



# C-Area Public Meeting Summary

Public Meeting Date: September 18, 2025

Location: Borough of West Mifflin Administration Building,  
West Mifflin, Pennsylvania



U.S. DEPARTMENT  
of **ENERGY**

Office of Environmental  
Management

U.S. Department of Energy  
Environmental Management Consolidated Business Center

## **C-Area Public Meeting Notes**

### **September 18, 2025**

#### **Purpose of Meeting**

The purpose of the meeting was to brief the public on the removal action alternatives being evaluated for two buildings in the C-Area at the Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory, located in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania.

#### **Presenters and Meeting Support Personnel**

- Matthew Young, Program Manager, Department of Energy (DOE) Environmental Management Consolidated Business Center (EMCBC)
- David Harper, Project Officer, Naval Reactors Laboratory Field Office, Bettis Laboratory
- Lesley Cusick, CERCLA Subject Matter Expert, Community Engagement Specialist, RSI
- Dominic Arcidiacono, Subject Matter Expert, Boston Government Services, Consultant to EMCBC
- Hugh Davis, Subject Matter Expert, Boston Government Services, Consultant to EMCBC

#### **Attendees**

There were 23 people in attendance.

#### **Host/Location/Date & Time**

Meeting hosted by the DOE EMCBC at the West Mifflin Borough Town Hall in the Borough of West Mifflin, Pennsylvania, from 6-8pm Eastern Standard Time on Thursday, September 18, 2025.

#### **Meeting Presentation**

##### **Introduction**

Ms. Cusick provided a welcome statement that offered thanks to the Borough of West Mifflin for providing the space and the opportunity to meet there, and a thank you to the guests in attendance. Ms. Cusick explained that the presentation portion of the meeting would be filmed and recorded, but that the Q&A portion would not be, in consideration of people who might be uncomfortable speaking in a recorded session. She stated that the main purpose of the meeting was to not only present the project to the public, but to hear from them. She noted that Q&As should wait until the presentations concluded and explained that there were many ways to provide comments and that she would provide more detail at the end of the meeting. (References to the slides that support the information presented are noted in the text).

Ms. Cusick explained the overall purpose of the meeting was to discuss a project in C-Area of the Bettis Laboratory, and that no decision had been made on which alternative to select, which emphasized the value of public involvement. She went on to explain that the public comment period began when the Notice of Availability and public meeting announcement was published in the local newspapers on

September 4<sup>th</sup>, and that it was open until October 4<sup>th</sup>, which provided roughly two more weeks after the meeting to offer feedback. She pointed out the many fact sheets and other materials available in the room for the public to take and explained that the project has a website that is actively maintained and up to date. She said that the fact sheets and slides would be posted to the website by the following week, with the video recording available shortly thereafter, and the meeting summary to follow, targeting the end of October.

After these remarks, she gave an overview of the program offices involved - the DOE Office of Environmental Management (EM) and the DOE Office of Naval Reactors (NR), noting that they are in a partnership to address legacy facilities at the Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory (Bettis). She identified Mr. Matthew (Matt) Young, the EM Program Manager, and Mr. David (Dave) Harper of the Naval Reactors Laboratory Field Office at Bettis as the presenters. She mentioned that many in the audience might not know about the EM Office or the Bettis Laboratory and hoped they would enjoy the meeting. At this point Ms. Cusick introduced Mr. Matt Young.

Mr. Young began with emphasizing EM's partnership with NR to evaluate legacy facilities at the Bettis Laboratory. He then provided background on EM's Mission, its long-established expertise in performing clean up at DOE sites, and the nationwide extent of its presence. After this brief introduction to the project, Mr. Young introduced Mr. David Harper of the Naval Reactors Laboratory Field Office at Bettis. (slides 2-4)

Mr. Harper then spoke to the public about the Bettis Laboratory, explaining its national significance and its role in supporting the U.S. Navy, notably the nuclear propulsion in aircraft carriers and submarines. He provided an overview of the site, its history going back to the 1940's and its role in national security for over 75 years and explained the various kinds of activities that occur on the site from research and development, and materials testing, to providing emergency mutual aid to surrounding communities. (slides 5-8)

Mr. Young then presented a series of slides that went into greater depth about the C-Area buildings – CX and CY. He noted their history, the types of legacy contamination found within them, and the presence of the defueled test reactors – 4 in CX and 1 in CY. He noted that the facilities are actively maintained by NR, the buildings are beyond their useful life, and largely unoccupied. Building layout drawings were shown and described. Mr. Young also indicated that the northern high bay in the CX building contains the Shock and Vibration test facility and that it is not a part of the project. He turned the presentation over to Ms. Cusick to discuss the regulatory process. (slides 9-17)

Ms. Cusick introduced the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation Liability Act, or "CERCLA" process to the audience. She explained that CERCLA is often equated with "Superfund" and the National Priorities List (NPL) and emphasized that Bettis is not a Superfund site and is not on the NPL, but that EM is using the proven CERCLA process for the project. She also explained that DOE has the decision-making authority for the action because of an Executive Order and that while DOE had

the decision-making authority and didn't need the approval of state, federal or local regulators, they would continue to coordinate with them.

