

# National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)

## Worker Outreach Meeting for Texas City Chemicals, Inc. (Smith-Douglass)

**Meeting Date and Location:** Thursday, October 18, 2007, 7:00 p.m., International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) Local 564 hall, Texas City, Texas

### NIOSH Worker Outreach Team:

Thomas Tomes, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), Health Physicist

Christopher Miles, Oak Ridge Associated Universities (ORAU) Team, Quantaflux, Lead for Special Exposure Cohort Evaluation Report Team

Mark Lewis, Advanced Technologies and Laboratories (ATL) International, Inc., Senior Outreach Specialist

Mary Elliott, ATL, Technical Writer/Editor

### Proceedings:

*NIOSH is tasked with performing radiation dose reconstructions under the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA or "the Act"). Under Subtitle B, the Act provides compensation for eligible former workers who have become ill with cancer (or their survivors) as the result of their occupational exposure to radiation during their employment in the nuclear weapons complex. Texas City Chemicals, Inc. extracted uranium oxide from phosphate ore under contract with the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) between January 1, 1952 and December 31, 1956. Employees who worked at the plant after the contract period may also be eligible for compensation for cancer due to residual radiation exposure.*

*NIOSH is currently evaluating the Texas City Chemicals Special Exposure Cohort (SEC) petition for NIOSH. The EEOICPA mandated the SEC as an additional means of compensation when there does not appear to be enough information available to perform dose reconstructions for a certain class of workers. The Texas City petition was filed on behalf of all workers at Texas City Chemicals between January 1, 1952 and December 31, 1956. If the petition is approved, a worker in the class must have been diagnosed with at least one of twenty-two (22) types of cancer and have worked at the facility for at least 250 days during the covered time frame.*

*NIOSH requested meetings with former workers to find additional information about the daily operations and safety procedures that may assist in the petition evaluation process. A list of questions was submitted to some of the former workers prior to the meeting, and again to meeting attendees (see Attachment). This meeting followed a similar format to the one held earlier in the afternoon.*

Mark Lewis opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. He thanked the attendees for meeting with the NIOSH Worker Outreach Team and explained that the meeting was being recorded to assist NIOSH in accurately documenting participants' questions and concerns. He stated that there had been another meeting earlier in the day with former workers from Texas City Chemicals (aka Smith-Douglass) regarding the period from January 1, 1952 to December 31, 1956, when the plant performed uranium extraction under contract with the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC). During the contract, the plant produced uranium from phosphate rock for use in the nuclear weapons program. Mr. Lewis acknowledged that two attendees had actually worked at the plant during that time. He asked the former workers to introduce themselves.

Former worker #1 (name withheld) stated that he began working at the plant in 1955 or 1956. The work was hard and the working conditions were often very dusty with workers being exposed to many chemicals. He recalled that his wife made him remove his work clothes before he went into the house because they were covered in yellow dust. Many of the workers were day laborers who were only told that they were working in a fertilizer plant. He said that the fertilizer bags "came out of the chute like bullets." Workers loaded 100-pound bags of fertilizer on pallets for four hours at a time. Workers did not take breaks except to eat lunch.

Former worker #2 (name withheld) had also attended the afternoon meeting. He stated that he had worked at the plant for nearly twenty-one (21) years, beginning in 1954.

Former worker #3 (name withheld) stated that he started working at Texas City Chemicals in August 1953. He stated that the plant shut down in January 1956. He went back to work when Smith-Douglass took over operations in October 1956 and stayed until the plant closed in September 1977.

Former worker #4 (name withheld) had also attended the afternoon session. He stated that he began working in January 1957 and stayed until the plant shut down in November 1977. He began his career there as a machinist's apprentice. He became a journeyman machinist after his training and spent his last six years at the plant as Maintenance Superintendent. When Borden went out of business, he and his boss stayed on to remove any of the equipment that Borden wanted to keep. The cleanup contractors came to work at the plant during that time, but former worker #4 did not know how long they stayed.

