to take it. This should be a high priority. It has received national attention in the news media and it's been written up in several significant environmental books, and we would hope that the EPA would continue to look at it as a priority site, coming back here more often.

Private drinking wells in the area should have greater attention. There are wells that need to be capped, apparently, in the area. All unused drinking wells or unused wells in the area should be capped and dealt with.

We also are concerned that any attention given this site -- that the cleanup efforts not move the contaminated plume into unpolluted ground water

and change the effect of the plume -- and, as I said, we are totally exploring more issues than that; but, basically, we request, and we think, that perhaps there are better ways these funds could be spent.

So much for the White Lake Public Advisory Council.

Speaking as myself, Norm Ullman, citizen, I would say that nothing would make me happier than to see the day when the entire site was clean. I don't think I am going to be around a thousand years from now, and I think that this is -- it's just terrible. Here is a small resort community -- two little towns -- and here, big industry came and said, "We are going to give you jobs," and one of the bankers -- local bankers -- said, "Well, this area has had 50 years of lumbering, 50 years of slumbering, and now the awakening" -- and I guess the addendum to that could be 50 years of plundering, and maybe 5,000 years of recovering.

I think this needs to be a top priority. I very strongly feel personally that greater attention needs to be spent on trying -- and I know they have tried many different processes and methods, but we have to come up with a way to clean the entire site;

and with the technology and skills that this country has -- you know, we can put a man on the moon and bring him back within 10 years -- we have got to put a greater emphasis on this.

Thank you.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Thank you very much, sir.

Next? Who is next?

MR. JAN DEUR: Oh (indicating).

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes, sir?

MR. DEUR: I will go next.

My name is Jan Deur. I am a trustee in Fruitland Township.

Before I entered into Township politics, I spent my career in finance and accounting. I have presented some written remarks to Mr. Bardo, so I'm not going to repeat those verbatim, but I just wanted to stress a few points.

I was trained in accounting, when looking at a major investment, so I look at what the payback and the return of that investment is; and this is a significant investment that's being proposed by the EPA -- $24,000,000 in total over the 18-year period -- and, to me, I just don't see the cost benefit of the equation. It seems to me to be out of balance.

It's going to cost 24,000,000, but I don't see the community getting 24,000,000 dollars' worth of value out of this proposal. The pollutants -- the contamination plume -- is still there, even after the $24,000,000 is spent. My feeling is that we need to wait for research to produce a much better, more effective technology, to allow for a permanent cleanup of the site.

I think the White Lake PAC alternative recommendations make a lot more sense -- those recommendations that Norm just presented. I recognize that the EPA doesn't have jurisdiction over many of the recommendations that the White Lake PAC has offered. I further recognize that what the PAC is offering up as alternative courses of action will have to be initiated by OxyChem.

To their credit, OxyChem has maintained a presence in this community, and they appear to be making an effort to be pro-active in various environmental efforts. I certainly hope that they will continue those efforts in this regard.

Finally, I would urge the EPA to keep the OxyChem site a high priority and to continue to provide the White Lake community regular public updates.

Thank you for your continuing efforts in monitoring this site.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

Who is next?

MR. STAN JONES: (Indicating.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes, sir?

MR. STAN JONES: I am Stan Jones. I am with the White Lake Area Sport Fishing Association.

We've -- we also agree with the PAC's proposal and their three alternatives -- and, again, we appreciate your position in not being able to initiate a lot of those things.

As myself -- my position -- the community, of course, has been bruised very badly by the damage that was done there, and I would like to see -- and I appreciate the EPA's follow-through on this.

This is -- I haven't heard a whole lot from you, you know, in a public meeting like this, so I'm encouraged -- the fact that you have guys that have got some follow-through.

We've got a beautiful site there, and, even as beautiful as it is, it's still, every day, a reminder to everybody around here that that is fallow ground. There is no development that can be

made of it at the present time.

I personally would like to see some encouragement towards, you know, either a conservative -- an easement in order to protect that property, also -- very important.

The -- well, that's basically what I wanted to express, is that I would like to see more done and more encouragement of the -- the chemical company in order to do more for the community. I do think the proposals -- the plan of the proposals -- towards something that is more tangible and "seeable" will encourage the community to be a little bit more pro-active towards conservation in this area, and it would make the EPA look better, and the chemical company, if we do.

Thank you.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Well, thank you -- and we will probably try just about anything to make EPA look better. Thanks.

