August 5, 2008, Flora, MS, Flora Evening

Page 1 of 46

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

NATIONAL BIO AND AGRO-DEFENSE FACILITY
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
(NBAP DRAFT EIS)
PUBLIC MEETING

DATE: AUGUST 5, 2008
7:00 p.m.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
121 CENTER STREET
CHRISTIAN LIFE CENTER
FLORA, MISSISSIPPI 39071

Catherine Coghill, Moderator

PANEL MEMBERS:
Mr. James Johnson, U. S. Department of Homeland Security
Dr. Steve Kappes, U. S. Department of Agriculture
Mr. Chuck Pergler, Tetra Tech, Inc.

ANGELA DAWN DILLARD, CSR 1763

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Page 2 of 46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WELCOME</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRESENTATION</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUPPER ENGLAND</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMAL COMMENT SESSION</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NELL WADE</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAMMY BLOSSOM</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STANLEY SIMPSON</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LESTER SPELL</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLORETTA COLEMAN</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUPPER ENGLAND</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHARLES ENGLAND</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANK GARLETT</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KENT HOBLET</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALEY FISACKERLY</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIKE KENT</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JASON DILLON</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LANNY FACE</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHIP ESTES</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIM HOWELL</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BILL WASHINGTON</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAZEL CUNNINGHAM</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPRESENTATIVE PHILIP GUNN</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUDY HOLCOMB</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LES CHILDRESS</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MICHAEL KELLY</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOHN TURNER</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUCK COVINGTON</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAYOR SCOTT GREAVES</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVELYN BROWN</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAVE DZELEK</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIARCA GARNER</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the facility, site characterization, security and feasibility will all be factors.

I chair the DHS/USDA Steering Committee that will evaluate this information and make recommendations to the decision force under Secretary Jay Cohen. We expect a record of decision to be in December of 2008. The site selected and construction will begin in 2010. The facility will be operational at 2015.

Your comments are important to us. I said before the comment period ends August 25, 2008. There are many ways for you to submit comments. Any comments received by August 25 will be addressed in the final EIS. Please keep in mind, again, you do not have to make your comments tonight. You can provide comments at a later date with any of the methods you see here on the slide as long as they're received by August 25. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHLAN: Okay, that concludes the presentation portion of the agenda for this evening. What we'd like to do now is turn it over to question and answers. If no one has any questions and answers we'll go ahead and start with the comment period, but I'd like to offer up the opportunity if someone in the audience has a
question about what was presented and needs further clarification, please come up to the microphone.
Yes, sir, come on.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: You mentioned that you limited the study to three diseases; is that correct?

MR. CHUCK PERGLER: Yes, we carried our portion of the analysis to three.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Is there any reason to believe that the listed diseases in these documents will be the only thing studied at this facility?

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: Right now based on the current threats that we have those are the eight diseases that we plan to study and research. Certainly without saying those diseases could change. They will be in the animal mission section. They will be in either the foreign animal diseases or the zoonotic diseases. At this point in time that's the plan.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I mean, my point is that there is no -- there really isn't any limit to what you can study as long as it's related to animals and animal disease.

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: They're based on...
threats that -- based on what we're seeing in the world. That is what we really focus our research on. It could change down the road.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay, thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Anyone else have a question? Yes, ma'am.

MS. TUPPER ENGLAND: I was reading about your meeting that you had in Butner, North Carolina, they're very concerned about what's going to happen to the waste water. I talked with a counselman this morning, they're having their meeting tonight to see if they want to recommend or not recommend y'all coming up to North Carolina. I heard y'all may be voted against it, and their concern is waste water and what you're going to do with it and how you're going to say you're going to purify it. What is that going to do to our water system here in Flora? What are y'all planning on doing with it and how do you plan on making it safe for us? Where is it going in our water system?

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: The water that we have at the facility will be treated before it's released. It's a requirement that it has to be sterile before we release it. We don't release waste water off site, we treat it on site.

DHS notes the commentor's wastewater treatment concerns. The NBAF EIS Section 3.3.5.1.4 describes the Town of Flora's wastewater treatment process and capacity. On average the system is at approximately 33% of its total capacity and a 10-inch gravity sewer line servicing the Flora Industrial Park has 100% excess flow rate capacity. The EIS Section 3.13.1 describes the NBAF's solid and liquid waste management methodologies. Section 3.3.5.3.1 describes Flora's proposed municipal potable water upgrades including additional groundwater well(s) with 720,000 gpd capacity and a 300,000-gallon on site elevated storage tank.
Everything is treated on site before it's released. The air is filtered, the water is boiled and sterilized, or sterilized. The issue of releasing off site is moot, and we communicated that to the site in North Carolina in the past. They make their own decisions, but everything is treated on site, we're all self contained.

MS. TUPPER ENGLAND: Can I have a follow up question?

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: I'm sorry.

MS. TUPPER ENGLAND: Can I have a follow up?

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Yes, if you could please come to the microphone. Thank you.

MS. TUPPER ENGLAND: Is that what you do at Plum Island now?

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: Yes.

MS. TUPPER ENGLAND: And you release it where, in the water around the island?

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: We treat it on site on Plum Island and we release it back out.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Have you ever had a problem with that?

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: No.

MS. TUPPER ENGLAND: You haven't had a problem with that?
problem with that?

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: No.

MS. TUPPER ENGLAND: Because I know y'all had a leak that had not reported for a couple years and it upset some of the senators up there. I didn't know if you had problems with the water.

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: Well, we're scientifically checked, not only by ourselves but by the State of New York. We are frequently monitored and will be at NBAF. --

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Any other questions from the audience at this time?

Okay, what we would like to do is next on our agenda is formal comments here today at the meeting, and just to let you know the parameters that we all like to work together on for this portion of the meeting. And, again, to accommodate everyone who signed in and would like to speak.

First of all, each person has three minutes, and I will help you, guide you as to where you are on the clock. We time it at three minutes a piece for speaking, would you please respect that. If you have some point in time where you have not finished your comment and your three minutes are up, please do take a seat because we want to make sure...
everyone has a chance to speak.

As a point of process and clarification, I would just like to state that where we are in this process, if you pose a question in your statement, under the National Environmental Policy Act we're not going to answer those now because what we have to do is to take all those comments and all those questions and respond to them with a scientific analysis if that's appropriate, and put those responses in writing in a final response document.

So anyone, if you pose a question it's that we're being disrespectful, we're following the process.

Okay, at this point in time I will call for a certain speaker, and that is Mr. Mike Kent, if you could please come up to the microphone. Okay, I will keep an eye out, if Mr. Kent comes back we will let him speak. We'll continue with Ms. Nell Wade.

MS. NELL WADE: Okay, I live in Flora, Madison County. And I was questioning, Plum Island is only proposed site that has low risk when she said that -- issues. And it's colder climate and isolation, that's a direct contrast to us here in Flora.

I question potentially, also, economic and...
environmental damage to Flora with all said being short term, high cost from construction on the island, which I understand is one of the questions that you'll all be going to answer later.

The Rift Valley Fever that you introduced to could potentially introduce to all those receptive hosts of mosquitoes could be much worse than West Nile, which we certainly have a problem with now. How would you stop the spreading of that to mosquitoes? And wildlife interact directly with domestic animals here, and what effect if contaminated, because they’re in and out of pastures all the time.

Whitetail deer were eradicated on Plum Island, I understand, and that is the way you took care of it over there. Could not some of these agents be studied more safely at their port of origin. -- in to here and to introduce this in the country is going to mean problems with containers with them coming in. I would hate to see us bring them in on purpose.

What cost is borne by Mississippi citizens from emergency responses. We have a volunteer fire department here in Flora currently.

And does the railroad track with shipments...
in close proximity may be additional risk.

Reporting of contamination in -- facilities has been faulty and transparency has been lacking.

So I wonder what y'all are going to do to address that in the future.

And, also, the question whether the proliferation of having this research on facilities, if that actually increases the risk?

Currently, our economic impacts -- for by wildlife contamination then that is certainly a local issue. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Sammy Blossom.

MR. SAMMY BLOSSOM: Good evening. I'm Sammy Blossom, I work for the Mississippi Cattlemen's Association, serving as Executive Vice President. I'm here tonight representing the officers of our association. We appreciate certainly the Government's efforts on our behalves in protecting the health of our herds. It's most important to us. As you know, agriculture is the largest part of the US economy, and the cattle industry is the largest part of agriculture. It's our livelihood.

In Mississippi cattle are grown in all of our 82 counties, and there are 20,000 beef producers...
in our state. -- on the extensive education program
about the NBAF lab to educate our producers and our
members about the effects and what it might mean to
our state. I can tell you tonight that of those
20,000 producers, after hearing presentation and
learning about it, I can count on one hand the
number that still have reservations about siting in
our state. And I think that our embracing this is
almost totally. We certainly appreciate your
efforts here.

On a personal note, my wife and I live in
Flora and we look forward to having a lot of great
new revenue when the lab gets here.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, sir.

Stanley Simpson.

MR. STANLEY SIMPSON: First of all I would
like to thank y'all for including Flora in the
process.
The economic and social and the heavy
impact that this facility will have on this town is
just unmeasurable.

Back in the 1940s we had an Ordnance plant
come to Flora. It was built by a private company
that was working for the federal government for the
United States Department of Defense. It closed.
When that facility closed a lot of jobs, a lot of people went away. I think we have a great opportunity to be able to take a giant leap forward for the town if we are successful in getting this facility here, and I just hope that the people in the town of Flora and the surrounding area will listen with open hearts and be more receptive to the idea of this facility becoming a reality. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, Mr. Simpson. Dr. Lester Spell.

DR. LESTER SPELL: Good afternoon, my name is Lester Spell, I'm a veterinarian by trade, and I presently serve the Mississippi Commission of Agriculture and Commerce. This is my fourth year as a state elected official. I understand the need for research in all phases of agriculture, whether it be plant or animal.

I want to say that we're excited to have you here to look at our state and consider our state. As I talk to people involved in all phases of agriculture, people who really come to know and understand what this facility is about, the safeguard that's built into this facility, think this is a wonderful asset to our state.
The Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association has wholeheartedly endorsed this project. The Mississippi Board of Animal Health, of which I'm a member, has stood and wholeheartedly endorsed its decision, and from looking at your Environmental Impact Study I think the potential of eight counties in this area could be affected by the billion dollars in agriculture in those eight counties.

And speaking on behalf of the Department of Agriculture and Commerce, I can tell you talking with farmers that I've talked to, we support this project 100 percent. I think the governor of our state, our state legislature, all the state elected officials, city, county, and all the counties joining -- all join. We welcome this facility. We -- a year ago we could build a safe facility would be better served not only our state but the whole nation. Thank you for this opportunity.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, sir.

Floretta Coleman.

MS. FLORETTA COLEMAN: My name is Floretta Coleman. I'm here as a mother and a grandmother. I don't have cattle, but I do understand the economic
impact that this lab is going to have on our town, as well as the surrounding towns. I'm looking forward to the bio lab coming. I'm looking forward to something to give our town a boost. We are losing our children because we don't have -- there are no jobs here, and I really think that the bio lab is going to be a good thing for us.

I've been here all my life, and I knew Flora when Flora boomed. It was a bang here. And now it's not what it used to be here, and I really think that this is going to be a good thing. And I think we as citizens of Flora should grab hold of this and not let it go. Thank you.


MS. TUPPER ENGLAND: Somehow I don't think I'm going to get applause like she did. I do have a lot of concerns and I tried to be open minded about this in the beginning. My daughter lives in North Carolina. That stuff they gave up there, they're into the golden research triangle. She told me, mom, you're not going to get it we're going to get it because that's what we do. And then all of a sudden every time I go up there there is more on the news, they're concerned, they're worried, they don't...
I want it.  
I studied a lot of stuff in their newspaper about it, so I started doing a little more research about some of the things that have happened on Plum Island and some of the things -- but started to concern me. Like the lady said earlier, Nell Wade, that have been some leaks. They're having some security problems, and y'all have missed some dead lines on some of the security requirement. The Senators from Connecticut and north New York have been concerned, and one had moved away because they thought it was a huge terrorist target. And so that's my concern, so if you move it over here into Flora what level of terrorist target are we now once you're moved into the middle of our dear state. So that concerns me now. A lot of the leaks concern me because being right most of the time is okay -- because it effects our lives, you just have to evacuate the state. It can effect our lost dog, our children, and now that you're putting 10 percent of this research on animals to human, it could effect us. So those concerns do worry me. Another thing that concerns me that a lot of us have worked forever on trying to get this Highway 22 project
stopped. You mentioned that a lot of the roads were going to have to be expanded into four lanes around this area and that threw up a red flag too because we've worked so hard not to be in that four lanes through a lot our farms and through an airport that's been here. So where are these roads going, and, you know, how is that going to effect what we've been trying to stop around here.

So I'm not trying to be inhospitable, but these are legitimate concerns, and I wish people would get on line and read what's happening in other states. In Georgia there is a huge program trying to get awareness for this. I wish there was a little more awareness about this. I understand that's it's economical and how people want to build up the economy around here, but I think when actually we do it the right way and that we don’t sell ourselves out to a program that ends up in the long run hurting us. So I think the island is a good idea, -- island, you can put the Plum Island stuff together and then it's contained to the island and not to all of us. So thank you very much. I'm glad you enjoyed the sweet tea. And I hope you go somewhere like maybe Kansas.

