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R-24
Office of Gerrie Schipske
Councilwoman, Fifth District
Memorandum

Date: March 13, 2007

To: HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

From: Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske *Gerrie Schipske*

Subject: AGENDA ITEM: Request Report from City Manager's Office on Testing Done to Determine Level of Depleted Uranium on Boeing/Douglas Park Project Site

DISCUSSION

Last week, *The Beachcomber* ran the first of a two part series written by Kirt Ramirez raising the question as to whether or not the proposed Douglas Park project is environmentally safe due to allegations by Mr. Ramirez that he was exposed to "depleted uranium" while living in a camper parked on the Boeing property.

Mr. Ramirez further contends that McDonnell Douglas-Boeing utilized uranium as "trim weights" in their DC-10 and 747 aircraft until the late 1980's but may not have fully disposed of the heavy metal and that it may have leached into the soil over which proposed residential and industrial developments are to be built. (FAA Advisory 20-123 confirms the placement of uranium "balance weights" in Douglas aircraft and the need to avoid handling this material.)

I have personally spoken with Mr. Ramirez who is a sincere, young man. Because of the nature of his allegations and the fact that a local newspaper has published them as a front-page story, I do believe that this issue warrants inquiry and sufficient reassurance that the proposed Douglas Park Project is safe.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council hereby requests that the City Manager provide a report within 30 days concerning: 1) Whether or not the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Douglas Park Project included testing the soil and groundwater for uranium and cadmium (which was coated on the trim weights to prevent corrosion) and the results of these tests; and 2) Confirmation from Boeing that this radioactive material and other heavy metals were completely remediated from the soil, sufficient to safely allow residential development on top of the soil.



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Advisory Circular

Subject: AVOIDING OR MINIMIZING ENCOUNTERS WITH AIRCRAFT EQUIPPED WITH DEPLETED URANIUM BALANCE WEIGHTS DURING ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS
Date: 12/20/84
Initiated by: AWS-330
AC No: 20-123
Change:

1. PURPOSE. This advisory circular provides information and guidance to individuals who come in contact with depleted uranium contained in aircraft control surfaces during accident investigations.

2. RELATED READING MATERIAL. Additional information on depleted uranium may be found in the maintenance manual of each affected aircraft and also in service information provided by the aircraft manufacturer.

3. DISCUSSION. For many years, aircraft manufacturers have used "depleted" uranium to balance ailerons, rudders, and elevators on certain jet aircraft and rotor blades on certain helicopters. Uranium is 1 1/2 times as dense as lead and is the heaviest naturally occurring metal. According to a 1983 McDonnell Douglas Customer Service First Quarter publication, only "depleted" uranium is used, which means it has been processed to remove most of its uranium 235, the most highly radioactive form used in nuclear powerplants. The remaining uranium 238 emits only low-level alpha radiation. While the depleted uranium normally poses no danger, it is to be handled with caution. The main hazard associated with depleted uranium is the harmful effect the material could have if it enters the body. If particles are inhaled or digested, they can be chemically toxic and cause a significant and long-lasting irradiation of internal tissue. Depleted uranium is slightly radioactive. To minimize radiation hazards, depleted uranium balance weights are 100 percent cadmium plated during the manufacturing process. If the cadmium plating is intact, normal handling of the parts is considered to be non-hazardous and no special precautions are recommended. The use of radioactive materials in many every day applications is not at all unusual. For example, tritium, a radioactive form of hydrogen, is used in self-luminous signs, such as exit signs, and watches. Thorium, which has a radiation activity level comparable to depleted uranium, is used in making gas mantels for lanterns, electronic equipment, and high-quality optical lenses for cameras and overhead projectors. Also, smoke detectors contain americium 241, a radioactive material.

4. PRECAUTIONS.

a. Avoid contact with balance weights using depleted uranium. On arrival at accident scenes of aircraft suspected of containing balance weights made of depleted uranium, determine if balance weights have been damaged or lost their cadmium plating coating. Request specialized assistance if balance weights have been damaged or lost their cadmium plating. No penetration of the plating is allowed.

b. Avoid breathing or swallowing particles of balance weights found damaged or with cadmium plating damaged or lost.

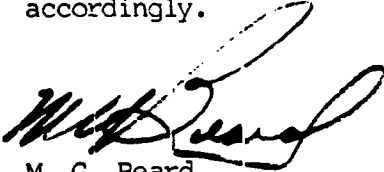
c. If it becomes necessary to handle balance weights, the following precautions should be observed:

(1) Personnel handling the balance weight should wear gloves.

(2) Industrial eye protection should be worn.