Former worker #5 (name withheld, son of former worker #4) worked at the plant from June or July 1977 until April 1978 with a contractor (Cemco) to clean out the "trash" in the tanks. He described the "glowing" residue that his team removed from the tanks. A co-worker had an incident where the "glowing" substance got into his boots and he had to be scrubbed down. The co-worker died from leukemia five years later.

Mr. Lewis introduced Victoria Shupe of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Division of Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation (EEOICP). He also introduced Tom Tomes of NIOSH.

Mr. Lewis introduced (name withheld) and thanked him for his assistance in laying the groundwork for the meeting. Mr. Lewis introduced Chris Miles, who is a subcontractor on the NIOSH Team. Mr. Miles is assisting Mr. Tomes in evaluating the Texas City Chemicals site.

**Mr. Miles:**

NIOSH is interested primarily in the uranium recovery operations that took place prior to 1956.

Information about the operations is very limited. The list of questions (see Attachment) covers the areas for which NIOSH wants to get more information. It is unclear exactly how much uranium was recovered in this process, and it appears that there may have been some problems with the process. Any information that you could provide about the operations at the Recovery Building during the contract period may help NIOSH understand the process better.

***Response from Former Worker #1:***

They didn't tell us anything when we were working there. We thought we were loading up fertilizer. I never heard anything about uranium. I remember yellow dust all over the plant. Everybody who worked there was covered with that stuff.

**Mr. Miles:**

You didn't work in the Recovery Building, did you? You worked in the warehouse.

***Response from Former Worker #1:***

Yes, I worked in the warehouse loading 100-lb. bags of Texas City Chemicals fertilizer. That is what I did all the time. We loaded that onto boxcars all day. It was shift work. We went there as laborers and did a hard day's work.

**Mr. Tomes:**

Did you do any work in the Uranium Recovery Building?

***Response from Former Worker #1:***

I can't recall if I did any work in that building, but the laborers worked all over the plant. If they needed laborers, they put us wherever they needed us. I was there when one man was killed. He was driving a loader of some kind and it overturned right on top of him.

It was really hard work, but at the time, I wasn't really thinking about that. I had a young family to support and I just wanted to work. We did anything our lead man assigned us to do and it could have been anywhere in the plant. I think most about loading those bags of fertilizer. They came at us all day long – zoom, zoom, zoom, just like bullets. You would have to be tough to do that.

***Response from Former Worker #4:***

I worked in the Recovery Building as a maintenance man while they still had operations in there. I would go in to make repairs to any equipment that needed mechanical attention. I worked on it right there in the building and I left when I was finished.

**Mr. Miles:**

Did you ever see them loading the product that they were making?

***Response from Former Worker #4:***

They could have loaded it right in front of me and I wouldn't have known it. I was actually in there working on equipment while it was operating, but I have no idea what they were doing. As far as a package of uranium, I wouldn't have known what I was looking at if I had seen it. If you want to speak to an operator who actually handled uranium, I don't think that there is anybody left. *To Former Worker #3 (name withheld):* Do you know of anyone still around?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

No, I don't know of anyone.

***Response from Former Worker #4:***

I am the only one I know of that actually went into that building while it was still in operation,

except maybe (name withheld), who was a pipefitter. There aren't more than two or three left who actually did any work in there while something was going on, but whatever that was, I don't know.

**Mr. Lewis:**

Could the yellow dust that he spoke about be yellowcake uranium, or was that something else? After the meeting this afternoon, one of the attendees mentioned that she regretted not asking about that.

**Mr. Tomes:**

Sulfur is yellow. They used that in other operations in the plant. That may have been what was all over. Yellowcake can be anywhere from pale yellow to dark. I don't know enough to tell them what it was.

**Mr. Miles:**

They probably used the term "yellowcake" to refer to the product in the Recovery Building.

**Mr. Tomes – Question for Former Worker #2:**

Sir, did you say that you worked at the plant starting in 1953?