MR. CHARLES ENGLAND: Most of my comments come in the form of questions. I'm not one to trust governments of any sort. I'm very pragmatic about placing my trust in someone that controls. There's only one person that can control me that I trust other than me very extensively. They're not sitting up front, they're not in Washington.

I would like questions answered like, is Homeland Security request this new facility on the mainland or did it come from politicians. Was it a political decision to do this on the mainland or a security decision to do this on the mainland.

I would like it on the record how the Senators from Connecticut and New York feel about moving the facility off of Plum Island. Do they want it moved or do they want it to stay there, a new facility to be built there? My understanding is they're all opposed to it being built on Plum Island. I would like to know why they're opposed to it being built on Plum Island. I would like for that to be in the record.

I've heard that they consider it a prime terrorist target. I'm not particularly afraid of terrorist, but if it's a target it's a target.

I've read that all of large wildlife on
series of fencing, security cameras, and protocols. In addition, a dedicated security force would be present on-site. Additional security could be provided via cooperation with local law enforcement agencies.
Plum Island is gone now. I've heard that new large wild life are killed, but that the original wild life died in a couple of weeks. I would like to know the answer to that question.

Foreign diseases, currently the foreign diseases are going to an island. Aren't they going -- aren't they going to be bringing them to the mainland when they do this. I'm assuming that these aren't from the mainland now.

I would like to know if there is any chance that we will be studying westernization of these diseases in the future at in this plant or any other plant because of the research done at the plant.

I would like to see a list of all the breaches and leaks from the Plum Island facility, and have the authorities responded to those leaks and when they were reported in relation to the leak time, when the leaks were breached actually got them versus when they were reported.

I would like to know, this is kind of hard, but I would like to know what the opposition at the other states is looking like. I would like to know how the people in Connecticut and Long Island feel about losing the facility they have. Do they want it to stay or do they want it to go?
DHS notes the commentor's questions regarding the history of accidents at the PIADC facility on Plum Island. Since 1954, there has been one accidental release of FMD from biocontainment (but not off Plum Island) and that occurred in 1978 when some cattle that were maintained by the research facility in outdoor confinements became infected. This release did not spread from the island. In addition, there have been five incidences involving a compromise of biocontainment, however, no pathogens were released. DHS will consider these incidents and their outcomes, as well as other such historic biocontainment incidents and laboratory-acquired infections, in the United States and worldwide, described in Appendix B, to improve the structural and engineered safety of the final NBAF design and to incorporate lessons learned from incidents of human error into the operating procedures. Laboratory-acquired infections have not been shown to be a threat to the community at large.
And a comment that's been mentioned to us a significant economic impact. I'm sure it will have some economic impact that's pure luck, some economic impact that should be --. To the best of my knowledge, every time a military base is closed in the US the economic situation has improved.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, sir.

MR. FRANK GARLETTS: Good evening. I live about four miles due south of here. I'm a private airport community, and my question is, a big old airplane is mentioned up here twice as crashing into buildings. You know, will there be a no fly zone where we can't get the -- come out all the time. It was about 11 or 12 of us down there now, it's going to expand probably to about 18 to 20 families that would have a significant impact if there's a no fly zone. If there isn't, that's fine. We need the answer to that question. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you. Kent Hoblet.

MR. KENT HOBLET: I'm Kent Hoblet. I'm Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University and I thank you for the opportunity to make some comments. We have

Comment No: 1 Issue Code: 16.5
DHS notes the commentor's concern. No-fly zones (nfz) will be considered along with other security measures for the proposed NBAF. A separate Threat and Risk Assessment (designated as For Official Use Only)(TRA) was developed outside of the EIS process in accordance with the requirements stipulated in federal regulations. The purpose of the TRA was to identify potential vulnerabilities and weaknesses associated with the NBAF and are used to recommend the most prudent measures to establish a reasonable level of risk for the security of operations of the NBAF and public safety. The TRA and security actions that would be implemented, based on TRA recommendations, are confidential due to NBAF security considerations; however, a nfz is currently not anticipated but remains an option based on security conditions.

Comment No: 3 Issue Code: 15.0
DHS notes the commentor's concerns. The location of a research facility at a new site will create both direct and indirect jobs not currently being generated in the receiving community. The manner in which a civilian research facility interacts with the surrounding community from an economic perspective is vastly different from that of a military installation; therefore the analogy of base closings benefiting communities is not applicable.
approximately 100 members of our faculty, and we have a continue -- in zoonotic diseases from USDA. As a college we see this as a tremendous opportunity for us to offer recruit scientists, to collaborate with scientists of NBAF and to recruit graduate students, and also for our veterinary students, both here and the students that might come in, so we see the great recruiting opportunity. I would like to call attention to the string of the consortium that's been put together for this group. In addition to Battelle, the addition of our in state partners of Mississippi State, the medical center, the other universities in the state. We are pretty much in the -- Tulane University, well known as a high quality research institution, and Iowa State University as the fourth leader in the animal disease research.

One question I have relates to the economic impact study. Although I have no fear whatsoever of Foot and Mouth Disease, I think for making comparisons among the various sites, and I do understand the major economic input -- be related to the secession of exports in a while. I think maybe we ought to look at the differences in livestock populations among the states that are competing for...
this. USDA leadership, for instance, Kansas has about six times the number cattle heads than Mississippi had. And also the continuous states. States around Mississippi are not high livestock states; whereas some of the other states are. Those are the comments I have. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Haley Fisackerly.
MR. HALEY FISACKERLY: Good evening and welcome to Mississippi. I’m Haley Fisackerly, President and CEO of HQ Mississippi and here on behalf as chairman the Greater Jackson Chamber of Partnership. The Greater Jackson Chamber of Partnership has been very involved in this process since the State of Mississippi first issued a letter of interest and we have worked very closely with the team involved in helping recruit this facility and after studying it and recognizing what this type of invest means not only to this state but also to this nation. We know that advancements in technology and engineering we’re convinced this will be a safe and secure facility.

We also hope that while you’ve been studying this state and as well as this region and particularly the Flora site you have found a region and a site that is abundant in resources.
Mississippi is very proud of our people.

We've stepped up to many a challenges in the past whether it to be the great challenge of Katrina when it hit this state and we all came together for that or whether you look not too far from here to see one of the largest manufacturing facilities built in this world in a very rural area. We were also picked in the Nissan facility. We're in the process of attracting another major investment in Toyota in north Mississippi, and one of the most advanced steel plants that's been built in the eastern part of the state, all in very rural areas, all facing many, many, many infrastructure challenges that we have come together as people to beat. We've also -- it's giving us a great opportunity to train work force and that in Mississippi folks is one of the most productive and ethically focused work forces in the country and we're very proud of our people. We also offer great educational opportunity in every aspect and we they think this will be also a great attraction for a facility like that. We thank you for this time. I thank you for time to make the comment and I appreciate the -- this is a test you have ahead of you but I hope you will find that this is a state rich in resources and we welcome the
opportunity. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, sir.

Mike Kent.

MR. MIKE KENT: Good evening, I'm superintendent of education for the Madison County School District and I'm admitting that I'm tardy.

I do want to take this opportunity to tell you that we look forward to the opportunity for you to have us located here. The Madison County School District is one of the fastest school districts in the State of Mississippi. There's a reason for that and that is we're simply the best in the district in the State of Mississippi. People have come to locate here for the opportunities that our educational system offers. The students in this area are eligible to attend Madison Central High School. This past year Madison Central had 26 national merit finalists. That was the highest number of national merit finalists of any high school in the State of Mississippi. That has been true for the past four years in a row, and I think it would be true next year if we have somewhere around 28 nominees that we think will be eligible. Madison County is one of the fastest growing counties in the State of Mississippi. It's all
about quality of life. You'll hear that tonight
over and over and over. Not only is there a great
public school opportunity in this county but there
are also numerous private and parochial schools that
also do a great job.

We look forward to the opportunity and we
hope you consider us seriously. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

Jason Dillon.

MR. JASON DILLON: Gentleman, the saddest
words, -- all the words that it could have been, so
I believe Mississippi is looking forward to the
opportunity of hosting you guys and allowing you to
come here. I believe that the greater majority of
everyone that I have talked to and that I have
networked with are in favor of NBAF locating here
and when I was thinking about my comments I saw us
to be warm trusting people, so we do trust. And in
the building and preparation of everything that you
will keep our interest at heart and I know that
you'll do that, but we are looking forward to having
you come to Mississippi. Flora is the Mayberry of
the nation. It's the Mayberry town, everybody knows
everybody and you go up here to the local restaurant
with everybody that you know, but all of this,
change is inevitable and we understand that, but the
opportunity to grab hold of something like this and
to allow it to take us into an ever changing future
whether you like it or not, we are wanting that
opportunity. We thank you for coming tonight, and
sharing this information with us. Thank you
gentleman.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, Mr.
Dillon.

MR. LANNY PACE: Thank you, my name is
Lanny Pace. I'm the executive director of the
Mississippi Veterinary Research and Diagnostic
Laboratory System. Our laboratory system -- is
located at Mississippi State University.

I thank the Department of Homeland Security
and USDA for coming and making this presentation.
In our laboratory diagnostic lab system in this
state we have four labs. Two of those labs are
located in the adjacent county, Rankin County. In
that county we have our central reference laboratory
for the state, so called state lab. We also have a
poultry and diagnostic lab in Rankin County. In the
Delta we have a catfish diagnostic lab and the
college of veterinarian medicine in Starkville we

DHS notes the commentor's support for the Flora Industrial Park Site Alternative.
have another full service RLPC diagnostic lab that serves as both a service and as our teaching lab for veterinary students. So within that lab system, four labs we deal daily with the threat of foreign animal diseases, zoonotic diseases and some of the things that you talked about. We have people trained to actually look for some of the diseases that are in the group of eight that this facility would do research and testing on. What I want -- one of the things I want to speak to is in our state lab system to let you folks know that we have had tremendous, tremendous state support for our laboratory systems in recent years. Our state legislature, our Governor, our local authorities in Rankin County, Commissioner of Agricultural, our animal commodity group have all shown a tremendous report and we just moved two years ago next week into the new 42,000 square foot, $18.5 million building that was fully state funded over there in Rankin County. One of the roles of NBAF is to develop diagnostic test for these foreign animal diseases and then once those test are released out to labs that are in the national animal health laboratory network, which our lab is part of it and then we at
the state lab do a screening for foreign animal
diseases and any suspect type diseases we refer
currently to Plum Island or to -- lab in Aims, Iowa
for confirmation, so we deal with what goes on at
Plum Island on a regular basis today.

And what I'd like to say is that we, in
addition to what Dr. Thompson said about the
interaction of our faculty with sites from the
facility that we have full trust in the biosafety
features of this facility and give full support of
our lab system, -- division of agriculture and
forestry the best I've ever seen from this facility.

Welcome to Mississippi.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

CHIP ESTES: Welcome back, good to see
y'all again. Part of the comments, and I may be
repeating myself a little bit from last time, but I
suppose just being on the economic development board
I was one of the first few folks that knew that
y'all were looking to come to Flora or Madison
County as we had to acquire and additional 20 acres
of land to meet with the current requirements and
let y'all build off the site. Since that time
besides the local community getting behind this the
Mississippi legislature, we do have at least one representative here with us tonight that re-did a bond package in the 88.5 million dollar range. Mississippi is obviously the poorest state in the country yet they come forth with this opportunity that shows how more serious we are of attracting this to the state because we know it will help the state. We know how it will help diversify -- to the citizens here. As Ms. Coleman said earlier we really don't have jobs that are really being offered or created here, but for Rankin County having Yazoo clay -- wouldn't be here either. They will be your next door neighbor, and they've been nothing but supportive of this project on the end here, so they're wonderful corporate citizen. They live here, go to church here and they want y'all here as well.

Having known that y'all were coming for sometime I personally actually had some skeptical thoughts myself, so I've been involved in the arena for about 26 years, doing natural gas work projects, power line -- power plants, power lines and pipelines, L and G facilities and a number of times we'd do the fatal flaw analyses. In fact I'm getting pipeline site similar to the facility EIS.
such as like you've done, recently completing one here in Mississippi for about $350 million and obtaining certificate last week.

Looking at the similar fatal flaw analysis from what I saw at first would solve my skepticism, one was safety, two was economic impact and three was the overall effect on the Flora citizens.

After touring the CDC in Atlanta about a year ago I personally have zero concerns that you guys know how to operate the facility safely. I'll be living a mile, two miles from the facility with my family and certainly welcome y'all to provide a facility that -- if you can operate a facility like what's in Atlanta studying human diseases I'm sure there's no problems whatsoever that could be occurring on animal diseases.

We certainly do in Mississippi need diversity of economic development and economic wealth creation. We do a great job of manufacturing. This would be an economic impact of knowledge creating.

In closing, I think you'll find that we love our quality of life here. I personally don't see this disrupting it. I don't think the impact is going to be such as it's going to create a
tremendous traffic or anything else, and I welcome y’all to Flora when you make that decision.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, Mr. Estes.

