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Response to Governor Thomas Vilsack (Iowa) Concerns Regarding Radiological Material at th

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Recipient(s)

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From: Mr. Newsome



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
INSTALLATIONS AND ENVIRONMENT
110 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0110

11 MAY 2001

Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Governor of Iowa
State Capital
Des Moines, IA 50319

Dear Governor Vilsack:

Thank you for your letter of April 19, 2001 expressing your concerns about past and present activities at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant (IAAAP) in Burlington, Iowa pertaining to the handling, storage and cleanup of radioactive materials. Please be assured that Army shares your desire for a thorough review of activities at IAAAP, a complete assessment of risks associated with any contamination present and ultimately the protection of human health and the environment.

Two coordinated efforts are under way to address contamination at the IAAAP. The first effort is being carried out under the Army's Installation Restoration Program (IRP). A second effort was recently initiated under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP). FUSRAP is a former Department of Energy (DOE) program transferred to the Army in Fiscal Year 1998 to address sites contaminated as a result of the nation's early atomic energy development activities. The Corps of Engineers is evaluating the IAAAP for possible inclusion in FUSRAP based on a referral from the DOE. The Corps must determine whether the FUSRAP-related contamination poses a threat to public health or the environment following the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) before including the site in FUSRAP for remediation. It has initiated a Preliminary Assessment (PA) under CERCLA to make this determination.

In support of this PA, Army archivists and historians have been gathering documents relevant to IAAAP's role in the nation's early atomic energy development activities. In addition, they have interviewed former Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) employees who might have been involved in these activities. These documents were made available to all interested parties including the Iowa Department of Public Health. The Army has forwarded requests for additional information from the Department of Public Health to the DOE and anticipates a preliminary response by later this month.

Since some contamination has been confirmed at Firing Sites 6 and 12, a radiological walkover to help characterize the contamination in those areas is being conducted and the results will be included in the PA. The PA, to be completed in the summer of 2001, will be the basis for determining whether further investigations are required and whether a flyover would facilitate such investigations.



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The Army will continue to coordinate and consult with the Iowa Department of Public Health and other stakeholders throughout this process.

Your interest in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Fitz
Raymond J. Fitz

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army
(Environment, Safety and Occupational Health)
OASA(I&E)

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FAX TRANSMITTAL

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