***Response from Former Worker #2:***

I worked there off and on starting in 1954. He was telling you about the gentleman who was killed out there. He got covered up. I was right there. I was in Bin 5 and he was in Bin 6. The front-end loader dropped a load of fertilizer on him and covered him up when he dug in under it. I loaded bags of fertilizer into boxcars with a forklift. I also loaded bulk fertilizer into hopper cars – dust, dust, dust everywhere.

***Response from Former Worker #4:***

Sometimes you couldn't see your hand in front of you. Have you ever seen the television show 'Dirty Jobs'? He hasn't ever seen any dirty jobs, not like what we worked in. This place was terrible.

**Mr. Tomes:**

One of the things that we are still uncertain of: Was Texas City Chemicals still under construction in 1953-54? Were they laying off then? Were they still operating? Do you know what they were doing back in the plant?

***Response from Former Worker #2:***

I never did get laid off. After Smith-Douglass took over, I went right on working for them. After Smith-Douglass sold to Borden, I went right on working.

**Mr. Tomes:**

NIOSH has documentation showing that in December 1953, Texas City Chemicals delivered 303 pounds of uranium to the government. The AEC records suggest that after that no more uranium was delivered because they were working on modifications to the plant. I don't know what that means.

***Response from Former Worker #1:***

That didn't have anything to do with what we were doing.

**Mr. Lewis:**

(Name withheld), do you remember any modifications to the plant while you were working there as a guard?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

No. I don't remember any modifications. I was just out on the gate. I can't remember.

**Mr. Lewis to Former Worker #3:**

Did you ever go into the building where they were doing the uranium recovery work?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

I went in the Recovery Building occasionally at night to see if the workers in there were alright, but that was the only reason that I ever went in there.

**Mr. Tomes – Question for Former Worker #3:**

Were they operating around the clock in the Recovery Building?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

I can't remember. That was a long time ago. We were working three shifts at the gate. But I didn't know anything about operations and didn't have any idea that what they were handling in there was bad. They didn't tell us how bad that stuff was.

**Mr. Miles:**

How do you remember the conditions in the Recovery Building? Compared to the main process building, was it dirtier or cleaner?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

It probably wasn't as dirty as it was outside where there was all the dust from the fertilizer. I really can't remember. I worked there from 1953 until Texas City Chemicals shut down in 1956. When I left there, I really didn't think about it any more.

**Mr. Miles:**

Do you remember how many people were typically working in the Recovery Building?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

No, I don't. When I went back to work, it was for Smith-Douglass. Then Borden bought them out, but it was still called Smith-Douglass.

**Mr. Tomes:**

It was still called Smith-Douglass after Borden bought the plant?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

Yes. I was still on the gate for about a month after I went to work for Smith-Douglass. After that I went into operations.

**Question from (name withheld) to Former Worker #3:**

When you opened the door to check on the workers in the Recovery Building, how many people were working in the building?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

There weren't many people in there – not more than two. I think there were two.

**Mr. Miles:**

Was that just night shift?

***Response from Former Worker #3:***

I didn't go in there in the day time. At night, all the people in the office and management were off, so I had to go in to check. I remember that we had to punch a time clock at night, maybe every hour or two, and that was one of the places we went to punch in.

**Mr. Tomes:**

Do you know if a security clearance was required to work in the Recovery Building? About that time, the government eased security requirements at phosphate plants that were doing recovery work. Whether they required a clearance seems to be dependent on the contract.

**Response from Former Worker #3:**

I had an AEC clearance and I'll always remember that. I don't know if everyone had to have one.

**Mr. Tomes:**

You had access to the facility, so you would have.

**Question from** (name withheld):

(Name withheld), do you remember any special trucks that came to pick up any type of special product?

**Response from Former Worker #3:**

No, I don't.

**Mr. Miles:**

Do you remember any product coming out of that building at all?

**Response from Former Worker #3:**

No, I never saw any product come out of the Recovery Building.

**Response from Former Worker #1:**

Are we talking about where they shipped the bags out?

**Response from Former Worker #4:**

That was the Shipping Department.

**Response from Former Worker #3:**

We had product being shipped out of the warehouse, but I didn't ever know anything about uranium going out.