MR. TIM HOWELL: Thank you for allowing me to speak. I lived here all my life and haven't lived here for about 15 years, but my family has been involved in business and we grew up here, still have family that lives here. And I think the opportunity that we have now is the safest most secure way for Flora to insure their way of life than they've ever had before because if we don't seize the opportunity that we have now then somebody else will come in and dictate to us the way of life that we'll have, and I think the opportunity that you're giving us is going to allow Flora to have better government, better protection, better fire services, better roads, economic opportunity. Besides the biolab, the impact that it will have for other jobs for this community are going to be far reaching, much more than we can ever understand. I understand the concerns. I have a concern when I drive that's why I put my seatbelt on. I have a concern when I go to bed at night that's why I lock...
my door. And I know you guys did the same thing about the safety concerns that you have, and I just want to say that I trust you. I know our government has to do this for our safety and I don't want to be a part of the mentality that's plaguing our country now where people say I want it done but not in my backyard, it needs to be done but I don't want to do it. I for one say let's do it. Let's do what we need to do for our country and let's reap the benefits of what this will do for our community.

Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

Bill Washington.

MR. BILL WASHINGTON: Good evening. Met with you several months ago and my position is still the same. I believe this is a positive impact for Flora, been here many years, saw it through in the '60s or '70s when we had -- IRS where Flora was very productive, had jobs, people lived here, we had communities. After that they left, so this is an opportunity where the government helps us rebuild Flora as a business entity and to help grow, build our school system, help folks get better and bigger for you. I know people don't like change. I know there's skepticism with bio because it's dangerous,
it is dangerous but we have to trust you and that
you all protect us and be honest with us and we
expect this, keep the community involved, we expect
that this facility should be built by minorities as
well as others so we expect that you do the right
thing and keep the -- Jackson State, Alcorn,
Tougaloo, Mississippi Valley State, minority
contractors, spread the wealth. Keep everybody
involved, have community activities where we can
make others aware of what is going on in the
facility, even during the building process so we can
educate.

In my travels I meet a lot of people and I
talk positive about this impact that I think that it
would have on Flora. I think it's good. It's going
to be good. Let's work this thing together, keep
everybody involved, thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

Hazel Cunningham.

MS. HAZEL CUNNINGHAM: I'm will defer. I'm
going to put my comments in writing. I believe at
this point I have a little problem with, hello, I'm
from the government and I'm here to help you, so I'm
going to put my comments in writing.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.
Our next speaker is Philip Gunn.

MR. PHILIP GUNN: Good evening, welcome to Mississippi. My name is Philip Gunn. I serve in the Mississippi House of Representatives and it's my pleasure tonight to welcome you here on behalf of the Mississippi Legislature. It is also my privilege to serve the good people of Flora. This is part of my district and I will tell you that ever since this thing has been mentioned that I have received nothing but positive comments from my constituents. The comments have been expressed tonight in the way of fears or concerns are the first that I've heard of anyone having a concern about this facility, and the concerns as I understood them are not necessarily objections, they were just questions and concerns and fears and they were valid concerns and fears. But I also know that as I understand it you are sending scientists and people here to work and they are bringing their families with them as well, and as any parent or spouse would be they are concerned about the welfare of their family and I am confident those people would not come here to work. They would not bring their families here. They would not put them in the environment where there was a harm or a fear or a
danger to their family, so I am confident that your
ability to operate this facility is very good.
There would be no concerns and I think that that
just in and of itself speaks volumes that we can
have great confidence that what you've done here
will be very safe and there will be no harm to this
community or to the people who work there.
Chuck, you said something that caught my
eye, or caught my ear I should say. And I think
today is your lucky day, you mentioned the fact that
there was a lot of infrastructure that needed to be
done, water lines, sewer lines, power lines, as it
turns out I happen to serve on the Public Utilities
Committee in the House of Representatives. And
that's what we do. We pass legislation and address
those concerns and we've demonstrated that over the
last four or five years with many of the facilities
Haley mentioned earlier, the Nissan plant, the
Toyota plant in Blue Springs, all of which are rural
areas, all of which had a great need for
development. And that's what we do. We've had many
special sessions. I've been personally involved in
legislation to get that stuff through. So I think I
can help you in whatever way you want that you may
need. I will be glad to personally introduce
legislation, I will walk it through myself in my own
hand to make sure that it gets passed so we can
address whatever needs you may have. I know these
people here in Flora will be proud to have this
facility. We want to do our parts as Americans to
help this nation be strong and protect it. These
are great Americans, they love this nation and they
want to do what they can to help, so thank you for
your time.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

MR. RUDY HOLCOMB: Thank you. My name is
Rudy Holcomb, I've got a flying business, sprinkler
system business about two miles from here and I
haven't heard or ready any comment about a no fly
zone. Is there going to be one and if so how big
will it be? I wish y'all could address that and
give us some kind of answer. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

Les Childress.

MR. LES CHILDRESS: Thank you. I'm the
alderman here in Flora and representing my area I've
had no calls or comments that were negative towards
the facility coming here. We'd like to welcome it
on their behalf. From a personal note I am involved
in livestock, horses and cattle, and I want to welcome it from my family and hopefully with a graduating senior maybe this is an area he might go into down the road. So anyway, we'd like to welcome you to Flora.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, sir.

Michael Kelly.

MR. MICHAEL KELLY: Thanks again for the opportunity to make this comment. I'm Michael Kelly and I'm with the Battelle Memorial Institute.

Battelle has been involved with the Gulf States Consortium since the beginning. It's clear some of the remarks tonight and the remarks earlier today that this a terrific team that has been put together, mostly by the other folks -- but not by Battelle. We chose to be part of this team because we viewed it as the right team, we view this as the right place, and we view this as the best place.

You have solid community support. You have tremendous backing at all levels, and you have an opportunity to come into a community that is ready to welcome you with open arms and likewise willing to do whatever it takes to make this a success and I think all of those things are the right things.

I think the other point is really to the
follks here in the audience and I just want to thank
the team up here at the table and the other probably
100 or so people I'm sure, if not more, that have
been involved in trying to bring about this
important facility for our nation's security.
You know these visions take a long time
when you realize that the operational capability of
the facility doesn't even come online until 2015 and
probably folks at the table will not get to see it
come online. They'll read about it and maybe get in
invitation to the grand opening, but that's the
right challenge and this is hard work. It's hard
work to figure out what's the right thing to do and
how to do it right. And so, again, my appreciation
and my congratulations so far on what we view as a
terrific effort. We know that it will continue to
be that way. Thanks for your service, and I hope
y'all have a great night.

MS. CATHERINE COGHLI: Thank you, sir.

John Turner.

MR. JOHN TURNER: I'll be very brief, but I
was part of the Mississippi Economic Development
Team that responded to the DHS Environmental Impact
Statement as we went through this process, and I
just want to let everybody know it was a very
detailed analysis that as was mentioned earlier, very similar to what was done to Grand Gulf, our nuclear plant down in Port Gibson. As we went through this process we felt very confident that this site was a very good site for this type of facility and had a very positive impact on the City of Flora, the County and the State of Mississippi. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

Buck Covington.

MR. BUCK COVINGTON: Hello, I'm Buck Covington. I wear many many hats, and I want to tell you thank you so very much. The clarity has been crystal clear of how the procedure works, how everything comes together. The questions were answered and comments time. The information coming forward is like a road map, it's easy to follow, so thank you again for that.

Getting back to the hats, my family has been from this area for over 100 years. My family was from here, I have some interesting selfish reasons for wanting this lab here. My daughter is studying biology at Georgetown, getting a PhD, have her come home and have a place to work. That would be wonderful.
I'm also the President of Archway Development. We've made a significant investment in a development here close by. The value will probably range between 800 million to a billion dollars in assets when it's all complete and it's real close by and it's going to be here to serve the people of this lab. We're really really excited about that.

But I'm also the Present of the Chamber of Commerce for Madison County, which is a broader scope and our board unanimously believes that this is the right way to go. -- we're excited about it.

One of the interesting things that I've been listening to tonight, and I'm going to try to do it before the yellow card too, is that I was reminded of something, I was at a funeral of Mr. Bozeman, I think it was about a year and a half ago. And the Minister had mentioned something about the legacy. It was the legacy and this is a very prominent family in the Flora area. And then there was another lady here who talked about what happened in the 1940's when Flora was called the depot, and then we step it up. Madison County and Flora stepped up. This is what we do. This is what we are. This is what we're a part of. Now it's our time to step up.

Comment No: 3 Issue Code: 15.5
DHS notes the commentor's support for the Flora Industrial Park Site Alternative. The economic effects of the NBAF at the Flora Industrial Park Site Alternative are included in Section 3.10.5 of the NBAF EIS.
again. It's part of our legacy. It's part of what
do. It's part of who we are. We're here for you.
We'd like -- consider it a service to the United
States. You know, beyond that -- I missed it.
I had a meeting with a CEO, Mr. Hugh
Manatino. He is also the President of Parkway
Development. I said, do you want me to speak for
you speak, he said yes. He said, speak as you will.
We'd been having a round table and one of the
gentleman who -- actually -- Dick Brazino, he was
very familiar with the process and how this works.
Through analysis and looking through the data,
through everything else, he's in great support of
it. So anyhow this just restates my and we
appreciate the time. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.
Scott Greaves.

MR. SCOTT GREAVES: Thank you. I want to
start with I am Scott Greaves, Mayor of Flora. I
know most of you and it's real good to see
everybody. I want to tell you how much I appreciate
you guys. We sort of like friends now, you know,
whatever happens we'll still be friends. You can
always move back to Flora and retire here. I think
you have heard enough good things about us.

DHS notes the commentor's support for the Flora Industrial Park Site Alternative.
I want to thank everybody for being frank, Charlie, your wife. Everybody's got their own feeling. Ruby, I appreciate you putting me in for your flying service, you know, he kills bad bugs. That's what he does for a living, flies around but the biggest thing is we've all come together to talk about it, we're to that stage now and I just want to tell you again how much I appreciate you being frank, thinking about it, giving some good hard thought into it, and of course we want you, so I've got that golden shovel whenever you get ready. Thank you so much. I think this is the end of it for speeches, isn't it?

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you, sir.
MR. SCOTT GREAVES: Thank you.
MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Folks, we've accommodated everyone who was signed up to speak, but we'd like to offer if there's someone who would still like to speak at this time who didn't sign up who'd like to come to the microphone to please come forward at this time. Yes, ma'am?
MS. EVELYN BROWN: Good evening, my name is Evelyn Brown and I'm speaking as an outsider. I moved here about five years ago to the town of Flora. I was born in Mississippi but -- California.
And I just want to shed a little bit of light on the residents here in Flora. This is a little bit different. I lived here, I was pleasantly surprised, and I'm saying this because in California they had a very negative image of Mississipians. And coming here the people were extremely friendly. I found that the Caucasians, the blacks, the Asians, the Hispanics, all of them, all of this is like a little family in this town and I have enjoyed living here in the past five years. I can't think of another place that I'd like to live. As far as the children, the adults, everyone is just like a -- like they've known everybody for life, and they have made me feel that way, that they've known me all my life. So I just want to say I think this is a good opportunity bringing the biolab here because you're going to find families coming into this community. There is a low crime rate. The officers, they waive at you, and it's just really a nice community to have people moving in to.

As far as the education, I don't have kids in school at this time, but I heard Flora Elementary schools are some of the best schools in Mississippi. The superintendent spoke about Madison Central, I have heard of better schools and as I
said I have lived in various states, so this is a very good community to bring a project in to. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

Excuse me, is there anyone else who would like to speak who has not? Yes, sir.

MR. DAVID DZIELAK: Good evening, my name is Dave Dzielak and I'm from the University of Mississippi Medical Center here in Jackson, and I had an opportunity to speak earlier today at the afternoon. I'd like to clarify some points for the this evening and those are the safety issues of the facility. This facility has been -- equivalent for CDC for animals. And I'd like to reiterate that the CDC is located in downtown Atlanta. It has diseases that are probably much more impactful on the human environment and the human condition than the diseases that will be studied here in the NBAF facility. So while this facility is located downtown Atlanta close to Emory University, there is no concern, safety concern that we have or that other people have for the CDC. I just wanted to make that point of clarification that the more you know about what is going on in a facility, the more you're educated about it, the less concern that one

DHS notes the commentor's support for the Flora Industrial Park Site Alternative.
1 has for safety concerns of this type of research and
2 this type of project.
3 We have ongoing at the medical center
4 research that works with BSL 3 types of
5 organizations every day. I walk by that facility
6 probably three times a week and I have no concerns
7 about the way we handle it. I have no concerns
8 about the way the CDC would handle it, and I have no
9 concerns about the way the bio-defense facility
10 would handle it as well. Thank you very much.
11 MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.
12 Anyone else? Yes, ma'am.
13 DR. BIANCA GARNER: Good evening, my name
14 is Dr. Bianca Garner, I work with the Chamber. I
15 just wanted to take a moment to just focus some
16 attention on something that I think is really being
17 overlooked and I think we need to spend some time
18 on. I was fortunate enough to read the EIS, and
19 they've done a good job of punching in on the worst
20 case scenarios; but the do a really good job of
21 saying how we're going to stop that. For 11 years,
22 11 years, I've worked with infectious diseases right
23 here in Jackson. I've worked with anthrax, HIV,
24 hepatitis. For 11 years I've -- I've monitored the
25 lab, I've been interviewed by the FBI,
fingerprinted, for 11 years I've kept my family safe. And I think that that's a critical point that needs to be addressed. It's that mitigation is identified with EIS and a plan is in place. And I think once we have that plan it sets everything in motion. So for 11 years I can say that what they're saying in that document works, and I think that's what we need to focus on, mitigation. Anywhere you go -- but for 11 years right at UMC I've worked with anthrax. I'm alive. I don't have sores. I haven't given my animals anything, and it worked. And so I'm the person, if you want a face for research in this state I'm that person. I think I've done a pretty good job. I haven't been cited, so I think it's worked and I think it's something we really need to focus in on additional meetings. Thank you.

