

**PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REPORT REVEALS ONGOING PROBLEMS WITH DESIGN OF NEW BOMB PLANT IN OAK RIDGE, TN—CALLS INTO QUESTION FUNDING TO ACCELERATE CONSTRUCTION
OAK RIDGE ENVIRONMENTAL PEACE ALLIANCE ASKS: WHY THE RUSH TO BUILD?**

The 2011 Performance Evaluation Report for Babcock and Wilcox Y-12 Technical Services, released Tuesday by the National Nuclear Security Administration in response to a March 28 legal challenge by Nuclear Watch New Mexico, indicates the Uranium Processing Facility proposed for the Y12 Nuclear Weapons Complex in Oak Ridge, TN continues to hit snags on the road to construction.

While most of the areas covered by the Performance Evaluation rate performance from good to excellent, in two cases B&W was denied full payment because UPF design packages were unacceptable as submitted. One was the CD-3A Site Readiness Package (Critical Decision-3A) for the UPF; the other was the Preliminary Safety Design Report. [PER, page 30, B. 3,4]

“The Performance Evaluation Report calls into question the rush to build reflected in the Obama Administration’s recent proposal to increase UPF funding to accelerate construction,” said Ralph Hutchison, coordinator of the Oak Ridge Environmental Peace Alliance. “Clearly there are significant challenges, both with site readiness and with the safety design report. It’s crazy—and fiscally irresponsible—to push forward without taking time to resolve these issues carefully.”

The PER for B&W also indicated significant milestones were also reached in upgrading Building 9212, where production currently take place.

“The Report indicates Building 9212 is undergoing upgrades of its systems which will enable it to continue its production operations for years to come,” Hutchison noted. “One wonders why we are also planning, then, to build another building to do the same job. It doesn’t take a nuclear engineer to know we can’t afford to be paying twice for the same job in this economy.”

Among the upgrades to Building 9212 cited in the report are electrical panels, Steam Stations, extensive painting. The upgrades resulted in risk reductions beyond the 9212 base plan; the PER also documents installation of new technologies in Building 9212.

“In 2008, the NNSA said they could upgrade Building 9212 to meet current seismic, environmental, safety and health standards for less than \$200 million,” Hutchison noted. “And this report shows they are well on their way to doing it. If we’re modernizing 9212 now, and completing the Life Extensions for our entire stockpile, why is it we need the UPF again?”

While the Performance Evaluation Report provides only a cursory look at Y12 operations last year, and is necessarily shaded by the simple fact that the contractor is reviewing its own operation, it does indicate areas of concern.

“We are grateful to our colleagues at Nuclear Watch New Mexico,” said Hutchison, “for their persistence in pushing for the release of this information. Now that we see what it is in it, we wonder why, in this age of transparency, NNSA withheld the information and forced the public to go to court to get it. They rate themselves ‘excellent’ on Information Protection in the Report, but there is also a duty to provide information to

the public, and NNSA seems to have abandoned that mission altogether.”

Copies of the Performance Evaluation Reviews are available at:

<http://www.nukewatch.org>

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