Okay. Who is next?

MR. BRUCE WRIGHT: I will go.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay. Good. Thank you.

MR. BRUCE WRIGHT: I am Bruce Wright, Montague Township.

Just to add a few things -- and I know you said you didn't want to talk about a website, but I would like to see that, and I would like this on the website -- to see -- to be -- to see how you can actively be looking for more technologies, instead of just waiting for somebody to come up with a new idea -- and it's funny. I have been listening to NPR all this week about the nightmare in the Gulf, and people have been calling in to the program -- engineers and scientists -- and offering suggestions. So I was wondering if there isn't a way to not just wait for somebody to come up with it -- to actually promote the idea at the universities and to experts out there and actually advertise, and then put that on the website, so we can actually see that something is happening -- you know, with pros and cons of why it didn't work -- it couldn't work or whatever -- but I would like to see a more active program. You know, I don't know what happens normally, but it would be nice to see that on a website that we could dial up.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes, yes -- sharing resources.

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: Yes. I agree. That would be a bonus.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: No. We share a lot of resources.

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: I know that.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay. No. Thank you very much. That was appreciated.

Who is next?

THE AUDIENCE: (No response.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Comments on the cleanup?

MS. TANYA CABALA: I will go -- see if I can read my notes. Tanya Cabala, 714 Alice Street, Whitehall, Michigan -- and it's the house I grew up in.

I am a founding chairperson of the Public Advisory Council -- it's been around for about 17 years -- and I fully support the Public Advisory Council's position, which makes sense. I am a member of the Public Advisory Council.

I just want to remind EPA -- because I am sure you know that our mandate is really focused on cleaning up the White Lake area concern, and we have been working on that for 17 years. We actually were told that we couldn't set up an advisory council 17, 18 years ago, because our White Lake area really wasn't much of a priority. We disregarded that and

ended up getting the blessing of the state and setting up our advisory council and setting up Muskegon Heights' council, too, and ours are actually set up as models of citizen participation.

We are a fairly small community; we have a fairly small group of core people working; but I think we really, working with different groups and members of the community -- we have made some progress to really be proud of.

One of the things I wanted to mention is that, as you might know, we do typically support EPA when they come to the community and want to offer a cleanup; so the fact that we are not supporting this -- and, of course, remember, I am speaking for myself -- but the fact that we are not supporting this position, I think, is pretty significant; and we did not take our decision lightly. We probably had anywhere from six to eight meetings, and every single word that you are going to get, as far as the PAC's position, was debated and agreed upon; so that is consensus.

Like I mentioned, we have made considerable progress. There have been cleanups that have been completed. There is still some that are underway. The one at OxyChem is going to be underway more than

we can imagine it in the future. There's been a lot of work, a lot of planning, a lot of studies that have -- that we think have been helping bring White Lake back to health, but but much more remains to be done; and I think -- someone made the comment -- I don't know -- it may have been Dan -- that we are getting older. I have been at what I have been doing over 20 years, and I think we are at the point now where we are really taking a look at -- and I think we always have -- but we are really taking a look at what's going to bring us something that will really make a difference, so that when we retire someday, we can say, "Well, we made a difference for White Lake" -- when we give the PAC over to some youngsters.

We feel like the Oxy site is contained, and that there is proof that that's the case. The lake is protected.

Now, we acknowledge that some people might want another buffer, but 166 days is enough for us. That's about the time that -- if the system were to fail -- there is more than enough time to handle the system, you know. So we think the recommendations that we came up with -- having OxyChem restart their health study that was to be completed a long time

ago, putting a conservation easement on the property -- the lakeshore property -- and setting up a stewardship program -- it would bring us just huge benefits, and benefits that we would be proud to support and participate in.

We recognize that it will probably fall to us to make sure that OxyChem does this, but we have been accustomed to encouraging folks to do things, and so we will just put that job on our list -- and I am sure that they know that we plan to do so.

We have gotten quite a bit of community support in the short time that we have made our position public, and -- and I guess I really want EPA to weigh the community's opinion here. They are knowledgeable people, people who care about the site, care about the community. We have been very involved. Many of us are fairly knowledgeable about the sites.

I think mostly, you know, we want to be sure you know that we think these things will really help us, and I think mostly help us get beyond our "toxic hot spots" image. I think that's part of the challenge we have right now, is that even though we have gotten a lot of major things done, people still think of White Lake as a polluted place; and by

instituting some of these recommendations, I think that will really help us move beyond that negative stigma, and we really need that.