MS. CATHERINE COGHILL: Thank you.

Anyone else at this point and time. We are here for the duration of the meeting identified. What we'd like to do now is take a break and in the event that someone would like to speak who has not or folks coming in after work or whatever the schedule we would certainly want to accommodate them when they show up. So we'll check back in shortly and we'll reconvene for anyone who would like to speak again.
Thank you.

(Off the record at 8:35 p.m.)

MR. JAMES JOHNSON: We're going to adjourn the meeting, but we wanted to give everyone a chance to comment one last time. No one.

(Meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.)
Chapter 2 - Comment Documents

August 7, 2008, San Antonio, TX, San Antonio Afternoon

Page 1 of 86
WELCOME ........................................... 4, 1
PRESENTATION .................................... 8, 12
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION .................. 29, 22
Rosa Sipinexki .................................... 30, 16
Marcel Perret-Gentil .............................. 32, 23
York Duncan ........................................ 34, 25
FORMAL COMMENTS SESSION ..................... 37, 19
John Kerr .......................................... 39, 1
Jim Dublin ......................................... 40, 24
Hope Andrade ...................................... 43, 22
Jonathan Huhn ..................................... 46, 10
Dr. Bob Hillman .................................... 48, 11
Clay Smith ........................................ 50, 21
Dr. Brian Herman .................................. 52, 5
Bebe Fenstermaker .................................. 53, 19
Susan Beavin ....................................... 53, 25
Amber Pearce ...................................... 54, 4
Eleanor Crow ....................................... 56, 13
Mary Fenstermaker ................................ 58, 8
Marcel Perret-Gentil ................................ 58, 12
Brett Cornwell ..................................... 60, 5
Jim Poage .......................................... 62, 15
Jeffrey Kantor ...................................... 64, 8
Lilliana Rodriguez ................................. 66, 10
George Irving ................................------ 67, 22
Nelson Wolff .................................... 70, 15
Dr. Thomas Leo Cropper ......................... 72, 22
Harold Timboe .................................... 75, 10
Melina Kinsey for Jean Patterson ............... 77, 23
Melina Kinsey ...................................... 79, 20
Sara Sanchez ....................................... 81, 10
Mary Pat Moyer .................................... 83, 3
Neal Guentzel ..................................... 84, 10
Karl Klose ......................................... 86, 12
David Marquez ..................................... 88, 18
Dr. James Wright .................................. 90, 6
Richard Perez ..................................... 94, 12
Angela Manson ..................................... 96, 4
Thomas Heralde ................................... 96, 8
Gerardo Interiano .................................. 96, 11
Ronald Steward .................................... 99, 2
York Duncan ....................................... 100, 15
### Index Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page/Line</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Delicia Herrera</td>
<td>105,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.J. Rodriguez</td>
<td>107,19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLOSING COMMENTS</td>
<td>110,15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPORTER’S JURAT</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**August 7, 2008, San Antonio, TX, San Antonio Afternoon**

Page 3 of 86
final decision, such as costs to construct and operate the facility, site characterization, security, and technical feasibility.

I chair a DHS-USDA steering committee that will evaluate this information and make recommendations to the decision authority under Secretary Jay Cohen. We expect the record of decision to be in December of 2008. If a site selected, construction will begin in 2010. The facility would be operational by 2015.

Your comments are important to us. As I said before, the comment period ends on August 25th this month, and there are many ways for you to submit comments. Any comments that we receive by August 25th will be addressed and responded to in the final EIS.

Please keep in mind you do not have to make your comments today. You can leave the meeting and make your comments at a later date. Again, as long as we receive them by August 25th, you can use any of the mechanisms that you see here on the slide. Thank you again for your time.

MS. COGHILL: All right. That concludes the presentation portion of the agenda. What we'd like to do now is open it up to the question and answer period. And again, just to reiterate, we want to keep...
questions specifically tied to the presentation that was just given. So if there, again, if there was something that you need further information on or further clarity, please do come to the microphone, state your name and organization if you choose, if not, that's fine as well. And please just keep your question to one question because, of course, we want to accommodate everybody who is here and also the folks who have signed up for the formal comment period. In the event that there are no questions, we'll go forward with the comment period. So at this point in time, is there anyone who has a question, and if so, please come to the microphone.

Yes, ma'am. ROSA SIPINIESKI: My name is Rosa Sipinieski. I am from SIPA Corporation. We are located at Texas Research Park Foundation, and my question is basically concerned about the Foot and Mouth Disease. The data I look for escape from the laboratory, which the reason was in 2007 in England was associated -- I don't remember the strain -- but it was associated with the virus strain which served as a vaccine. So from your presentation I really did not see any plan for such event if -- most likely will
not happen -- but if it does, what farmers of Texas will have -- will you have the same time when you study, prepare the vaccine for the strain because we know about 60 strains of the Foot and Mouth Disease most common are eight, but they do not provide cross protection. So I think it would be prudent to prepare the vaccine at the same time when you work on characterizing this particular disease. Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Let me take a shot at responding that.

In the unlikely event that Foot and Mouth Disease would get out of the facility, again, it's very unlikely, or in the event that Foot and Mouth Disease comes into the country, whether accidentally or intentionally introduced, the USDA has a national coordinated plan to respond to those types of events involving the National Animal Health Network that trains the state and local veterinarians to be able to detect the Foot and Mouth Disease to be able to put the protocols in place to respond to that type of outbreak, should it occur.

DR. RODRIGUEZ: So APHIS, the Animal
Plant Health Inspection Service, is a part of the USDA that is primarily charged with control of FMD outbreaks, regardless of whether they're accidental introductions or deliberate. And they do have a vaccine bank for many of these serotypes and subtypes of Foot and Mouth Disease available, and they would activate that bank according to the type of virus that they detect.

So the response would be similar, whether it is released from a laboratory or introduced from abroad.

MR. JOHNSON: I think it's important to your point of view that in an FMD outbreak, we don't evacuate people. We control the movement of animals.

MS. SIPINIESKI: I understand that.

MR. JOHNSON: I just wanted to make sure.

MS. SIPINIESKI: I just want to follow up for the economic problem, you know, aspect of that.

Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you very much.

Yes, sir. Please come to the microphone.

MARCEL PERRIT-GENTIL: Good afternoon.

I'm Marcel Perret-Gentil, I'm the university -- a veterinarian from UTSA.

DHS notes the commentor’s concern. The risk of an accidental release of a pathogen is extremely low, but DHS acknowledges that the possible economic effect would be significant for all sites. Section 3.10.9 presents estimates of the possible economic effect of an accidental release.
Initially that was not addressed in the presentation was, obviously, the reason why we, the Department of Homeland Security, want an NBAF is because the risk of a foreign animal disease to come to the United States is great or at least is at a certain level that it compels the Department of Homeland Security to develop a new facility.

Now what was not explained was what are the risks of a foreign animal disease coming into this country compared to the risks of a foreign animal disease being released from the laboratory, namely, the NBAF? Is that clear what I'm asking?

MR. JOHNSON: I think since Plum Island, which was put up 50 years ago, a lot has changed in society. I mean, I think we are clearly a much more mobile society. We -- you know, air transportation, the world is flat, so to speak. It's a very mobile society, and the FMD is a very contagious disease. It can spread very easily. People can carry it with them, you know, on a -- you know, on an airplane.

So the risk, in and of itself, and plus the fact that there are numerous countries today that have FMD in their countries. I don't know if you've got that. We had a chart that shows FMD that travels, really, to many countries throughout the world. Given...
the mobility, given the presence of FMD in other
countries, I would say the risk is great that we could
have an accidental or intentional introduction into the
country, and that's what we're trying to prevent.

And so that is precisely why we're doing
the research at Plum Island. But as you know, some of
these diseases that we are studying have emerged in the
last -- or we want to study, rather -- have emerged in
the last 10 years, and we have no place to study them.

So if there is an outbreak somewhere in
the world, how can we better understand what those
diseases are and be in better position to respond to
them. There is no facility that we have in the United
States that we can currently do the research on that
here.

MARCEL PERRET-GENTIL: So if I understand
correctly what you just said was that risk of a foreign
animal disease coming to this country is significantly
greater than the risk of something being released from
an NBAF facility.

MR. JOHNSON: Sure. By far.

MARCEL PERRET-GENTIL: Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you. Any more
questions? Yes, sir.

YORK DUNCAN: My name is York Duncan.
I'm president of the Texas Research Park. Jamie, this is a question that I've heard at one of the other locations.

It's my understanding that you are very close -- or at Plum Island very close to developing an effective vaccine for FMD in the next couple years; is that correct?

MR. JOHNSON: That's correct. And I think Luis could give a far more eloquent response than I could. Do you want to comment on that?

DR. RODRIGUEZ: Actually, there are effective vaccines against Foot and Mouth Disease available around the world. The problem with those vaccines -- there are many problems with that, and one of them is the way that they are produced. It's highly -- it poses some risk in the sense that you have to grow the actual live virus, the virulent virus, and then kill it in order to make a vaccine.

The new vaccine that the USDA ARS has developed -- discovered over the last -- in research over the last five or six years actually allows the production of FMD vaccines without the live virus, thus decreasing the risk of release.

So these vaccines actually are -- colleagues at Homeland Security are taking it through...
the developmental process, and we trust that by the end of next year we will have the first of this new generation of vaccines. And let me point out. This is the first new vaccine against Foot and Mouth Disease in the last 60 years, the first innovation, and it came out of the research done at Plum Island. Without the Bio-Safety Level-3 facility at Plum Island, that research could have never been done.

YORK DUNCAN: Can I ask a follow-up question?

So if there's going to be a virus in the next 24 months or so, in essence, you may not even really focus on FMD in the NBAF facility.

DR. RODRIGUEZ: The question, if I understood correctly, is now that we have a vaccine, we don't need to continue to study Foot and Mouth Disease. I don't know if that's what you were asking, but that's the question that comes up.

There are so many gaps that we don't know about Foot and Mouth Disease transmission specifically related to the species. Escape. The virus can escape, and what I mean by escape, escape being immune response during vaccine -- vaccination process. And a lot of those mechanisms are not well known.
So even if we do have better vaccines that I trust we will have very soon, there is a lot of questions about the rapidity of spread and the transmission of disease that we'll need to continue to be researched. So I envision we will have research in NBAF on Foot and Mouth Disease as well.

MR. JOHNSON: I think in addition to common strains, they change, where we have to be able to be on top of that.

MS. COGHILL: Next question. Yes, ma'am.

Could you please come to the microphone so we can hear you? Thank you very much.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I had signed up to speak for three minutes. Is that later?

MS. COGHILL: Yes, ma'am.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay.

MS. COGHILL: Any other questions at this time? Okay.

What we're going to do is do exactly what you were asking for. What was going to be happen next, that's the formal comment period of the meeting. Just to go over so we'll all clear and working together, for this part of the meeting what I'm going to do is call a person who signed up at the time that they signed up for to the microphone. Please, again, state your name and
organization if you'd like to the front of the room so
the court reporter can gather everything correctly.

Each person will have three minutes to
speak. We’re really asking that you stick to that three
minutes. We want to create a fair process at all sites
and create a fair process here for everybody in the
room.

All the comments will be recorded by the
court reporter. I also just want a point of process to
go over real quick. If you have a question that you're
posing in your comments at this time, please do not
think that the folks at the front of room are being
discourteous and not responding. Under the National
Environmental Policy Act, Department of Homeland
Security has to respond to every comment that we
receive, and we do that under what's called a Comment
Response Document.

So it would be premature at this time, if
someone poses a question, to provide a response because
we have to go through scientific analysis to make sure
we're addressing everything. So please keep that in
mind.

All right. At this point I will call the
first person to the microphone who signed up, and that
gentleman is John Kerr, K-E-R-R.
JOHN KERR: Thank you. I am John Kerr, I'm president of Southwest Foundation for Bio-Medical Research here in San Antonio, and I'm the chairman of the Texas Bio and Agro-Defense Consortium.

We are -- we commend the Department of Homeland Security for the thoughtful and comprehensive nature of the Draft EIS for the six sites under consideration and the dedication and hard work of the department staff throughout this long process. And if we are selected, we are fully prepared to defend the selection process in accordance with federal law.

Among the chief issues addressed in the EIS and certainly the paramount concern of the public is safety and the mitigation of risk associated with the maximum containment research that will be conducted at the NBAF.

In the interest of completeness, I believe the EIS should take note of a significant difference between the San Antonio site and the other five sites, namely, that San Antonio is the only site with direct local experience in the design, construction, and operation of a Bio-Safety Level-4 lab.

The research conducted for over eight years in our BSL-4 lab, including research for the...
Department of Homeland Security, involves the most deadly pathogens and selected agents that could be used in bio-terrorism, and our safety record has been impeccable. Rather than ask the question as citizens in other communities have asked, could such a lab be operated safely, we can demonstrate that we have, in fact, operated such a lab in complete safety for nearly a decade.

There's broad public awareness and community acceptance in San Antonio for this maximum containment research. Our local emergency response teams and public health officials are thoroughly familiar with this research and trained in rapid response to any potential outbreak.