(3) Respirator mask should be worn to ensure no radioactive dust particle ingestion.

d. Gloves, wrapping material, wiping cloths, respirator filters, or any other articles used in the handling of damaged balance weights should be discarded and appropriately labeled as radioactive waste and disposed of accordingly.



M. C. Beard
Director of Airworthiness



Background Information

Subject: Use of depleted uranium counterweights at Long Beach Boeing plant

Agencies confirm Boeing handled depleted uranium within regulatory restrictions

The Boeing Company takes environmental issues seriously and has a firm policy to comply with all local, state and federal regulations. The California Regional Water Quality Control Board, Los Angeles Region (RWQCB-LA) and the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (DHS) investigated use of depleted uranium counterweights at the Site in 2006 and found that Boeing formerly handled depleted uranium counterweights in accordance with the regulatory restrictions.

Assessment and remediation conducted under direct oversight of Regional Water Quality Control Board for safe re-development.

Environmental assessment and remediation have been implemented at the former C-1 Facility (the Site) to ensure safe redevelopment of the property. The assessment and remediation has been conducted under the direct oversight of the RWQCB-LA and has included sampling and analysis of a wide suite of compounds and constituents based on historical operations at the Site. Sampling for depleted uranium was not done because the counterweights were not processed, manufactured, or altered at the Site. The assessment included sampling and analysis of a wide range of metals including cadmium and nickel. This sampling and analysis was conducted to evaluate potential releases that might be associated with processing and/or manufacturing operations at the Site, which were not performed using the depleted uranium counterweights.

Use of depleted uranium counterweights addressed in 2004 Environmental Impact Report

In 2004, during the Environmental Impact Report public comment period for the Douglas Park Project there was a comment relating to the use of depleted uranium at the Site. A response to this comment was prepared and included specific information relating to the use and handling of depleted uranium counterweights at the Site based on standards that were in place at the Site since 1962. The weights were manufactured off-Site by a supplier, and were not chemically, physically, or metallurgically treated or manufactured at the Site. Once received at the Site, the weights were moved to the designated secure storage area, where they were inspected prior to installation on aircraft. The weights were stored, handled, and installed in accordance with strict facility requirements and consistent with the regulatory restrictions. These strict requirements were developed in part to ensure that depleted uranium would not be inhaled or ingested.

Normal handling of intact depleted uranium counterweights is considered non-hazardous

The use of depleted uranium counterweights in commercial aircraft have been addressed by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in advisory circular 20-123 and the World Health Organization (WHO) in Fact Sheet N 257. The FAA concluded that normal handling of intact depleted uranium counterweights is considered non-hazardous with no special precautions required.

The above is a summary of relevant information; additional information and references can be provided if needed to assist the City of Long Beach.

Date: March 6, 2007

Contact: Steve Chesser (562)593-9223

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This Week's Poll:

Do you agree with the Airport Draft EIR recommendation that "bigger is better"?

- Agree
- Disagree
- Neither

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Douglas Park a Health Risk?

by: *Kirt Ramirez*

I have a story to tell.

For five years I have tried to get other news outlets to report on what I'm about you, but have been unsuccessful.

I would like to thank *Beachcomber* Publisher Jay Beeler for letting me go through with this, even though it is unorthodox for a journalist to tell his own story in person.

The details I will present here have been thoroughly documented. My story has parts and contains information that has never been reported in the media before now. This story involves uranium poisoning and the former Boeing C-1 facility Lakewood Blvd. and Conant St. I'm about to share with you what I stumbled upon in 2002, facts I believe you have a right to know.

In order to explain my uranium story, I must first share a separate story detailing my personal history, which will ultimately lead to my uranium discovery. This section is for a reason. The story is unusual and complicated and cannot be briefly summarized, as it includes safety issues unknown to the general public.

I grew up in Cypress. I was physically healthy for most of my childhood. But in my early teenage years, I slowly became ill. I couldn't concentrate, I started stuttering, my hair and eyebrows began falling out, and I suffered from extreme fatigue and depression. I became introverted and started twitching and having spasms.

Doctors documented these symptoms but could not offer an explanation. My condition progressively got worse during the mid 1990s. I was diagnosed with heart and lung problems. My skin developed a yellow tint and I was hospitalized many times for depression.

My symptoms could not be explained as just mental or physical problems. So what was happening to my body that my several doctors could not explain. I tried to finish college, but failed since I couldn't concentrate on my studies. I couldn't hold

got severe migraines and became weaker. By age 19 in 1995, I was extremely moved in with my aunt in Los Alamitos.