**Comment from** (name withheld):

In the meeting this afternoon, somebody referred to a chemical being filtered leaving a by-product of acid.

**Response from Former Worker #4:**

It came through the filter system and dropped through the floor into a dump truck. The dump truck would carry it out to the fill. That was in the Recovery Building.

**Comment from** (name withheld):

That would answer Mr. Miles' question.

**Response from Former Worker #4:**

The by-product went through a chute into a dump truck that was parked beneath it. When it was full, the truck went to the gyp pond to dump it out, and then came back for another load. It wasn't hauled out of the plant unless someone came to get some of it. They took out tons and tons of it that way.

**Question from Former Worker #5 to Mr. Tomes:**

Did you go by the facility to see the gyp pond?

***Response from Mr. Tomes:***

No, I didn't. I was looking for it on Main Street.

***Response from Former Worker #4:***

On the map that you had in the afternoon meeting, I think it showed that the gyp pond covered something like 30-40 acres. When I first went to work there, it was level with the ground. When I left, it was 30 feet tall – the whole 30-40 acres.

**Comment from (name withheld):**

During the Amoco v. Borden case, there was testimony that said that “Borden dumped phosphorus on a 35-acre inactive pile. Other more highly-radioactive waste from the equipment was also dumped on the pile, creating a “hot” area.” You were very close with your 30-40 acre estimate for the size of the pile. The waste was supposed to be low-level radiation, but a later statement said that the land was tested and all of the samples showed that water and soil samples were all “excessively high.”

***Response from Former Worker #4:***

I recall the run-off water system out there. It was bad and we would remark that we never saw ducks and birds over there in the water because of the contamination – never. Back in the 1950s, there were ducks and birds all over out there. It was very marshy country.

**Mr. Miles – Question for (name withheld):**

Does the reference you made ever refer to a specific radioactive material? Does it ever mention uranium or radium specifically?

***Response from (name withheld):***

Yes, one statement did mention radium. I was scanning over it just a while ago.

**Mr. Miles:**

That is what we would expect to see in the gypsum, mostly.

**Question from Former Worker #5 (name withheld):**

Doesn't radium have a longer half-life?

**Mr. Miles:**

Radium actually has a shorter half-life – only 1,600 years.

***Response from Former Worker #5:***

As the gentleman there said – and also someone at the meeting this afternoon – I remember Dad coming home with dust on his clothes and his shoes. Mama would just throw it in the wash pile and wash it all together. I remember Dad having holes in his pants and still wearing them to work.

**Mr. Lewis/Mr. Tomes – Question for (name withheld):**

Was the discovery item that you cited earlier a matter of public record? I am curious as to how you obtained that information. Can we get a copy of that information?

***Response from (name withheld):***

Yes, it is public record. I can give you a copy. There is some good information in here on the site that may not be common knowledge. Amoco claimed that Borden was aware of the radioactivity in the ground. Amoco originally bought the property for \$2.2 million, but bargained down to \$1.8 million after they discovered that the property was unusable.

**Comment from** (name withheld):

The Texas City Council called a special meeting with the management from the plant and they agreed that the plant should be closed. I have a lot of information here – a lot of history.

**Mr. Miles:**

I think it is interesting that Texas City Chemicals built the plant and evidently it wasn't very profitable because they shut down and filed bankruptcy. Smith-Douglass seemed to have more success, because they operated the plant for a long time.

**Response from Former Worker #3:**

When they shut down in 1956, they said that they couldn't make any money on the uranium recovery. They just weren't getting enough of the product out of that rock. That is what they told us at the time.

**Mr. Miles:**

That is consistent with what I have seen. They were expecting to have a lot more product.

**Question – Former Worker #4 to Former Worker #3:**

What were they doing in that building in 1957? They were still doing something in the Recovery Building then.

**Response from Former Worker #3:**

I really don't know what they were doing in there.

**Mr. Tomes:**

NIOSH has AEC records that show that Texas City Chemicals did not deliver any product to the AEC in 1954 and 1955. I also saw another record that showed where one of the larger AEC laboratories was analyzing samples from Texas City Chemicals. I assume that Texas City Chemicals was doing something since they were sending samples to the AEC Laboratories.