We are in close proximity to three Level-1 trauma centers. We are not subject to the risk of natural disasters, such as tornados, hurricanes, or earthquakes. In short, locating the NBAF in San Antonio in contrast to the other five sites would significantly mitigate the risk of any endangerment of the public.

Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Next person is Jim Dublin.

JIM DUBLIN: My name's Jim Dublin. I'm the chairman of the Texas Research and Technology
Foundation, and we are the proud stewards of the Texas Research Park. And we've appreciated working with you throughout the process and look forward to continuing to do so.

It's my honor today to read into the record a letter from former governor, Dolph Briscoe whose ranch is in Uvalde, west of here about 80 miles. He was not able to attend but asked us to submit this letter for him, I'm pleased to do. The letter is addressed to the Honorable Jay Cohen, undersecretary for science and technology and selection according to the National Bio and Agro-Defense facility.

"Dear Admiral Cohen, first let me commend the fine work performed by the Department of Homeland Security, addressing the need for the National Bio and Agro-Defenses Facility in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I serve on the advisory board of the Texas Biological and Agro-Defense Consortium, TBAC, and have followed DHS's efforts in this area.

"I suggest that the DEIS needs more emphasis on stakeholder support since that support is crucial to community acceptance in both the specific and broadest sense. As a Texas rancher and former governor, please allow me to advocate San Antonio's Texas Research Park site as the perfect location for the NBAF.
"Our family, the Briscoe family, began ranching a century ago, and I was personally involved in the effort to eradicate the horrible screwworm, which was such a scourge to the cattle industry. While no one has talked about the screwworm for many years, if you were a cattleman in the mid-20th century, few problems were more treacherous.

The screwworm would lay eggs in an open wound, such as a cut on a cow's lip, caused by eating prickly pear. The eggs would hatch and worms would infest the animal, eventually killing their host. Up to one-third of some herds were infested, putting the beef industry at great risk.

"The screwworm was finally defeated by advances in vaccine development. I'm confident that the NBAF laboratory DHS proposes to build will find similar solutions for the infectious diseases adversely impacting cattle ranchers, indeed those raising livestock of all sorts today and tomorrow, and in doing so, NBAF will make this country safer and help secure our food supply.

"I'm also a former president of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raiser's Association and was very pleased that organization offered its full support in their letter of February 13th, 2007, to Secretary
Chertoff. The more than 14,500 members of the Cattle Raiser's Association were joined by the Texas Association of Dairymen representing over 800 dairy farm families, and the 15,000-member Texas Poultry Federation in believing that Texas, and in particular San Antonio, are extraordinarily well-equipped to keep our country's food and fiber production safe and secure. Again, it appears to me that this very high level stakeholder's support for the Texas Research Park site was not given proper consideration in the DEIS.

"Admiral Cohen, I want to express once more my own strong endorsement and that of my fellow members of these important livestock associations for the Texas Research Park as the preferred site for the NBAF. It is, without a doubt, the ideal location and has a strongest level of support from ranchers and farmers, the stakeholders, who need it the most.

"Respectfully submitted, Dolph Briscoe."

Thank you very much.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Hope Andrade.

HOPE ANDRADE: Good afternoon. My name is Hope Andrade. I'm the Secretary of State for the State of Texas, and I want to welcome you back to Texas.
I'm here today, this afternoon, on behalf of Governor Perry and the State of Texas to voice our support of the National Bio and Agro-Defense facility. We believe this facility is imperative to our nation's security, and we are confident that San Antonio provides the best location and opportunities for the NBAF.

I would like to share with you some of the qualities that make San Antonio the prime candidate for this location. First, San Antonio is the only site under consideration for the new facility that already has the research infrastructure in place to be capable of handling such activities. SFDR has operated the nation's only privately owned BSL-4 labs since 2000 with no hazardous incidents, which no doubt is a part of why this committee has expressed their steadfast and consistent support for this project.

Additionally, we have three preexisting research institutions right here in San Antonio. SFDR, UT San Antonio, and the UT Health Science Center make this region in bio-medical and bio-science research. Furthermore, San Antonio's home to a health care workforce of more than 110,000 people and houses the largest military health care and bio-medical research operations in the United States. This provides natural
opportunities for collaboration and coordination in its
NBAF's planned research activities.

Most importantly, Texans are excited
about this project. The TBAC has done an outstanding
job working with state and local leaders to explain the
benefits of this project for San Antonio and the state
as a whole. Along with more than 300 jobs and $1.5
billion in economic impact over the next 20 years,
NBAF's presence in San Antonio will serve as an impetus
to bringing more high-tech activity to the region.

This project is expected to be to San
Antonio what NASA was to Houston in the '60s, and as a
state official, as an American, and as a resident of
Bexar County, I urge you to consider bringing the NBAF
to San Antonio.

The security of our nation will be in
goods hands and Governor Perry and I stand behind its
efforts with full support, willing to assist this
community in bringing this project to fruition.

One of the issues that we heard addressed
was the quality of life, the quality of life that we all
enjoy in San Antonio where we live and raise our
families. Earlier this year, San Antonio was named as
the friendliest city in the United States. Some of the
criterion they used for their ranking included safety,
diversity, number of parks and public spaces, and
statistics such as median home prices and the total
number of visitors.

I assure you that we are friendly, we are
happy, and that we’d be more than happy for NBAF
to call San Antonio their home. Thank you so
much for allowing this testimony.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Jonathan Huhn is our next speaker.

JONATHAN HUHN: Good afternoon. My name
is Jonathan Huhn, I’m Deputy Regional Director for
United States Senator John Cornin. He could not be here
today, unfortunately, but he wanted me to enter into the
record his support letter to Secretary Chertoff, for the
NBAF.

"Dear Secretary Chertoff, as the
department prepares to make its final site selection for
the National Bio Agro-Defense facility, I’d like to
reiterate my strong support for the proposal submitted
by the Texas Biological Agro-Defense Consortium in San
Antonio.

"This proposal has been -- has unbeatable
advantages that will uniquely benefit the facility.
Also known as Military City, San Antonio is a community
that embraces its role as host of our nation’s foremost
national defense and homeland security installations.

"Unlike some communities, people in San Antonio wholeheartedly welcome the opportunity to support new facilities in the defense of our nation, as evidenced by the city's enthusiasm for thousands of new personnel who are arriving as a result of BRAC.

"All of the primary stakeholders in the community, including government, business, and community groups, stand ready to support the NBAF. Also, the San Antonio site offers outstanding research capabilities and experienced workforce that is ready and able to perform vital research.

"San Antonio's bio-medical community already accounts for over 110,000 jobs and collaborates closely with the military, Homeland Security and academic community. In addition, eight board-certified veterinarians are available to the NBAF.

"The proposed site has access to major highways and proximity to airports and has been confirmed not to present any environmental problems for the local aquifer recharge zone.

"As you can see, the San Antonio application clearly meets or exceeds all DHS requirements. The consortium has clearly demonstrated they have the research capacity, strong community
acceptance, and critical facilities necessary to fulfill the DHS mission of implementing and integrating National Bio and Agro-Defense strategy.

"I strongly urge you to ensure that these advantages are given the strongest consideration."

"Sincerely, United States Senator John Cornin."

Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Bob Hillman.

DR. BOB HILLMAN: Thank you. My name is Dr. Rob Hillman, I'm the executive director of the Texas Animal Health Commission and the state veterinarian for the State of Texas.

It is our job at the Animal Health Commission to prevent, conduct surveillance, conduct patrol activity to eradicate serious diseases in our livestock and poultry in the State of Texas. As such, we rely heavily on our national laboratory for support and disease control and eradication efforts, and we look forward to a rapid construction of a new laboratory.

A review of the Draft EIS indicates that all of the locations remaining under consideration will meet the environmental requirements stated in the Impact Statement. Therefore, we believe it's important that
the Department of Homeland Security give credence to
other factors that may elevate a particular location
above the others.

Some of those would include the fact that
we have a host of colleges and universities to serve and
provide degree programs and vocational programs for our
workforce. There are at least 37 colleges and
universities and trade schools within San Antonio, plus
a host of others in the regions around San Antonio.

Research programs. You’ve already heard
about the research infrastructure that’s already in
place. I’ll not dwell on it and go to other points.

We have a strong heritage in animal
disease response in the State of the Texas, dating back
to the 1890s, when researchers at Texas A&M College,
working in concert with USDA scientists and Texas
cattlemen, solved the puzzle presented by Texas Cattle
Fever, which led eventually to the eradication of the
disease from the United States. The spirit of
inquisitive nature and persistence exhibited by these
early pioneers continues to this day and is clearly
evident in this community.

The Animal Health Commission has
developed, has exercised, and in fact, has put into play
a very strong animal disease response plan to deal with...
foreign animal diseases that have been introduced into Texas.

The Animal Health Commission and its collaborating agencies and industries stand ready to collaborate with the new NBAF laboratory in identifying the needs for effective response to high-consequence diseases and to threats and to help evaluate the tools that are needed for disease response.

I believe that we are at high risk for disease introduction. One of the questioners asked about foreign animal diseases being introduced. There's been five since 1999. All of them have impacted Texas.

There are a number of other reasons that we could support bring the lab to Texas but one is that we have a large population of livestock in this state that are at risk. We believe it prudent to have a laboratory close to the livestock populations that we can rely on for effective disease mitigation. Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Clay Smith.

CLAY SMITH: Hi. My name is Clay Smith, and I represent the Texas Department of Transportation and in the work area here in San Antonio.

The Texas Department of Transportation has received -- has reviewed the Section 3.11 on traffic...
impacts with the Research Park subject to the Draft EIS, and we appreciate the opportunity to make comments on the document.

Anticipated travel demand associated with the NBAF site appears to be in accordance with all the anticipated future land use in this area. This land use projection is accounted for in the San Antonio BPO's regional travel demand model, from which the traffic projections for future years are developed.

The NBAF traffic growths would have some impact on the existing transportation system, however, it would be considered relatively minor when compared to all the other residential and commercial growth already planned in the surrounding area.

The state maintains two facilities around the Research Park, FM 1957, which is Potranco Road, and State Highway 211. Capacity improvements for these roadways as described in the document are currently included in the NPO's long-range plan, and in fact, in their 10-year plan and in their travel demand for this region. The expansion of these projects are scheduled in their plan.

TxDOT in the San Antonio district supports the efforts to bring NBAF to San Antonio and are willing to support this economic opportunity with
the infrastructure planned in this region. Thank you very much.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Brian Herman.

DR. BRIAN HERMAN: I'm Dr. Brian Herman. I'm the vice president for research at the University of Texas Health Science Center here in San Antonio. We are also a member of the TBAC community. I want to indicate to the panel that the University of Texas Health Science Center, my colleagues from UTSA and the UT system, all collectively strongly endorse San Antonio as the site where NBAF should be located.

The University of Texas system brings together 15 component institutions that have major activities in the areas of high relevance to the research that would go on at NBAF, including some very specific areas here in San Antonio. As you may recall from the DEIS, the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio actually has a number of facilities that would be positioned across the street from the NBAF facility, including BSL-3 -- current BSL-3 laboratories, BSL-2 laboratories, and are in the process of actually developing a rather large program for expanding the infectious disease research that would occur at the Texas Research Park Site for the
university.

Second, something that may not have come to your knowledge yet is that our university is also expanding its clinical activities in this Westover Hills area in partnership with a new hospital that's been built out here. We're staffing that hospital and providing physician support and clinical support, and so this area will have enhanced access to top quality health care should some unforeseen event happen at the institution.

Lastly, I would say that I just want to reiterate what you just heard, that, in fact, this area of the city is expanding in a fairly rapid fashion, and expansion comes with increase in major kinds of infrastructure, all of which will benefit the NBAF facility. Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Bebe Fenstermaker, the next speaker.

BEBE FENSTERMAKER: I really have no comments at this time. I have some questions that I'll put in writing, and I'd like a transcript of these proceedings. Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Susan Beavin.

SUSAN BEAVIN: Same thing. I had
Amber Pearce.

AMBER PEARCE: Good afternoon. My name is Amber Pearce, and I am the policy director for the Texas Health Care and Bio-Science Institute. We are a state-wide public policy organization, and our whole mission revolves around supporting and advocating policies and activities that support the growth of the life science industry in the state.

We are essentially the state's trade association for life sciences. And our membership is made up of our of academic research institutions, small and large pharmaceutical and bio-tech medical device companies, including agricultural bio-tech companies, businesses providing support to the industry, and finally, developments and chambers of commerce that are growing industry in the region.

My focus today is more on the socio-economic benefits of the NBAF project. We recognize the potential that the NBAF has to bring, the great economic impact, not only to San Antonio but to Texas as a whole. Investment in research and innovation attracts more research, more research talent, research dollars, and innovation in general, not just local state
tax revenues.

The UT system in 2006, which includes the University of Texas in San Antonio and the Health Science Center, ranks number one in the world for the number and quality of bio-tech patents produced. Texas is home to 3,200 life science establishments, employing over 84,000 people at an average salary of over $70,000. It's a highly attractive industry from a workforce standpoint.

This state has a great understanding of what it takes for the industry and the industry's needs and San Antonio specifically. San Antonio is a region with many assets, and THBI feels that NBAF is a natural fit for this community. It has a vital and collaborative life science research base and a life science educated workforce with broad subject focus that meets NBAF's criteria. It is ideally situated location-wise and has proven experience managing BSL-3 and BSL-4 labs.