So we appreciate what you are doing. At this point, we don't agree with the proposal -- I don't agree the proposal -- and I hope we can sit down and take a look at this further if need be.

Thank you.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Thank you very much. I appreciate your comments, really.

So who is next, then?

THE AUDIENCE: (No response.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Who would like to make a comment on the cleanup site?

MR. JIM COUSINEAU: I will make one.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay, sir.

MR. JIM COUSINEAU: Jim Cousineau, Montague Township.

I wrote a letter to Chicago, also, so I won't be very long here -- but I just want to comment in talking here about the technical proposal; and, as I understand the proposal, it's going to draw up water from the west of the current site to the east, and we are going to supply these pumps with water, at a million gallons a day. That's

going to divert the clean-water flow that currently goes north and south in that position from west to east; and there is always a danger, when you divert a water table, that you will draw new contaminants in to a water table from another source, and therefore contaminate the ground water on the property to the west.

Many -- virtually everybody along the shoreline there uses water wells yet for their water supply, and therefore their water supply would be endangered if that happened with this project.

We haven't seen any technical aspects of this; we haven't seen anything that shows what would be the flow of the water from west to east regarding this; and I'm not sure there's been any technical aspects of this studied except for perhaps: Hey, we've got clean water here we can use. Let's just use it.

I think it's dangerous to do that without being able to at least assure the people along the lakefront that you are not going to influence their well water.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Thank you very much, sir. I appreciate those comments -- and you did send those comments in?

MR. COUSINEAU: I did.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay. All right. Then who is next?

MR. JEFF KING: (Indicating.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes?

MR. JEFF KING: I will make a comment.

I am from Montague Township. I am Jeff King, the supervisor.

This is the official position the Township took at our meeting last Tuesday. I will hand this over to Ken when I am done reading it.

The US Environmental Protection Agency is proposing that Occidental Chemical Company, the former Hooker Chemical Company, conduct expanded cleanup of the contaminated ground water at its site in Montague Township.

Montague Township studied the proposal and has concluded that this EPA proposal does not provide a clear path to cleanup of the OxyChem site. Added cleanup of groundwater under the lakeshore portion of the site provides negligible benefits for relatively large costs -- $24,000,000. There is little benefit to the site to be realized from this additional remediation strategy.

The existing ground-water contamination is

already being captured and treated effectively by the system of pumps and filters in place and currently running. Therefore, the Township does not support this EPA proposal.

Then, furthermore, Montague Township would like to acknowledge and agree with EPA's comments at the public meeting in April that OxyChem has gone above and beyond what is required by the EPA remediation order. OxyChem's continued work to enhance the natural restoration of the site through their native grass program and other natural habitat work is appreciated and preferred by the community and is held in high regard.

This was an approved resolution, made on May 11, 2010.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Thank you very much, sir. I appreciate that, really.

Good. We've got some good -- you've got a lot of work to do, dude.

All right. Who is next?

THE AUDIENCE: (No response.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Do we have any -- is anyone contemplating anything more?

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: I would make one.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay. We have a

gentleman right here (indicating). We will come back to you, sir.

MR. BUSKARD: Brian Buskard, Muskegon County resident.

My last job, I worked for an environmental engineering company -- and I'm not representing them; I am representing myself -- and I just want to say: My wife and I fish on White Lake; we kayak; we like to swim; and it's always been kind of in the back of my mind: I won't eat any fish that we catch. We catch and release because of the background that I have.

I have been to many EPA meetings in Lansing and throughout the state, and I know that you guys have a sense of urgency to get things done. I know the president has a sense of urgency to get things done. I know he wants to get the area of concerns cleaned up, and there's been a big focus, and you guys are working really hard; and I have seen it throughout the state, so I know the pressure that you are under, and I appreciate that, and it seems to me that you are really close here with White Lake. The White Lake area concerns have been knocked off. It's almost to the end point.

The disconnect that I see, being an

outsider, is: The science hasn't been shared with the local community.

I am familiar with the environmental firm that's done the studies. I haven't had access to them, but I'm sure there are reasons for what they are doing; and I don't understand them, because, from what I am hearing from these folks and seeing on the time line -- you know, from an environmental engineering aspect, it doesn't make any sense to me. It should be a lot quicker than this if you put additional wells in. I just don't understand the time line. So I think there is a lack of information there, and perhaps that will come forward in your website.