Ms. Cusick went over the CERCLA process flowchart pointing out the public meeting and noting that the community involvement aspects were included from the beginning and continue throughout. She briefly discussed the documents that had been produced to date – the Community Involvement Plan, or CIP, the Historical Site Assessment, or HSA, and the Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis, or EE/CA. She further explained that the HSA contains the history of the buildings from construction to the present, including information about the contaminants, and that the EE/CA uses the information in the HSA to identify alternatives for how to address the contamination and their risks and hazards. She further explained that no decision had been made on the alternatives and that public feedback was sought on the alternatives, and that the decision to be made would be documented in an Action Memorandum. Lastly, Ms. Cusick reviewed the community engagement activities that have occurred to date and would occur in the future. She then turned the presentation over to Mr. Young. (slides 18-21)

Mr. Young then reviewed the alternatives included in the EE/CA that ranged from Alternative 1, a continuation of the present Legacy Facility Management (LFM) activities, Alternative 2, which entails removing the reactor vessels and related piping and equipment, their disposal, and LFM, and Alternative 3 – which is Alternative 2 plus demolition of the facilities and disposal of the wastes. Mr. Young then showed a table that compared the alternatives focusing on key aspects of the work – the effectiveness at reducing risks, the implementability of the alternative, the cost, and the duration of the work included in each alternative. He explained that Alternatives 1 and 2 were considered interim, because at some point in the future, the facilities would need to be demolished due to their age and condition, whereas Alternative 3 was permanent.

Mr. Young explained that DOE's preferred alternative was Alternative 3 because it was completely effective at reducing risks and hazards posed by the buildings and was readily implementable. He noted that although the cost for Alternative 3 was the highest among the alternatives, that it was permanently effective. He then explained the project schedule, pointing out the public meeting and noting the remaining steps until project completion, in particular, a completed Action Memorandum (AM), a request for proposal to implement the work documented in the AM, etc. (slides 22-26)

At that point, Ms. Cusick returned to wrap up the meeting and reviewed the various ways of making comments. She explained that there were still two more weeks to provide comments, noting that the comment period was open until October 4<sup>th</sup>. She emphasized that CERCLA was a public process, and that the voice of the public was important to the process. She also explained that the Action Memorandum was the decision document and that it would be prepared following the public comment period and review of the comments. (slide 27)

This concluded the presentation portion of the meeting.

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## Meeting Q&A

A summary of the questions from the audience and answers by the presenters for the subject area follows:

### Schedule

*What is the anticipated start date of work if Option 2 or 3 is approved?* Mr. Young explained that Alternatives 2 and 3 require significant background work prior to implementation, but portions of the work could start early next calendar year in 2026.

A follow-up question was asked - *how long would it take to complete the demolition (Alternative 3 is the demolition alternative)?* Mr. Young's response was that initial work would take up to a year, with another two to three years to complete the project for a total of about four years.

### Waste Management

*Where would radiological material and other regulated materials be disposed of?* Mr. Young replied that radiological and regulated materials from the work would be evaluated, and a determination made about where the material would be sent. He provided that some waste could be disposed of within the state and other materials would be sent out of state to licensed facilities that can handle the material safely.

### Environmental Management

*Will we be notified if there was some sort of disaster at the plant?* Mr. Harper explained that Bettis works with the state and local fire departments through a Memorandum of Understanding with each agency to advise the public on issues and actions if any need to be taken.

*A question was asked about Alternative #3, the demolition alternative, and how, if it is chosen, would there be any investigation of how groundwater flow would be affected?* Mr. Harper explained that the Laboratory has recently updated its understanding of groundwater flow at the Site, who works closely with the State and the US Environmental Protection Agency to monitor legacy contamination. Mr. Harper noted that studies have been completed and that the Laboratory knows where the water goes and how it travels. Further, he explained that the Laboratory is working with the State to clean up soil contaminants and is under a Consent Order to pump and process any water before it leaves the Site.

On a related manner, an additional question was asked about coal mines in the area. *The individual asked if groundwater changes affect the coal mines.* Mr. Harper replied that the Laboratory did not believe that the potential work could impact the mines and that groundwater from the Laboratory projects would reach the mines. Mine subsidence is a concern; however, the mines are stable and have water flowing through them right now. For more information, Mr. Harper explained that Bettis issues an annual Environmental Monitoring Report (EMR). The EMR is shared with the regulators and is available to the public.



## Regulatory/Communications

*There was a question about Local and State involvement in the project and how that would work.* Ms. Cusick responded that the project team has involved Federal, State and Local regulators about the project from very early in the process, informing them by emails, calls and briefings. She explained that the Community Involvement Plan (CIP) lists the regulators that DOE expects to continue to be engaged with during the project.

## Other

*A question was asked about the Valley National Gas site (this property was acquired by the Bettis Laboratory in 2024), inquiring if it was part of this project?* Mr. Harper replied that the Valley National Gas site is not a part of the project, explaining that as a part of the National Lab structure, Bettis Laboratory was looking to extend its buffer distance to the public. NR is refurbishing the rail to be used for deliveries to Bettis, which will minimize local traffic. He explained that the property will be able to be used to support the C-Area project when the work starts.

*A comment was made by a Bettis Laboratory neighbor regarding the deforestation of the hillside across from his home for the addition of retention ponds and that they were not aware of the project and that all the trees would be removed (this comment was not related to the subject of the meeting).* Mr. Harper noted that managing stormwater runoff was a problem in western Pennsylvania, and there was no way to pipe it out, so it needed to be held on site. He explained that the Bettis Laboratory footprint was limited, creating a challenge. Bettis has worked with the State on the design to hold water in the ponds without releasing too much at one time. Mr. Harper explained that the ponds have been designed to capture all the water from a 100-year flood and that the water can be released slowly and will also percolate into the soil. He noted that only an extreme event could cause the ponds to overflow. He explained that the project development is complete and that the Laboratory will look at re-foresting the hillside to make it more attractive, also stating that they do expect the hillside to re-vegetate.

## Conclusion

As of 6:59 pm, there were no more questions. Ms. Cusick briefly summarized the meeting, pointed to the slide projected on the screen with the various information and comment response methods, and thanked the audience for their time and attention.

The meeting concluded at 7:00 pm. Some audience members stayed to pick up materials made available for the meeting and talk to the presenters.