Then there's the tremendous military and health care presence. It has a long history of working with government entities.

We understand the potential concerns this facility brings, and we also recognize the tremendous economic, research, and health benefits it brings as...
well. On behalf of THBI and our membership, I appreciate the opportunity to comment and say we wholeheartedly support the location of the NBAF facility in San Antonio, should it be the chosen location. Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.


We'll go on to Gerardo -- and I'm probably not going to pronounce this correctly. I apologize in advance -- Interiano.

Eleanor Crow.

ELEANOR CROW: Hello. Hi. I'm Eleanor Crow, I'm a resident of the community surrounding this facility. And I hope my questions will help you provide education to the community that you intend to occupy to alleviate their fears of this type of operation based on our ignorance of it.

Therefore, as a member of the community that surrounds the Park, I have concerns about the fact that accidents may pose a threat to people, animals, water, and the air. My questions are therefore intended to educate the community about how we can feel safe living nearby.

I only have three minutes, so I won't ask
DHS notes the commentor's concern. The NBAF would provide state-of-the-art operating procedures and biocontainment features to minimize the potential for laboratory-acquired infections and accidental releases. As examined in Section 3.14 and Appendix E of the NBAF EIS, the risk of an accidental release of a pathogen is extremely low. DHS is aware of the historic biosafety lapses and will consider these events to improve the structural and engineered safety of the final NBAF design and to incorporate lessons learned from incidents of human error into the operating procedures. The EIS economic (Section 3.10 and Appendix D of the NBAF EIS) and risk analysis (Section 3.14 and Appendix E of the NBAF EIS) acknowledge and assess the accidental Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) releases in Great Britain. The proposed NBAF design would incorporate engineering features and operational procedures to prevent or mitigate an accidental or deliberate pathogen release from any of the BSL laboratories within the NBAF. Appendix B to the NBAF EIS describes biocontainment lapses and laboratory acquired infections in the United States and world-wide. Laboratory-acquired infections have not been shown to be a threat to the community at large. Should the NBAF Record of Decision call for the design, construction, and operations of the NBAF then site specific protocols and emergency response plans would be developed, in coordination with local emergency response agencies that would consider the diversity and density of human, livestock, and wildlife populations residing within the area. DHS would have site-specific standard operating procedures and emergency response plans in place prior to the initiation of research activities at the proposed NBAF.

DHS notes the commentor's concern. Chapter 1, Section 1.1 of the NBAF EIS identifies DHS's mission as the study of foreign animal and zoonotic (transmitted from animals to humans) diseases that threaten our agricultural livestock and agricultural economy. The goal or benefit of NBAF is to prevent these animal diseases from spreading in the United States through research into the transmission of these animal diseases and the development of diagnostic tests, vaccines, and antiviral therapies. DHS believes that experience shows that facilities utilizing modern biocontainment technologies and safety protocols, such as would be employed in the design, construction, and operation of NBAF, would enable NBAF to be safely operated with a minimal degree of risk, regardless of the site chosen.

DHS notes the commentor's concern about the human health and safety of the surrounding institutional residents. Chapter 3, Section 3.14 investigates the chances of a variety of accidents that could occur with the proposed NBAF and consequences of potential accidents. Although some “accidents” are more likely to occur than others (e.g., safety protocol not being followed), the chances of an accidental release are low. A site-specific emergency response plan would be developed and coordinated with the local emergency management plan and individual facility plans regarding evacuations and other emergency response measures for all potential emergency events including...
accidents at the NBAF, and which would include stipulations for all special-needs populations.

Comment No: 4    Issue Code: 21.6
DHS notes the commentor’s concern that NBAF waste be properly pre-treated for pathogens prior to discharge to the local wastewater treatment plant. Disposal and decontamination (killing or inactivation of bacteria and fungi and viruses) procedures have a long and proven history of effectiveness when facilities are well maintained and procedures followed. The NBAF would provide state-of-the-art biocontainment features and operating procedures to minimize the potential for laboratory-acquired infections and accidental releases. The risk of an accidental release of a pathogen is extremely low. Section 3.14 and Appendix E of the NBAF EIS identifies the potential for, or likelihood of, the scenarios leading to adverse consequences, and this analysis provides support for the identification of specific engineering and administrative controls to either prevent a pathogen release or mitigate the consequences of such a release. Section 3.13 of the NBAF EIS describes the processes that would be used to control and dispose of liquid and solid waste from the NBAF. Section 3.13.2.2 explains that all of the thermal, disinfection, and decontamination technologies used to treat any type of animal waste generated at the NBAF will meet the operational and validation criteria (i.e., monitoring of effluent) recommended in “Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and NIH 2007) to ensure effective treatment. Further, as discussed in Section 2.2.2 of the NBAF EIS, operational training and the use of standard protocols and SOPs would help to reduce the likelihood of human errors that could pose a threat to health and safety. Sections 3.3.8.4 and 3.7.8 of the NBAF EIS describe methods used to prevent and mitigate potential effects of spills and runoff and to ensure compliance with sanitary sewer acceptance criteria (e.g., routine monitoring of effluents, etc.), respectively.
to protect the community from any accidental
corruption of the water supply?
And my last question would be, would
every member of the panel drink a glass of this treated
water? Thank you very much.
MS. COGHILL: Thank you. Mary
Fenstermaker.
MARY FENSTERMAKER: I'll submit my
comment.
MS. COGHILL: Thank you.
Marcel Perret-Gentil.
MARCEL PERRET-GENTIL: Thank you. Marcel
Perret-Gentil is my name, and I represent the University
of Texas at San Antonio as the institution's
veterinarian. I'm director of the laboratory animal
resource's center.
UTSA is home of the South Texas Center
for Emerging Infectious Diseases. Some of the
representatives are here with us today, and these are
highly qualified and very progressive scientists who I
work very closely with. And they -- I'll tell you these
investigators and these scientists are making great
progress, great discoveries on select agents, which are
of great concern to the Department of Homeland
Security.
Let it be known that UTSA and South Texas Center for Emerging and Infectious Diseases are in full support of the NBAF development in San Antonio and committed to the success. So as Secretary Andrade mentioned and said earlier that San Antonio is the only city with the type of research infrastructure to work with and support the NBAF and we're committed to it.

To add to the safety record already known in this city -- and you all know, we have a BSL-4 facility, one of the few cities in this country with such a facility -- and so, to add to the record, the safety record in this city, let me tell you, the strong military presence in the city makes San Antonio a very safe city to host the NBAF.

In addition, great appeal of this city, with its low cost of living, along with a strong research infrastructure, makes San Antonio the ideal location to attract the best scientists to the NBAF.

I'm confident today because I participated in the last impact Environmental Impact Meeting that was held in San Antonio that you'll be overwhelmed, gentlemen, by the great support the city gives to this endeavor. You will hear -- I mean, you may hear some opposition but it's so minor compared to the overwhelming support of the San Antonians that I expect you'll be overwhelmed.
August 7, 2008, San Antonio, TX, San Antonio Afternoon

Page 60

1 think you will leave today with a sense that perhaps
2 this may be the place. Thank you.
3                MS. COGHILL: Thank you.
4                Brett Cornwell.
5                BRETT CORNWELL: Good afternoon. Brett
6 Cornwell, representing Texas A&M University system. I'd
7 like to read into the record a letter from Guy Dietrick,
8 the Vice-Chancellor for Federal Relations.
9                "Dear Admiral Cohen, thank you for the
10 opportunity to express the Texas A&M University system's
11 strong support of the location of the National Bio and
12 Agro-Defense facility in San Antonio, Texas. Texas A&M
13 University system is one of the largest systems of
14 higher education in the nation, with a state-wide
15 network of 9 universities, 7 state agencies, and a
16 comprehensive health science center.
17                "The A&M system has many resources that
18 will naturally tie into the location of the National Bio
19 and Agro-Defense facility in San Antonio. A few
20 examples of the areas that can support through students,
21 staff, and research collaborations are the College of
22 Veterinary and Bio-Medical Sciences.
23                "The College of Veterinary and
24 Bio-Medical Sciences was established in 1916 and is
25 today one of the top five in the country. One out of
every 10 practicing veterinarians in the United States has an Aggie diploma. The faculty and staff of the college are committed to the exceptional teaching, research, and patient care. Our research addresses significant problems in both animal and human health and impacts animal and human health, which impacts Texas and the entire nation.

"Also, the Texas A&M University Institute for Preclinical Studies is located next to the College of Veterinary Medicine and Bio-Medical Sciences and is slated to open in June of 2009. It will play a key role in training veterinarians, physicians, scientists, and engineers. It's focused on translational research that will enable the breakthroughs and new discoveries to quickly move from concept into the marketplace.

"Also, the Texas Institute for Genomic Medicine. The Texas Institute for Genomic Medicine is currently in operation at the Institute for Bio-Sciences and Technology in Houston and will open in College Station at the end of this year. The combined libraries from these two facilities will constitute the largest knockout mouse library of its kind in the world.

"Texas A&M University at San Antonio, a new university campus that will one day serve 25,000 students in San Antonio, and then also the Texas A&M
University Agricultural Program, one of the premier agricultural programs in the United States, with over 6,000 students currently enrolled in degrees ranging from animal sciences to biological and animal engineering.

"Texas A&M University system looks forward to providing all the necessary resources through students, staff, and collaborative events to support the location of the National Agro and Bio-Defense facility in San Antonio, Texas.

"Sincerely, Guy Dietrick, Vice-Chancellor for Federal Relations."

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

JIM POAGE: Yes, my name is Jim Poage, and I'm the president and chief executive officer of the San Antonio Technology Accelerated Initiative. We help technology companies get up on their feet and find funding. And on one end of the spectrum, we take the mad scientist with great innovative ideas, pair them up with people who want to invest in those ideas and create companies, products, and ideas that go forward into the commercial marketplace.

One of the things that I'd like to emphasize today is that while the selection process and
the construction process of this facility will take place for many years, the eventual success will depend on the staff and the researchers that are there, resident at that facility. And one of the things I think is difficult to look at and understand is the rich environment that San Antonio has to attract that kind of people to live here.

I have direct experience for many years. I graduated from the United States of Wyoming. As you may know, Wyoming is one of the least populous states in the United States. The University of Wyoming has had trouble for many, many years in attracting top quality research and faculty, and the reason is, is because of the remoteness of the facility.

There is always a tension between the remoteness of this facility and then the inherent security provided by that remoteness and the tension created by the ability to attract qualified individuals to work in that facility.

I think San Antonio provides an absolutely ideal location that can attract the highest quality researchers that can not only work in a facility that is safe but also on a daily basis have themselves, their family, their friends, their colleagues in other branches of industry and other fields of research, where...
And I think that is extremely important and one of the reasons that we are extremely favorable about locating this facility in San Antonio. Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

JEFFREY KANTOR: Good afternoon. I'm Jeffrey Kantor from the University of Texas at San Antonio. In my position as senior associate vice president for research development at UTSA, one of my main responsibilities is to bring new, large program opportunities to our institution.

I've learned that any large opportunity has to be carefully weighed for the benefits it would bring versus the possible negative impact it might carry. I've reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement regarding possible effects of bringing NBAF to San Antonio, and my conclusion, without a doubt, is that the tremendous benefits to both NBAF and San Antonio to situating the facility here far outweigh small and easily manageable environmental issues.

One of the significant benefits of having NBAF in San Antonio is that UTSA's 28,000 students, 58 percent of which are from historically underrepresented
groups in higher education, would have new far-ranging opportunities in education, experiential opportunities, and economic opportunities. Cooperative research programs between NBAF scientists and UTSA faculty would ensure that the latest scientific achievements become a regular part of our students’ course work.

For years, UTSA has graduated more Hispanic students than anywhere else in the country. NBAF would help increase these numbers even more.

NBAF would raise the knowledge and interest of biological scientists throughout our Hispanic community and provide first-class job opportunities for our graduates across the board of scientific, technical, and support fields. NBAF would significantly assist UTSA in meeting its goals of access and excellence as one of the nation’s largest minority serving institutions.

NBAF’s research requirements are a perfect fit with UTSA’s nationally recognized program in the biological sciences and the basis for an unparalleled partnership. While UTSA is growing towards a premier research status in many fields across all 42 universities in Texas, UTSA is already the third largest biological research program.

UTSA’s groundbreaking research in molecular biology and specialization in vaccine
development are critical components to success in NBAF's mission. Combining UTSA's research strengths with NBAF's would make San Antonio the center of biological discovery.

Locating the NBAF in San Antonio is the logical conclusion. It would be a win for both national security and the people of San Antonio. Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

LILLIANA RODRIGUEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Lilliana Rodriguez, Doctor of Public Health and laboratory training manager at the University of Texas Center for Bio-Security and Public Health Preparedness.

I would like to speak specifically to the health and safety section of the Environmental Impact Statement. Over the past five years, our center has trained over 50,000 individuals, including public health workers, first responders, physicians, nurses, allied health care providers, and veterinarians. Workshops, symposia, and training courses have covered basic and advanced disaster life support, recognizing and responding to bio-terrorism disaster and crisis leadership, Board of Health epidemiologic outbreak investigations, laboratory preparedness, public health and the law, personal protective equipment, overview of
agro-terrorism, protection of vulnerable populations, rural health, and risk communication.