But the environmental easement -- that's something I personally would support -- if we could keep that area a wetlands, I think that would also help get you to the area-of-concern completion, where that would help knock that off that list.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Thank you very much. I appreciate your comments.

Who is next?

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: (Indicating.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Wait. Before we get to you -- does anybody have any other comments with

regards to -- are you contemplating giving us any other comments?

THE AUDIENCE: (No response.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: You are probably putting them together in your head -- I know what that's like -- thinking: How can I say this?

Does anybody have any comments?

THE AUDIENCE: (No response.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: So are we done with comments?

THE AUDIENCE: (No response.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: We are done with comments, then.

Are you going to make a comment, or are you going to make a statement?

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: Whatever.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: No. I need to know, because I am going to ask her to stop after that -- after the comment period, you know -- so it does make a difference.

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: Let's make it a comment, then.

Norm Ullman, citizen.

I really liked a couple of those comments. We don't know what's going to happen with the water,

and that's in here (indicating). Also, by no means are we satisfied with where we are at. I want to emphasize that. We want this cleaned up, and we want to continue with the strong effort towards cleaning it up; but I think there is a cost-benefit concern here.

We would like to see a much greater emphasis on research, and sharing of research all over -- like, let's get this out. How can we settle this? This is an area that I think is keenly aware of these problems -- far more so than most places.

I was at a meeting of a candidate running for congress, and he mentioned the fact that Vern Ehlers, 10 years ago -- a Grand Rapids congressman -- was talking about the Asian carp, and nobody listened to him.

Well, we don't act. We react when it becomes a crisis.

He said, "Now you know about Asian carp. How many of you know about the quagmire of mussel?"

Just about every hand went up.

"This is the only place I have ever seen that. Maybe I get one hand up, normally," he said.

I told him after the meeting -- I said, "The White Lake area people are acutely attuned to what's

going on, so we are going to be watching you, and we do want to see continued efforts made, but we want to see significant quantum leaps, you know; not just a few hundred feet."

We have copies here, if you have not seen the Public Advisory's comments. We didn't read them all. There are three pages. You didn't want to hear that. I will put them back there if you would like a copy, if you have not seen it (indicating).

Thank you.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: All right. Thank you very much. I am glad you did make a sort of "semi comment" at the end there, because the whole thing was really a statement.

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: Well, you were going to turn me off if I said it was a statement.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: No -- that's all right.

So if no one has any comments, then, officially, the comment period is over -- and so you can record the rest of this -- but let me take up one point that this gentleman made -- that you brought up about sharing information.

Just for the record, we do have a repository, do we not?

MR. KEN BARDO: Yes, we do.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: So everything that we have done is in the repository.

MR. KEN BARDO: Both in Chicago and in the two libraries here: White Lake and Montague.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: So there is -- so there is information out there.

MR. BRIAN BUSKARD: How do we access it? I guess that's the question.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Well, I mean, you get yourself up and you go to the library and you say: "Hey -- 'da da da' -- give me the stuff."

The thing we say is: Just don't take the approach of a lot of people and go through the entire repository and make it tough on yourself. That happens a lot. I am sure it doesn't happen here.

MR. KEN BARDO: It's a lot of information, but it is indexed. It's chronological, so if something grabs your interest, it should be indexed to a name, and the librarian can help you with it.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: So let's jump from there to the web page now -- yes.

Traditionally, we haven't had web pages in

RCRA -- not as they do in the Super Fund. In the Super Fund, there are web pages that you go to -- in fact, there is more than one web page. That's because, if there is, say, an emergency response needed, it's available. The on-site coordinator usually has a web page that's accessible to the community, and the region itself has a website put up; so, if you are doing research on the Dow site, you go just go to "EPA", go to "Dow", and you will get information that will keep you going for the next hundred years.

Okay. This site does not have one, but this site will have one. I guess it's a question of when Ken and I sit down to decide how we are going to put this together. It will be a duplication -- a lot of it will be a duplication of what's at the repository -- but for someone who doesn't want to go down to the library, this will be an easy way to get it.

There's a lot of advantages to having that. Of course, you know we have a lot of sites, and there's only a few of us to get all these websites up -- and, actually, the people who actually put the websites up -- they are very limited in number -- but we will make -- we are making a pledge now to you that we will have a website at this site, you

know.