I eventually gave up on my doctors and mainstream medicine altogether out of frustration. My doctors weren't helping me. The drugs they prescribed to treat symptoms only made me worse through the many side effects. I always felt deep inside that something else was causing my symptoms and I wanted to find out what it was.

Finally An Answer

After doing some research in 1997, I found a medical doctor who appeared on "one of the best" list. This doctor specialized in environmental medicine, metabolic medicine, preventive medicine and clinical nutrition. He was an Air force captain and a 1959 MIT biology graduate.

My aunt financed some of the costs of seeing him, since my insurance did not cover "alternative" treatments. During my initial 45 minute visit, I knew this was the doctor for me. He was thorough, interested, focused and honest.

During the exam, he looked in my mouth and noticed nearly every tooth was with "silver" amalgam dental material. He said my symptoms matched that of mercury poisoning. It is now well known that amalgam material contains 50% mercury and that the element can leach out and be absorbed by the body.

As a fellow of the American Academy of Environmental Medicine and a diplomate of the International Board of Environmental Medicine, my doctor ordered that lab tests be performed immediately to test for heavy metals.

This testing of toxic metals was performed by Doctor's Data Inc. in Chicago, my medical specimen was sent via FedEx. This lab analyzed 15 different elements regarded as toxic, including mercury, antimony, arsenic, bismuth, cadmium and uranium. Doctor's Data is a CLIA certified lab, so precise, that their tests are regularly used in court cases.

When the results came back, my doctor was right. I had mercury poisoning. In Jan. 1998, my lab work showed a very high level of mercury. The test's reference range for mercury was "5" and below, meaning any result over "5" was a concern. My result for mercury was "22." In addition, the lab attached a discussion and bibliography for mercury, since my level was so high.

I also had an elevated level of cadmium, but other metals, including uranium, were well below the reference range limit. I started a medical treatment regimen in 1998 for heavy metal poisoning.

My doctor recommended I remove the source of mercury and have all of my amalgam dental fillings removed and replaced with a non-toxic material for cosmetic and medical indications.

Meanwhile, the American Dental Association admits that mercury leaks out of dental material. But they still claim that not enough is leaked to cause "significant" harm.

problems. This is a huge controversy in the US, but most dentists still use me amalgam as of this writing.

Many books have been written on this topic, some linking mercury from fillin diseases, such as Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported in its Monday, Oct. 25, 1999 edition that Sw Denmark, Austria, Germany, England and Canada have recommended dentis material other than mercury, especially in children and pregnant women.

I have a folder thick with health reports, newspaper clippings, environmental documents and studies that I have gathered over the past 10 years. I surely be the toxic nature of amalgam fillings.

Mercury attacks the nervous system and symptoms can include introversion, timidity, depression and apathy, according to medical journals. Mercury in sn doses of only a few parts per million can damage the brain and spinal cord, li kidneys and thyroid, according to biology.

I went back to the dentist who originally placed mercury in my teeth and aske to remove the fillings. He did, and replaced them with a white composite resi

It then took from Jan. 1998 to Aug. 1999 to detoxify from mercury using the best in chelating drugs. I had regular Doctor's Data tests performed to check : levels of metals.

By Aug. 1999, mercury was no longer an issue. The detoxification treatments brought the mercury and cadmium down to normal. And other metals, such a uranium, were still well below the reference range limit. Thus, I was pronoun "clean," and could now move on with my life.

I already felt like a new person and my doctor documented my rapid recovery return to good health. My family and friends were amazed at my new healthy appearance and complimented me.

The Boeing Experience

Now comes the second part to my story. After being "clean" of metals, I left County and moved to Long Beach. A friend living in a camper near Long Be: College invited me to live with him, rent free, while attending the college.

I considered it exciting to move to Long Beach and took him up on that offer in my early 20's and thought of it as a camping adventure. We parked the car Lew Davis St., near the college and Boeing. But that didn't last very long.

A police officer one day told us to move the camper someplace else. So my fi and I found a spot on Conant St., near Lakewood Blvd., where about 20 other campers were parked. The majority of people living there were Boeing emplc who had residences far away, worked in Long Beach during the week, but the home on the weekend. Our camper blended right in and no one from Boeing asked us to leave.

For around three years (1999-2002), I lived in a camper on Conant and attend LBCC. Because I was done with my former medical doctor and treatments, I had medical follow-ups for mercury during that time. But my health slowly began to deteriorate again, and by the third year of living near Boeing, I was very sick.

I lost hair, became depressed, started twitching again and always felt tired. My stuttering returned and my eyes were swollen. It got to a point where I often missed classes because I was so tired.