**Question from** (name withheld):

What year was that?

**Mr. Tomes:**

I don't remember the date, but it was during the period of time when they weren't delivering product to the AEC. They may have still been developing the product.

**Comment from** (name withheld):

I misspoke. (*The speaker reads a 1970 article regarding productivity at the Borden plant.*) I have other information on two other refineries here, too.

**Mr. Tomes:**

We assume that Texas City Chemicals produced uranium during the entire contract period. We just don't know all of the details.

**Comment from** (name withheld):

The information that has come forth, regardless of the entity – DOL, NIOSH, whomever – is quite good. There are too many cases of cancer. What gives me such a bad feeling is that the men worked unknowingly in it. That is not good. We wouldn't be happy with it today if we were told that we were working in something so harmful without having the choice to refuse to work in it. I have heard all kinds of questions, "Did you know this?" Congressman Lampson just recently discovered what really was going on out there. We sent him several documents on my father and were asked if we had him tested for radiation. We didn't think that there was any

reason to have him tested. We just thought he worked at a fertilizer plant. My father was buried before Congressman Lampson ever brought that information forward.

I was asked earlier today whether my father ever showed any signs of radiation exposure. He had a place on his arm that looked like a burn. He put ointment on that burn for a long time and it never did heal. It discolored the skin quite a bit and it never did heal. It would get to 90% and then break out again. There is a possibility that it was a radiation burn. The only way we could find out now is to have his body exhumed. That is a bit gruesome for a family to have to go to a cemetery and have to extract bodies to prove a case. My mother had cancer, too. (Name withheld) has had several family members afflicted with cancer. Many families in the community are affected. It is quite clear that something was happening out there, regardless of whether anything is ever done about it.

**Mr. Tomes:**

Do you mean exposure to chemicals and radiation exposure?

**Response from (name withheld):**

Yes. No real precautions were taken to protect any of the men, such as special clothing and respiratory protection. The only consistent protection in the plant was rubber boots. A pair of leather shoes wouldn't last any time in that kind of environment. That was a general statement from many gentlemen who have been present at the local meetings. We have had perhaps 20 local meetings and have gotten testimony from several who have already died from cancer. We heard some information this afternoon that we haven't heard at any of these local meetings about the presses and the extraction process. One of the gentlemen who signed the affidavit that my father worked at the plant was (name withheld), who is no longer with us. He was the foreman in charge of the black laborers at the plant. He had several forms of cancer. He was near death at the time of his statement and a county judge witnessed the testimony because he was unable to sign and required his daughter's help to hold the pen. I can't pronounce all the different types of cancer, but, basically everything that we have sent in has been denied. That is disheartening.

**Mr. Tomes:**

Are you talking about the EEOICPA program?

**Response from (name withheld):**

Yes. It is kind of bitter for all of the employees.

**Mr. Tomes:**

This program covers all but one cancer and that is chronic lymphocytic leukemia, which is not considered a radiogenic cancer. It has to be a true cancer. There may be precancerous diagnoses that are not covered. If someone has medical evidence of a cancer, they need to resubmit that to the Department of Labor.

**Comment from (name withheld):**

Many of the workers' survivors have filled out extensive paperwork for the initial claim. The initial response from the Labor Department is denial on that case. That was like putting a pin in a balloon. They don't want to fool with it. We started encouraging them to bring us death certificates showing a cause of death. We probably got 20 death certificates that people have shared with us that indicated that cancer was the cause of death.

**Response from Former Worker #4 (name withheld):**

I submitted a claim to the DOL District Office in Colorado. I had cancer while I still worked at

the plant. I had to get a pathology report and all of my medical records from M.D. Anderson Medical Center. I talked to (name withheld). He told me that the time period was from 1952 to 1956 and that nothing was covered after that time.

**Ms. Shupe, DOL Policy Department:**

That may have been correct at the time when you spoke with him. In 2004, it was extended to 1977.

