

**Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board
Recommendation 98-16**

to the U.S. Department of Energy and Kaiser-Hill

Regarding Retired Worker Medical Benefits

Approved August 6, 1998

August 7, 1998

Secretary Bill Richardson
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Jessie Roberson
Manager
Department of Energy
Rocky Flats Field Office
Building 460
Golden, CO 80402-0928

Bob Card
President
Kaiser-Hill/Rocky Flats
Building T130D
P.O. Box 464
Golden, CO 80402-0464

Dear Secretary Richardson, Ms. Roberson and Mr. Card:

Two years ago, the Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board (RFCAB) submitted Recommendation 96-10 regarding protection of medical benefits for Rocky Flats retirees. This recommendation stated the following:

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board recommends that the Department of Energy, and its present and future contractors must commit to the retired and

disabled workers of the Rocky Flats Plant to provide lifetime health care benefits at the same level and cost to each individual as he/she had at the beginning of his/her retirement or placement on long-term disability.

It has come to our attention that Kaiser-Hill may be considering a proposal that would increase the costs incurred for medical coverage by Rocky Flats retirees. The Board would like to reiterate our 1996 recommendation that these benefits not be altered.

We feel it is very important that the Department of Energy honor the commitments it has made (including those made by previous contractors) not only in the area of cleanup, but also with regard to treatment of its employees. Additionally, we see this issue as having the potential to affect the morale of current workers and are, therefore, quite concerned about the possible safety implications of cutting retiree medical benefits.

It is also important that this issue not resurface every year. Therefore, we strongly urge the Department and Kaiser-Hill to explore any options available to separate funding for retiree medical benefits from the annual cleanup budget. This funding should not be competing with cleanup activities, but should be administered separately from Kaiser-Hill's budget.

Finally, the Department of Energy has an obligation to develop and communicate a clear plan for how it will finance retiree medical benefits after closure and once there is no longer a contractor at Rocky Flats. We would like to hear from DOE about this matter.

Please advise us of the progress of these issues.

Sincerely,

Tom Marshall
Chair

cc:

Representative David Skaggs
Senator Wayne Allard
Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell
Larry Ferris, Rocky Flats retiree committee
Jerry Harden, United Steelworkers

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board is a community advisory group that reviews and provides recommendations on cleanup plans for Rocky Flats, a former nuclear weapons plant outside of Denver, Colorado.

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