

ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION

MEETING NO. 962

2:15 p.m., Wednesday, February 17, 1954

Present

Lewis L. Strauss
Henry D. Smyth
Thomas E. Murray
Eugene M. Zuckert

K. D. Nichols
William Mitchell

Roy B. Snapp
W. B. McCool
John H. Stumpf

Also Present

L. R. Hafstad
Rear Adm. H. G. Rickover
Shelby Thompson
E. R. Trapnell
George G. Manov
Francis J. McCarthy
Gerard C. Smith
Comdr. James M. Dunford
John Mackenzie, Jr.
Dr. John C. Bugher
Col. Vincent G. Huston

CLASSIFICATION CANCELLED

~~OR CHANGED TO~~

BY AUTHORITY OF L. M. Galanter
BY R. Anderson DATE 4/4/79

DELETED

AEC 141/22 - Policy for Nevada Proving Grounds

Under consideration was a report by the Director of Military Application, proposing that the Commission approve the continued use of the Nevada Proving Grounds for atomic test activities, in accordance with limitations set forth in the subject paper, and approve the initiation of

planning and the release of funds for capital construction in preparation for tests to be conducted in the period 1954-55.

Colonel Huston and Dr. Bugher reviewed at length the circumstances leading to the recommendation of AEC 141/22 and particularly the proposed criteria to govern future test activities as set forth in Paragraph 4 of AEC 141/22. Colonel Huston commented that if preparations for forthcoming test operations are to be completed on schedule it will be necessary to initiate planning and general preparations in the very near future. Mr. Smyth observed that the requirement that the scheduling of shots be more elastic than in the past appeared to be most important. However, this provision raised the question of the desirability of avoiding open shots in the future if it is at all possible to do so. The Chairman indicated that he shared Mr. Smyth's concern on the subject of open shots and believed that in view of the hazards necessarily involved in conducting tests in the continental United States, it was desirable for the Commission to obtain the advice of the General Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine before making any commitment on the future use of the Nevada site. Mr. Zuckert said that he agreed that it would be highly desirable to obtain the views of the advisory committees before the Commission attempts to reach a decision on this matter. He observed, however, that in order to avoid delay in preparation for test operations, it might be desirable to authorize release of construction funds and approve the initiation of planning at once.

Mr. Murray said that while he shared the concern of the other Commissioners about the hazards of continental testing operations, he felt strongly that the progress of the program and considerations of economy required the continued use of the Nevada Proving Grounds. Perhaps it would be desirable to make the criteria proposed in AEC 141/22 more stringent; this could easily be done if the advisory committees so recommended. However, he hoped that the Commission would not fail to act at this meeting such a way as to reflect clearly its recognition of the necessity of continuing continental testing operations.

The Commissioners then discussed at length with Colonel Huston and Dr. Bugher such matters as the membership of the Committee to Study the Nevada Proving Grounds, the basis of the Committee's recommendations, and the means which might be employed to provide a greater margin of safety in test operations. Dr. Bugher summarized the Committee's

position by saying that while it was clearly impossible to insure that no hazards would arise as a result of weapons tests, it appeared to be quite possible to take additional precautions which should provide a greater margin of safety than previously.

After further discussion of these and related matters, the Commission:

a. Approved the initiation of planning and general test preparations for conduct of tests at the Nevada Proving Grounds in the period 1954-1955;

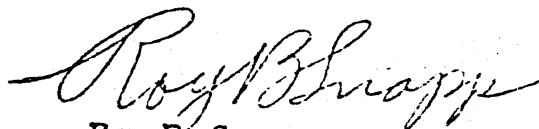
b. Approved release of \$460,000 for capital construction items in Fiscal Year 1954 budget; and

c. Requested that the General Advisory Committee and the Advisory Committee for Biology and Medicine be asked to consider and, at the earliest possible date, report their views on the proposed policy for the use of the Nevada Proving Grounds set forth in AEC 141/22.

Mr. Murray asked to be recorded as dissenting from the majority Commission decision in that he believed that affirmative action on Item b. of the recommendation of AEC 141/22 should have been taken at this meeting.

At this point Colonel Huston and Dr. Bugher left the meeting.

DELETED



Roy B. Snapp
Secretary

Approved by the Commission: May 11, 1954