Sometimes we have links that you can go to that will bring you to another website, like a community website, if you have one -- so you could have a link there to that, so that you can cross-reference what's going on back and forth, and their opinion about the cleanup that we are doing could be found there, and you could contrast back and forth the information -- but we are going to do that.

I don't want -- I know I don't want to give you a specific date as to when that will be up; but hopefully, it -- we would hope that that should be up -- at least a preliminary site could be up -- pretty quick. I mean, not "pretty quick" -- I mean, within a reasonable amount of time after you are done with the comments --

MR. KEN BARDO: Right.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: -- after he is done with the comments, which is quick.

MR. KEN BARDO: Some of the main material is on our website. All right? Just Google "EPA, Region 5." I think it's under "hazardous waste." The proposed cleanup -- that's a much larger document. I know it's some of the filings. It's the main material now that we are putting out for public

comment.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes -- and the site that you are making reference to is not always easy. I mean, it doesn't look like one of the Fund sites, where it's actually an actual page. We are sort of redesigning how RCRA does these sites.

If you go to a Fund site -- those of you who have been there -- it's all right there. Our site is more like there is a list of sites, you've got to click on the site you want.

MR. KEN BARDO: You've got to know the year the action occurred.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: It's not as manageable as the other one. We are trying to make the design work for us. We will make it work -- so we pledge that we will do that.

Now, you know, if we are coming back here -- we don't like to come back into the community unless we have something to say, you know, because otherwise -- I mean, it's just not worthwhile. It's not beneficial for us and not beneficial for you. So we would like to -- you know, after we have the response out to the comments -- sometime after that, we will decide -- depending upon what those comments are and how the movement goes on the cleanup -- then

we will come back.

Quite frankly, we usually like to come back after the cleanup starts -- after we start a phase of it or a construction part of it -- and then come back after that goes on for awhile and give you an update on how it's going -- and I think that's reasonable; right?

MR. KEN BARDO: Sure.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: You know -- so, I mean, we are not going to -- we were here April 14, and we are back here pretty quick after that. You might not see us for awhile. That doesn't mean that we have forgotten about you. We haven't. It's just that we don't have anything to say to you right now that you haven't already heard. You know where the phone is if you need us, if you have a question.

I have talked to you, Tanya, several times on the phone.

She does really care. The reporter there really cares -- and, as citizens, we are very open with the reporters, as we are with the community, so if people want to do stories about what's going on here, we pretty much open up the house to them -- you know, within reason.

MR. KEN BARDO: We have put together a

mailing list, too, for when we come out with the final decision. Maybe we will come back here and actually present it; but, at a minimum, everyone will get a response on, you know, what's commented on; and everyone that's on our mailing list will get a copy of the final decision made by EPA.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: I don't see that happening until the fall sometime -- right? -- the final decision -- really.

MR. KEN BARDO: It takes a few months.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Yes -- really, it does -- because you've got to get a lot of feedback from a lot of people. A lot of people don't understand the internal workings of that. Maybe we will talk about that at some time.

It's not just Ken and myself. There's a whole bunch of people. It has to be signed off by management, and everybody has to approve and sign off on the technical aspects of this. Ken probably has colleagues that he confers with on water issues and what have you. It's not all that simple, and it is time-consuming.

MR. KEN BARDO: If you haven't received anything from EPA already, like a public notice, maybe you are not on our mailing list. So maybe the

best way to do this would be: I could give you a sheet here to sign in -- or else my e-mail. Everyone e-mailing would be probably easier.

It's my name -- last name first -- "Bardo" -- dot, "Kenneth" at "EPA", dot, "gov".

You could e-mail me then, if you haven't received anything from us, your name and your address, and I will make sure you are on our address and mailing list then.

MR. BUSKARD: I have a quick question, if I could. I don't know all of the history here, and I hear people tossing around the figure $24,000,000; and, to me, when you talk about cleaning up an environmental site, that's peanuts -- at least in my opinion. That's not real money.

Where did that 24,000,000 come from? I mean, where did that cap come from?

MR. KEN BARDO: The money is not a cap. It's an estimate. It's an estimate based upon: If they put another extraction well system in, what would the cost of that new extraction well system be? -- and I want to say it's about 1.4 million.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: I thought you said 1.9?

MR. KEN BARDO: Somewhere in there.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Right.