***Response from Former Worker #4:***

He told me that if I wanted to pursue the claim, they could put my claim on hold until the date was changed. I have paperwork that states that there were no means to put the claim on hold, that if I wanted to continue, I would need a lawyer. I couldn't afford a lawyer so I had to pull my claim.

**Question from (name withheld):**

On quite a few of those death certificates, the causes of death were things like diagnoses like pleural plaque, asbestosis, and other lung disease. Would those conditions be caused from radiation exposure?

**Mr. Tomes:**

I can't answer that question.

**Mr. Lewis:**

The gentleman who just joined us worked at the plant later. I'm going to let him introduce himself.

***Response from Former Worker #6:***

I worked with the disposal of the material. We took vacuum trucks out there and hauled off a lot of the material in tankers. We hauled off a lot of material out of that particular area of the plant.

**Mr. Tomes:**

Was that in the late 1970s?

***Response from Former Worker #6:***

Yes. We worked for a company called Coastal Environmental Control.

**Question from Former Worker #4 to Ms. Shupe:**

Do you know (name withheld)?

**Ms. Shupe**

I have heard the name, but I do not know him.

**Question from (name withheld) to Former Worker #6:**

Was the waste that you hauled off in liquid form?

***Response from Former Worker #6 (name withheld):***

Most of it was liquefied, like sludge. We also hauled off powdered material and dirt. We went in and vacuumed the surface.

***Response from Former Worker #5 (name withheld) and others:***

That was raw material – before it had even been crushed. All of the phosphoric rock came out of Plant City, Florida. It was barged up here. It was loaded with shark teeth. We used to go over there and pick the shark teeth out of it.

**Question from (name withheld) to Former Worker #6:**

Can you tell us where you took the waste? Did it go to the Superfund site?

**Response from Former Worker #6 (name withheld):**

We went to the Superfund site. We went offsite to Pasadena to the landfill. We also went up to landfills in Beaumont. We disposed of most of the material at different sites.

**Response from Former Worker #5 (name withheld):**

You did some dumping out in the big pits at Malone Trucking, too. After my job ended with Cemco, I worked out at Malone. I remember CEC bringing waste out there.

**Response from Former Worker #6:**

Our office was at Grant Avenue and First Street in Texas City. (Name withheld) was the owner of the company.

**Comment from (name withheld):**

Maybe I have misunderstood. Did you take any of the waste from Borden (aka Texas City Chemicals) to the Superfund site over on Route 146 where they had the machine set up? I am talking about the place where they were taking all the waste that they were cleaning up from the tin smelter.

**Response from Former Worker #6:**

Yes, we took some of the waste to that pit. We hauled a lot of waste all over this area.

**Response from (name withheld):**

We need to know where some of it went.

**Mr. Tomes:**

Is there anything else you would like to mention about your work at Texas City Chemicals?

**Mr. Lewis to Former Worker #6:**

What we are talking about is the uranium recovery process at the plant in the 1950s. There is also a question about where the waste went, and you have been a help with that.

**Mr. Lewis:**

We have the plans where the workers identified the work areas this afternoon. We got some information from some gentlemen who actually worked there. But we still have a lot of unanswered questions.

**Mr. Tomes:**

We are always looking for more information. We would like to have more.

**Mr. Lewis:**

That is why we will advertise the NIOSH Town Hall Meeting that is scheduled for November 15. There is always a chance that we will reach someone who actually worked at Texas City Chemicals that we haven't heard from yet.

**Mr. Tomes:**

Any time we can get more information it is a good thing.

**Comment from Former Worker #1 (name withheld):**

It seems like they are waiting until we are all dead to do anything about this. Most of the guys I worked out there with are dead. The ones who are still living have some kind of illness. I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. Here we are in 2007 trying to find out what happened and this

(contract) was in the early 1950s. It looks to me that they are trying to wait until we all go. There are not many of us left to tell what went on then.