The University of Texas, along with our partners at two other Texas schools of public health, North Texas and Texas A&amp;M and other academic health science centers, including UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, have built a significant workforce infrastructure to protect, respond, and control any potential hazardous incidents for both humans and animals.

Texas has a robust public health and animal health surveillance and response infrastructure as we deal with the potential for endemic diseases, such as Rabies, West Nile Virus, Equine Encephalitis, anthrax, Foot and Mouth disease, and Texas Tick Fever, every day, 24/7, 360 [sic] days a year.

Thank you for this opportunity to supplement the health and safety information available to you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you, Ms. Rodriguez.

George Irving.

GEORGE IRVING: Good afternoon. Thanks for the opportunity to speak.

My name is George W. Irving, and I'm a Doctor of veterinary medicine. I have over 40 years'
1 experience in performing and managing research and
development programs similar to those planned for the
NBAF. I am a vice president at Conceptual Mindworks,
Inc. here in San Antonio.

Conceptual Mindworks is a woman-owned
minority small business based in San Antonio, Texas. We
are an applied research and software engineering company
with over 18 years experience supporting the Department
of Defense. Our work in bio-warfare agent studies has
resulted in four patents plus three pending patent
applications, and our scientists have numerous published
peer-reviewed articles in the course of executing
government agency goals and objectives.

I agree with the assessment that
significant benefits, like new vaccines, diagnostic
procedures could occur, and I respectfully suggest that
"could" is a soft word. I think they will or would
occur as a probable outcome from work at the NBAF.

As an experienced research administrator,
I agree with the characterization of the risks involved
in the nature of research contemplated for the NBAF. I
have personally worked with infectious diseases, and
I've directed laboratories with infectious disease
programs or nuclear reactors requiring rigorous,
uncompromising safety programs and the type of state and
federal oversight that we will see at the NBAF.

It is the people, highly professional, trained and committed to safety, that make these facilities function in a safe manner. I believe the exceptional safety record of laboratories of San Antonio illustrate we have the training, skills, and human resources required to properly conduct the research and maintain safety necessary at the NBAF.

This safety record, in concert with San Antonio’s exceptional emergency response capability, merit emphasis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Texas has contended for years with certain endemic diseases, most of which were mentioned by my colleagues just now and has a 1200-mile border with Mexico.

I would submit that Texans have a superior record in dealing with the emerging or reemerging diseases, a fact not also recognized in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I have personal knowledge of availability of excellent infectious disease research facilities in San Antonio at Brooks City Base. It will be vacated by the United States Air Force in the near term. This includes BSL-3 laboratories.

These will be exceptional resources where...
the NBAF laboratories operations could begin immediately in San Antonio. San Antonio is -- CMI is a small business for scientists and engineers currently working on contract for the Air Force. These professionals are most likely to opt to stay San Antonio as the Air Force realigns missions to Ohio. They will thus be available for staff at the NBAF. These individuals are highly trained and proficient in infectious disease technologies required by the NBAF.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to comment. I'm convinced the nation is best served by locating the NBAF in San Antonio, Texas.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Nelson Wolff.

NELSON WOLFF: Well, thank you, thank you very much. Perfect timing. I just walked in.

Introduced as County Judge but my role in county government is to run county government. We're a large government entity running a major hospital system, as well as doing a number of the same things that the City of San Antonio does but on a county-wide basis.

It's an elected position with four commissioners.

I wanted to comment on two or three different issues with you. Let me first thank you for giving San Antonio consideration for the Environmental
Impact Statement I think that you have before you, and I
want to comment about a couple of issues with respect to
that. But on more of a larger basis, we would be
delighted to have you here.

San Antonio is known as Military Town
USA. We are very close working relationship with the
military, and we're a close relationship with a number
of research institutions that we have in San Antonio.
We provide the teaching hospital for the medical school,
and so we're very much involved in a number of issues
dealing with research and with respect to the medical
community and with respect to some of the research that
you'll be doing here.

Three things I want to be able to mention
to you: Number one, we believe in having a good quality
of life here in San Antonio. The employees that would
be working here will love it here. We just invested --
county government just invested with voter approval some
$450 million dealing with quality of life issues,
regional sports complexes, performing arts centers,
extension of the river, improvements that we have in
major facilities that we have out at the Coliseum and
the AT&T Arena grounds, and so we invest in quality life
as well as infrastructure.

Two issues with respect to the
Environmental Statement -- air quality and transportation. Air quality. I'm Vice Chair of the Regional Clear Air Committee. We were the first in the nation to create a compact with the EPA about six or seven years ago now, a three-year compact to work on keeping our air clean out and keeping San Antonio out of the designation of not meeting the standards of the Clean Air Statute. We are the only city in the nation of our size that has been able to do that, and we will continue to do that.

And second, on transportation. We're investing a great deal of money. The mayor and I just appointed a commission to come up with a number of initiatives on transportation. We're investing money in capital infrastructure for roads and highway and streets, as well as looking at increased mass transit system that would include light rail.

So again, thank you very much for coming to San Antonio. Thanks for listening to us.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

DR. THOMAS LEO CROPPER: Hello. My name is Dr. Cropper. I'm a veterinarian from -- originally from Ohio State University, retired out of the Air Force in 2004 in San Antonio. I'm a former site commander at...
the Air Force Research Laboratory at Brooks Air Force Base where we had Bio-Safety labs there, as well as several other labs that do if bio-medical research and development.

I live here in San Antonio. My family lives here. I feel, as I looked at the EIS statement, you-all did a good job. A couple things I would talk about as I looked at the USDA's efforts to prepare for national animal emergency support. Some of their efforts in trying to build a National Animal Emergency Response Corps, we're making progress in those activities but the speed or ability to respond to any disaster, obviously, requires rapid access to your national lab or your NBAF. And I would ask you to perhaps broaden the ability of that.

And I look at the weather patterns across the United States where all the sites are located at. I think San Antonio probably has more clear runway days than any of the other potential sites. So reality is, we have to do the specimen from a lab -- from a farm where we're concerned about infected animal to the national lab. I think that’s a really important criteria to consider in how the speed of movement from a farm to the laboratory or the NBAF will be.

And I think San Antonio would probably
come out pretty high on that list, once you do an analysis, not only that, but because in the center of the country you have equal access pretty well from both coasts, and I think that's also important, as well as being the largest state in the nation with the largest border as we heard earlier.

The concern I have is, anybody is entitled to transport, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, could delay in the accurate diagnosis of a condition that we're concerned about and the ability to have that stated in that -- and our nation to respond. And so I think that's a really important issue.

I can also share with the EIS, I'm a senior manager of a government lab that the quality of life is awfully important to the men and women who we can recruit and retain in our laboratories. And San Antonio's cost of living and quality of life is really an important issue that I think will really make a difference to the men and women who can afford to work in a government lab. And so I encourage you to perhaps expand that particular part.

As I listen to the alternatives, the no-action alternative, I think, would be potentially catastrophic for our nation, so hopefully, the leaders...
Would not decide to follow that course of action or inaction, I guess would be a better word. I did agree with the Secretary of State Andrade, San Antonio is the right location for NBAF. The scientists and the engineers know how to build and maintain bio-safety secure laboratories. Thank you again for a job well done on the NBAF EIS assessment. MS. COGHILL: Thank you. Harold Timboe. HAROLD TIMBOE: Thank you. I may be able to cover a little bit of what Eric Epley will get to in a few moments. But my name is Dr. Harold Timboe. I am a part-time staff of the Texas Research Park. I also hold the clinical professor faculty appointment as a Department of Family Medicine and Community Medicine at the UT Health Science Center School of Medicine, and I'm a retired major general from the United States Army. I've commanded Brooke Army Medical Center here in San Antonio and then moved on to command Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. As such, I was responsible for the medical support to the Pentagon attacks on 9/11, as well as the following anthrax letters, and I was also responsible for medical support to the Fort Dietrick facility's U.S. Army Medical
Research Institute for infectious disease, so contingency operations, planning disasters are my background.

And what I'd like to emphasize is San Antonio, you've heard it talked about -- preparedness by several other speakers -- there is no other city in the country, no other region in the country that is better prepared to respond to a whole variety of eco-disasters, accidents, be it animal health or human health, than San Antonio.

We have, in my judgment -- we are better prepared than the national capitol area is to respond to anything out of Fort Dietrick. In fact, I don't think there's a close second compared to San Antonio.

San Antonio is home to the U.S. Army North. They are the Pentagon's agency responsible for Homeland Defense operations, command control coordination. They are here at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. They also are responsible for civil support to disasters and other emergencies. They have a highly trained staff of professionals available all the time for interoperable and integrated operations with other federal state and local agencies. They are in practice and operate all the time. They have their national operations and coordinations here in San Antonio at Fort
1 Sam Houston.  

2 In addition, we also have three large federal hospitals with over 1,000 federal physicians and the requisite health care workers support staff. There are also over 10,000 active duty training personnel who are immediately available for a response. And I think this is an important issue as how quickly can you mobilize the manpower requisites trained and coordinated to do the myriad of tasks that would be required in the first 48, 72 hours.  

3 San Antonio can do that and has demonstrated during Hurricane Katrina recently that we were the city in the nation to receive the largest number of hospitalized patients in the country, 600 within 24 hours, and took excellent care of them on no notice.  

4 So in my judgment, San Antonio is exceptionally well prepared. We're here, we're doing this type of research now, and we're ready to host the NBAF. Thank you.  

5 MS. COGHILL: Thank you.  

6 Melina Kinsey for Jean Patterson.  

7 MELINA KINSEY: Good afternoon. My name is Melina Kinsey. I'm with the Southwest Foundation for bio-medical research. I'm the Director of Environmental
Health and Safety. I have been asked to read a letter from Dr. Jean Patterson, she's the department chair for the Department of Virology and Immunology. She is in charge of our Level-4 laboratory.

"Dear DHS, I've had the privilege on July 30th to participate in a tabletop exercise that was led by the local FBI here in San Antonio. The exercise included all local law enforcement, emergency services for the City of San Antonio and Bexar County, and our local health department.

"It was held at the nearby newly constructed emergency operations center on Brooks City Base. The EOC was opened recently services and was used for emergency services as Hurricane Dolly came to shore here in Texas. It is a state-of-the-art building, extremely well-designed and operated.

"The tabletop exercise was to deal with the potential bio-terrorism threat of a food-borne nature. I was included as someone who has worked closely with the FBI in understanding issues of bio-terrorism and also as someone who has closely worked with the National Bio-Defense Analysis and Counter-Measures Center of DHS on bio-terrorism scenarios.

"The moderator was from the FBI
headquarters and worked us through a scenario of ricin
in potato salad. We discussed issues of who would be in
charge, who would act to identify potential
perpetrators, how chain of custody would be handled, how
emergency services would be handled with mass
casualties.

"In my opinion, the exercise identified
how well prepared San Antonio and Bexar County are in
emergency preparedness and how well communication
between federal, local, and health officials has been
developed. In the opinion of the moderator, who not
only was the EOC -- who not only was the EOC of one of
the finest facilities she had seen in any municipality
of comparable or a larger size, but San Antonio was
better prepared than almost all cities where she had
performed this exercise.

"Sincerely, Jean Patterson."

MS. COGHILL: Thank you. Yes, you're
next.

MELINA KINSEY: I'm speaking for myself
again. Again, I'm Melina Kinsey, I'm the Director of
Environmental Health and Safety at Southwest Foundation
for Bio-Medical Research. And I wanted to express also
and chime in at what Dr. Patterson was bringing to the
table about we have a great relationship, with not only
our Emergency Operations Center here in San Antonio, all of our fire departments that are close to our facility, and also we have a very good relationship with the local police departments and FBI.

In my department we are in charge of working -- making sure that the building is operational, our high containment Level-4 lab, so I have a BSL-4 mechanical systems engineer who makes sure that the building is operating correctly. Every year we certify that by bringing it down and doing a decontamination, and during that time we also provide training for our local fire departments, FBI, and local police officers so they know if they are the first ones to respond, exactly what to expect from us.

The training gives them a very familiarity of our facility, where they need to go, and they at least know where the hazards are of a high-containment lab. Also, we have an established medical response team that includes an infectious disease doctor from UT Health Science Center and also one of the -- an occupational medicine doctor from a contracted company called Cocentra Medicine Centers.

We've established those lines, and I think that in addition to the support that you will have from the scientific infrastructure, you also have a
There are also local emergency responders and local law enforcement personnel that are familiar with high containment and the emergency’s intervention.

Thank you for your consideration.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Sara Sanchez.

SARA SANCHEZ: Good afternoon. Welcome to San Antonio. My name is Sara Sanchez, and I am the vice president for the San Antonio Economic Development Foundation. I am here to read a letter on behalf of Mr. Mario Hernandez, who is the president and unfortunately is unable to be with us here today.

The letter is addressed to Mr. James Johnson and reads: "The San Antonio Economic Development Foundation supports the establishment of a National Bio and Agro-Defense facility at the Texas Research Park. We appreciate the efforts your department has undertaken to study the environmental impacts of the project in our community.

"We have analyzed the results of your findings and noted that no significant adverse effects were outlined in the report. As such, we are able to..."
I take comfort in that the proposed NBAF facility will adhere to rigid guidelines property and protocols established by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention in other guidelines.

“We are pleased that your findings do indicate significant potential beneficial effects in the three areas of biology, socio-economics, and health and safety for the Texas Research Park site.