I went to a doctor for a physical examination, and found that I had a very low blood cell count. In fact, it was not even in the reference range, it was so low. This never happened to me before. My body temperature was low and I felt and looked awful.

I thought maybe the mercury had returned. Thus, I had another Doctor's Data test performed for heavy metals, since it had been three years since my last fecal metal test was performed in 1999.

The results shocked me. This time, the mercury did not return, but uranium suddenly became an issue. My uranium level in 1999 was 0.059, which is normal and well below the 0.12 reference range limit for uranium. But after moving to Boeing and being retested in 2002 with the same fecal metals test used by the same lab in 1999, my result was 0.367. Uranium stood out from all the rest of the metals tested, stretched into the 95th percentile column, and Doctor's Data attached a discussion on uranium, since my level was so high. I was diagnosed with uranium poisoning in April 2002.

I have since consulted with other doctors in the area and had the same tests performed, and they all correlated. My doctors did not know what to do, as this is rare. One of my doctors called a colleague of his, who has been a toxicologist for over 50 years, and even he did not know how to treat uranium poisoning.

I believe I got poisoned from living near Boeing for three years. These tests do. They reveal what my living environment exposed me to. For more information on fecal metal tests, visit www.DoctorsData.com.

I have since contacted officials at state, local, county and federal levels about this matter, but despite repeated calls, they were unresponsive.

I came across a *Press-Telegram* article from May 20, 1992 discussing McDonnell Douglas, now Boeing. The opening paragraph read, "Emissions from McDonnell Douglas operations in Long Beach and three other Southland cities are exposing hundreds of thousands of residents to an increased risk of cancer, the state Attorney General's office alleges in a lawsuit filed in Los Angeles."

Boeing has acknowledged using depleted uranium at the former C-1 facility in 1992, in balanced weights for aircraft manufacturing. But depleted uranium is no longer used or stored at that site, according to Boeing and state officials.

Scientific literature says depleted uranium can cause cancer and has a half-life of 4.5 billion years.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Health Services said in a letter dated Feb. 23, 2006: "The possession and use of depleted uranium counterweights is excluded from our regulatory control when installed in, or stored or handled in connection with the installation in or removal from, aircraft, rockets, projectiles, or missiles, if each counterweight has been manufactured by an appropriately licensed manufacturer."

And the Long Beach Health Dept. isn't quite sure how to address this matter. "We may not be able to do anything about it. We do have jurisdiction for hazardous materials, but this case seems beyond us. But I'll talk to my superior. It's not something that we do everyday," said Long Beach Hazardous Waste Operations Officer Nelson Kerr on Feb. 23, 2007.

Meanwhile, the Department of Transportation Federal Aviation Administration issued in a Dec. 20, 1984 advisory:

"For many years, aircraft manufacturers have used "depleted" uranium to balance ailerons, rudders, and elevators on certain jet aircraft and rotor blades on certain helicopters. Uranium is 1 1/2 times as dense as lead [sic more dense than lead] the heaviest naturally occurring metal. According to a 1983 McDonnell Douglas Customer Service First Quarter publication, only "depleted" uranium is used, which means it has been processed to remove most of its uranium 235, the most highly radioactive form used in nuclear power plants.

"The remaining uranium 238 emits only low level alpha radiation. While the uranium normally poses no danger, it is to be handled with caution. The main hazard associated with depleted uranium is the harmful effect the material could have if it enters the body. If particles are inhaled or digested, they can be chemically active and cause a significant and long lasting irradiation of internal tissue. Depleted uranium is slightly radioactive."

Douglas Park Safe?

Now Boeing wants to build homes only a few footsteps from where I used to live in my camper.

I told my story to Boeing in person in 2002 and an officer made copies of my work and personal information. He said someone would call me. But for five years no one called.

In addition, I called a Boeing environmental spokesman in 2002 and asked him if hazardous chemicals mainly exist around the C-1 plant. He told me naphthalene (an ingredient found in moth balls). But when I mentioned uranium, he hung up the telephone on me.

I recently told Boeing my story again Feb. 23, 2007. I spoke with Ron Fornit of Boeing safety and health and environmental affairs, but he wouldn't discuss the matter. "As you probably wouldn't be surprised, I can't comment." He said he would contact me.

Boeing spokesman Glen Golightley called me on Feb. 28 (the first person from Boeing to ever call me) and said Boeing is within regulations. "What are you expecting from us?" he asked. "I'm not sure why you're calling."

I will continue this story in the next issue of the **Beachcomber**.

Beachcomber

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