MR. KEN BARDO: And then add on to that the estimate that it's going to take 18 years to operate a system -- to operate the system at the lake -- before you can shut it down. It is about a million dollars a year now to do that. So the estimate is pretty good -- but that's over an 18-year period. So, annually, it's, you know, 1-and-a-half million.

MR. BRIAN BUSKARD: What I am getting at is: If we really want to attract somebody to clean up the site, we have to put money behind it; and $24,000,000, if you want to --

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Wait a minute. EPA is not a marketing firm. We don't market properties or --

MR. BRIAN BUSKARD: I am not marketing properties. Bidding is the --

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: What we do is we clean them up as best we can.

MR. BUSKARD: If you are saying you can't find the technology, if you pay enough money --

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: That's another thing, too. You brought up the issue of technology. At the last meeting, I thought we were pretty clear that we are out there trying to find that -- we are

not waiting around for technology to come to us.

We have people that actually -- these are professional people. They go to conferences. They go to their specialty conferences. They belong to organizations. They are professionals. They are always looking to update, just like you do in your own business and I do in mine.

We constantly look to update and look for new and better ways to do things -- so we do that. So, I mean, if you have the opinion that we are just kind of waiting around for something to happen --

MR. BRIAN BUSKARD: What I am saying is: It shouldn't be limited by the 24,000,000, because that won't motivate too many people.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: And I think we have already discussed -- wasn't there a range? Usually, when we come out with a remedy, there's maybe four or five or six of them. So we have four or five or six possible remedies, and we always give what the remedy is, and we also say: This is going to cost a million dollars. This is going to cost 20-million dollars. This is going to cost 30-million dollars -- and so from that list, you know, moneys are a consideration, and part of figuring out what's the best bang for the buck.

MR. KEN BARDO: What Rafael just talked about, we did back in 2001. We are just updating the remedy.

We came out with a remedy in 2001. We looked at all the alternatives to the remedy. There was a range of costs in there. There were different technologies looked at.

We are beyond that, though. All that work has been done. The only thing we are saying is -- the only thing we have come back with now is -- we are saying that one component of the remedy is to clean up the ground water in a timely manner. We found out we couldn't do it. Why can't we do it? We couldn't find a technology.

Even though we studied all these technologies, we couldn't find a technology to clean up the source there. So, as an alternative, we are offering something different. So that's a little bit inconsistent with what we said in 2001.

That's why we are back. We think it's a significant change from what we put out for public comment nine years ago. That's why we have come back with public comment again and we are here tonight.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: And, by the way, your

comments are going to very seriously be considered.

MR. KEN BARDO: Absolutely.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: And, quite frankly, it wouldn't be the first time that we have changed remedies based upon comments -- because I have been in lots of those situations where the community said, "Don't you think this might work better?" -- and it was, like, "Duh." The light bulb went on.

MR. KEN BARDO: It's like in 2001, the remedy was changed substantially based upon public comments. We went with the dredging of White Lake. That wasn't what we originally proposed. That was over a 5,000,000-dollar project; and that was added with public input, and we appreciated that at the time.

Did I say "500" or "5" million?

MR. NORMAN ULLMAN: "5" million.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: "5".

MR. KEN BARDO: All right.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Was it "5" million or "500" million?

MR. KEN BARDO: No. It was "5" million. I heard someone say "500", so I thought I misspoke.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: So -- good -- we have had a little clearing of the air. Sometimes you

have a need to do that.

So I think I have covered -- did I answer your question? Maybe not the way you wanted to hear it, but --

MR. BRIAN BUSKARD: I wanted to hear you say that they are willing to spend enough money to attract somebody to want to do it. I guess that's what I really wanted to hear.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: I can only say -- we can only say so much.

MR. KEN BARDO: Well, I mean, if we find the technology -- an effective technology -- to clean up the source area, it will be implemented. I mean, cost is looked at, you know --

MR. BRIAN BUSKARD: Sure.

MR. KEN BARDO: -- but, right now, there are no technologies. So if something comes about, you know, it's going to be looked at real strongly, because that's the only way to clean up the site -- as everyone wants to, you know, in a timely manner, in a lump sum, and get this big bang for our buck and get it cleaned up for future generations, rather than taking thousands of years.

MR. BUSKARD: Thank you.

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: What else?

THE AUDIENCE: (No response.)

MR. RAFAEL GONZALEZ: Okay. I think that ends our meeting, then -- our official meeting.

Thank you so much for coming, and you will be seeing us again.

* * * * *

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