**Mr. Tomes:**

The NIOSH program is in place to evaluate how much radiation dose a worker may have received on the job. They developed EEOICPA because the workers weren't always told what they were working with and weren't adequately protected or monitored for radiation exposure. That is why we are looking for more information now – to see whether we can determine what exposure the workers got at Texas City Chemicals.

***Response from Former Worker #1:***

I understand what you are saying.

**Comment from** (name withheld):

I have heard a lot of the former employees say that they have had a lot of urinary tract problems after they left there, too – a lot of infections and such after they got older. I don't know whether it has anything to do with their work or not. We appreciate that NIOSH took the time to come down here to hear these stories. Many times, people have become frustrated at these meetings because they know that after we close our meetings, the information is just going to stay right here. When the agencies come down here investigating, it gives people a little hope that something might come of it. We try to get them to understand that their statements need to be as true and to the best of their knowledge so that there is no misleading information so you can somehow tie the picture together. We are going to pray that you will somehow find a way to convey what you have heard today from all these employees and help them in some way to get some type of medical care or compensation. Please do what you can to help us out. We appreciate your having enough compassion to come and hear what we have to say here in Texas City. Thank you.

**Comment from Former Worker #6:**

I may not be as old as some of you, but I was really concerned when I read about this meeting. I am not just thinking about the workers back in the 1950s, but also about us younger guys who could have been exposed to this. I lost my wife at an early age to multiple cancers after I started working out there in the plant. I was very curious about how she got the cancer. Was I bringing it home in my dirty work clothes for her to wash? My daughter has had children with birth defects. I was concerned that I was exposed by working in that area and that could have caused the problems. Most of the time, we worked without gloves and masks. They would just tell us to jump out and get something and we would do it. They never told us what kind of materials we were dealing with. Was it toxic? Was it harmful to your body? They never did tell us.

**Question from** (name withheld):

Can you tell us when you worked out there?

***Response from Former Worker #6:***

We probably worked there between 1969 and 1977. The co-owner of the company is still living and I'm going to try to see if he has any paperwork from the jobs we did there.

**Comment from** (name withheld):

I think the most important thing about this man's testimony is that it was just wrong to take any man out there to work at that point in time, knowing that it was a contaminated site. That is abusive. I think it is quite clear that, due to all the industrial installations here in Texas City, at that point in time, someone had to know about the contamination out there. Some of our civic

officials, some of our plant managers – somebody should have been stopped them from going in there. This man is 50 years old, that's a big difference in the time from the workers back in the days of the contract.

**Comment from Former Worker #4:**

I think that all of the workers are on the same page. Everybody has the same story to tell. There is no variation.

**Comment from** (name withheld):

There are a lot of husbands and wives who have had cancer.

**Comment from Former Worker #4:**

You can go over to Carbide and look at the same amount of people. They didn't have cancer like we did at our plant. You can go to any plant here and take the same percentage of workers. They don't have the cancer rate that this company had.

Mr. Lewis reiterated that NIOSH would hold a public meeting on November 15 to hear more from the community. He thanked the attendees for their time, and adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m.

**Attachment:** Questions about Texas City Chemicals

## Attachment:

### Questions about Texas City Chemicals

Here are some questions that the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is looking for information on.

Anything you can tell us about even one question will help. Don't worry if you don't know about most of these.

Texas City Chemicals started up a uranium process in December 1953. But they did not ship any uranium during 1954 and 1955. We understand that this was due to modifications to the main plant.

What work was going on at the plant in 1954 and 1955? Do you know of any plant operations, modification, or uranium work at this time?

What was happening at the plant in 1956? We understand that it may have shut down for a while.

Texas City Chemicals filed for bankruptcy in 1956. The plant was later bought by Smith-Douglass. Do you recall anything about this?

What building(s) were used in the uranium process? What was it used for after 1956?

How were the raw materials handled and moved to the uranium building?

Can you describe the uranium work?

How was the uranium packed for shipping? Was it dried and packaged?

What happened to the waste from the uranium plant?

What protective gear did people use in the uranium process?

Did people who worked in the uranium process wear radiation badges?

Did the company ever collect urine samples from them?

Do you have any other information about radiation at the plant?