“Our community will benefit from the research that will take place in the NBAF facility as new vaccines are developed and tested. Furthermore, this project is expected to create 250-plus direct jobs with an estimated income of between 26 and $30 million annually. These benefits are further compounded by the health and safety benefits that will be realized by our citizens.

“San Antonio, as you know, is already home to the Southwest Foundation for Bio-Medical Research, a BSL-4 facility, which has been an asset in our community. We welcome and look forward to expanding our bio-safety labs in San Antonio with NBAF and feel that your project will benefit all our citizens.

“Sincerely, Mario Hernandez, President of San Antonio Economic Foundation.”

Thank you.
MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Mary Pat Moyer.

MARY PAT MOYER: Hi, I'm Mary Pat Moyer.

I am a PhD microbiologist. I'm also the president and chief science officer of ENCELL Corporation, which is a small business here in San Antonio, and I'm also the president of the San Antonio-Austin Life Science Association, which is a regional networking organization.

The San Antonio — on behalf of the San Antonio Austin Life Science Association or SALSA, we are supportive as a group of the NBAF. And we are a collegial group here in Texas, and a collegial group -- and I think that's part of the environment and the positive things from all of the people who live here and work together.

On behalf of ENCELL, ENCELL is a company that is expanding its operations to include BSL-3 level manufacturing, and we work closely with government, academic, and other companies in the development of vaccines and diagnostics, and would have city support for our expansion into our new facility.

The small businesses that are here in San Antonio -- on behalf of the small businesses that are here in San Antonio can provide additional support for
1 NBAF activities, and there's a lot of talent here that
2 you've already heard about. But it's important to know
3 that they can bring attributes and rapid response in
4 manufacturing, as well as having trained personnel that
5 can be provided to the NBAF activities going forward.
6
7 So thank you for the opportunity to
8 speak.
9
10 MS. COGHILL: Thank you.
11
12 NEAL GUENTZEL: I'm Neal Guentzel, and
13 I'm Associate Dean and Co-Director of our South Texas
14 Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases at the
15 University of the Texas at San Antonio. And what I'd
16 like to talk to you about is the fact -- is related to
17 the socio-economic impact of the NBAF in San Antonio.
18
19 UTSA is the fastest growing university in
20 the state, and our South Texas Center Infectious
21 Diseases is the primary research center at UTSA. We
22 have a critical mass of high-quality researchers in
23 emerging infectious disease and bio-defense, that's
24 currently 17 investigators and their research
25 laboratories and growing.
26
27 Our research directly relates to the
28 mission of the NBAF and includes long lasting studies of
29 select agents, microbial pathogenesis in most
30 immune
August 7, 2008, San Antonio, TX, San Antonio Afternoon

Page 60 of 86

1 responses, and innovative vaccine research and development.

The NBAF needs a trained workforce with graduate and post-doctoral students. We have already graduated and are currently graduating individuals at all levels in our laboratories from the baccalaureate to doctoral to post-doctoral, so the workforce is here.

There is multiple opportunities for collaborations between the NBAF and the South Texas Center, and this includes joint research, adjunct appointments at UTSA, internships, as well as things like a joint seminar program. There is multiple continuing education and sabbatical opportunities for NBAF researchers.

Finally, I'd like to address the issue of those who oppose putting the NBAF here or anywhere. To me it's morally wrong not to study diseases that affect, harm, and kill our fellow human beings. What if we hadn't studied the horrible infectious diseases of the past? What would have happened in the absence of our understanding the disease pathogenesis, our absence of antibiotics, absence of vaccines would be a lifespan of about 35 years, which is what it was throughout human history before these events. And what would have happened as the graveyards would have been full or would have had a future.
be full of dead children?
2 So in summary, the South Texas Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases and UTSA are prepared to fully support the efforts to locate NBAF at Texas Research Park. The South Texas Center for Emerging Infectious Disease and UTSA will be outstanding partners in support of the various activities of the NBAF once the right choice -- and I emphasize the right choice -- is made to locate NBAF in San Antonio.
3
4 Thank you for this opportunity to speak.
5 MS. COGHILL: Thank you. Karl Klose.
6
7 KARL KLOSE: My name is Karl Klose, and I'm a professor of microbiology at the University of Texas San Antonio. And I'm also the director of the South Texas Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases. Since I wear several hats, I thought that I would mention my support of the NBAF as a scientist, as an educator, and finally as a citizen of San Antonio.
8
9 As a scientist, I have dedicated my career to studying, preventing, and treating infectious diseases. I consider it my responsibility to use my education and my training to better mankind through the study and elimination of infectious diseases, and I'm the Director of the South Texas Center for Emerging Infectious Diseases.
We are the most successful center at the University of Texas San Antonio because we bring in the most external research found at the University. We have 17 individual investigators and our associated laboratories. We operate two Bio-Safety Level-3 laboratories, and we have a large number, obviously, of scientists that are dedicating their careers to preventing infectious diseases, both naturally acquired as well as bio-threat agents.

So speaking as a scientist and as a member of the South Texas Center for Infectious Diseases, we strongly support the NBAF, and we realize the potential mutual beneficial relationship between that facility and ours at UTSA.

As an educator, I'm involved in educating both undergraduates and graduate students at UTSA. We have a very large undergraduate population, approximately 30,000 undergraduate students. We give out the most biological degrees to any Hispanic serving institution in the entire country, and we are training the next generation of scientists.

This is would be a tremendous boon to the student population at University of Texas San Antonio, and, again, there would be a mutually beneficial relationship between our student population and the
1 NBAF, given that we will provide a trained workforce for
2 that facility.
3 Finally, as a citizen of San Antonio, I
4 realize what a wonderful place this is to live. It has
5 an extremely high quality of life as you've probably
6 heard from a number of other speakers. We have a very
7 low cost of living, and the economic and scientific
8 impact on San Antonio are really quite large from my
9 perspective.
10 My colleagues, scientific colleagues in
11 the military, at the Southwest Foundation for
12 Bio-Medical Research, the Health Science Center at UTSA,
13 and the bio-tech industry in San Antonio are all
14 strongly supportive of the NBAF relocating to San
15 Antonio. So I want to thank you for your attention.
16 MS. COGHILL: Thank you, sir.
17 David Marquez.
18 DAVID MARQUEZ: Good afternoon, I'm David
19 Marquez, Executive Director for Economic Development for
20 Bexar County. Again, you've heard a lot about the
21 science, I certainly can't speak to a lot of that
22 experience myself, but I do want to emphasize about San
23 Antonio.
24 First of all, thank you again for the
25 Draft EIS report. I think it's very well done.
Something that's hard to capture in a document like that is the nature of this community when it comes to large economic development projects like this one and particularly federal projects. You're probably pretty familiar that the last round of the base realignment closure process in 2005 brought a substantial amount of federal contracted investments to San Antonio. Our ability to stand up for a project of that nature is critical, and I think your project particularly will benefit from that experience we're gaining now and be able to deliver your project on time and on budget with the skill sets that are necessary, federal contractors that are certified. All those things are already in place here, and I really don't think it can be overstated.

Our ability to deliver on all of these large-scale projects, as I have been mentioned earlier, the roads project that may be needed for the area and the other capital improvements. We are, in fact, a growing community and so those skill sets are here and ready to be employed in support of this particular National Bio and Agro-Defense Facility.

Again, the federal contracting side, with the experience that been gained today with regards to BRAC and the other installation and other dollars being
spent here, directly relate to our ability to help build
this lab and stand it up in a timely manner. Thank you
very much.

MS. COGHILL: Okay. Our next speaker is

Dr. James Wright.

DR. JAMES WRIGHT: My name is James Wright, and I'm a rancher. I live out here in the Hill Country, about 80 miles southwest of San Antonio. And in the Hill Country we have plentiful deer, we got a lot of livestock, and we got a lot of wild pigs running around.

I hear that you guys are really set up to handle any type of emergency but what I want to point out -- I've got to put my glasses on. I can't read too well. The emphasis I see in the EIS is basically based on that of economics and not necessarily that of biological safety, and that's what I think should be the overriding factor in consideration of the placement of this facility in any place. The documents, the EIS documents, tout that the environmental criteria will dictate determining the outcome of the facility. If this were indeed the case, why all the emphasis on economic impact? Perhaps the report should be called the Economic Impact Statement not the Environmental Impact Statement.
August 7, 2008, San Antonio, TX, San Antonio Afternoon

Page 66 of 86

1. Biological safety should be the primary factor and focus for this facility. This area in San Antonio, I understand, is going to be on 100 acres. At any point in time out where I live, our neighbors, we can look out our back porch, our front porch, and hell, we can see 100 acres. It's nothing.

2. And then you talk about biological containment. This does not give us a good feeling about the security of such a facility. As you may or may not be aware, recently down here in Beeville, Texas at a stock barn, they had a mock trial with the Foot and Mouth Disease Virus. They released it in terms of a trial.

3. They found out in 48 hours -- our animal health officials found out that this entire heartland of America, Texas, would be exposed to this devastating disease. Mexico's livestock industry would also be destroyed. I don't think anybody's mentioned that from that standpoint.

4. You have to understand in England they've had actually three outbreaks, one in '61 that killed 450,000 livestock. In 2001, they killed more than 6,000,000 livestock with an outbreak with Foot and Mouth Disease Virus. And this recently last July or August in England at their new Philbright facility, they had...
August 7, 2008, San Antonio, TX, San Antonio Afternoon

Page 67 of 86

1 another outbreak due to waste water containment they
didn't treat right.
Germany and Denmark have built their
facilities on islands much like at Plum Island that we
have here in New York. I'm going to stick with risk and
the decisions to minimize risk, and the risk is the risk
of a potential destruction of our livestock industry in
Texas, the destruction of the hunting industry here in
Texas, and probably would put the Texas Parks and
Wildlife out of the wildlife business, the destruction
of the exotic hunting industry, and certainly the
elimination of the swine or hog industry.

If the disease -- and this is a quote
from the Legislative Director of the National Grain and
formed the subcommittee on oversight investigations last
year, if the disease works its way into the wildlife
population, there may be no physical means to enforce a
plan to destroy or dispose of infected populations of
wildlife.

Might look at your California history on
Foot and Mouth Disease Virus, got into the deer
population out there. Economics indicate a 33 to $40
billion effect, okay? But I don't think this includes
the aftereffects. I've seen what happened, and you can
create a Texas Chernobyl here with Foot and Mouth

Comment No: 3 Issue Code: 13.0

DHS notes the commentor's concern regarding wildlife control in the event of an accidental release. The potential response measures that could be employed in the event of an accidental release are described in Section 3.8.9 of the NBAF EIS. Table 3.8.9-1 describes the potential response strategies that could be considered in the event of an accidental release. Depopulation or population reduction is one of ten potential FMD response strategies developed by the National Park Service. However, the National Park Service recommends the use of other strategies or combinations of strategies to avoid depopulating wildlife (see Table 3.8.9-1). A more likely scenario would include one or more of the non-lethal measures described in Table 3.8.9-1. In the event that depopulation or population reduction was determined to be the most appropriate course of action, hunting with firearms would be the likely method for implementing this strategy.
Disease Virus outbreak. And I've been to Chernobyl, I've seen the outbreak over there. Who's going to clean up and what will be the total impact not only short term but long term?

I woke up one morning and found dozens of flocks of sheep in Utah that were dead because of an "oops" out in a dumpway facility. You may or may not or remember that but that was a mistake. There is no such probability of 100 percent bio-security.

Recently released by the GAO, Department of Homeland Security has not conducted or commissioned any study to determine whether Foot and Mouth Disease work can be done safely on the U.S. mainland. I'm sure you guys are well aware of that.

And the risk -- I want to talk about risk and benefits. The benefit proportion to risk and benefit is that of economics to San Antonio -- which is fine -- the city and its business and collegial partners. They're seeking knowledge, and I don't mind that but they're really not putting into effect biological safety. The risks are imposed on us, the livestock producers, with no benefits.

The risk, $40 billion-plus to us. The benefits, a half a billion to locals. That's an 80-to-one ratio. You guys want to go into livestock
business, that's a pretty good ratio for us, 80 to one.
If you don't get anything else out of
this, I and my cohorts, we fully support the upgrading
and retention of the facilities on an island such as
Plum Island or on an island. And it's not on an island
with similar desirable features. We're already
connected to the mainland and certainly should
maintained under federal conditions, federal
operations. Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you, sir.
Next speaker is Richard Perez.

RICHARD PEREZ: Good afternoon. My name
is Richard Perez, and I'm the President and CEO of the
Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. And I'm here
today to support fully the location of the Bio and
Agro-Defense lab here in San Antonio.

The business community of San Antonio and
the region is firmly behind the location of the lab
here. We think it's an excellent site. We have many
research facilities already located in San Antonio that
are doing stellar work. We have BSL-3 and BSL-4 labs
here now that have never had in any problems whatsoever
with any type of contamination or containment.

I'm also a former elected official. I
used to represent the City of San Antonio as a City
Council member, and I can tell you if there was any --
even one iota of doubt in my mind that we could not
handle this facility here in a manner that's safe for
citizens, livestock, the environment, that I wouldn't be
here today lending my voice to support this issue.

This is important not only for the City
of San Antonio because it is important economically and
otherwise. However, it's also important to our nation
to find a new location, an alternate to Plum Island,
that's safe that has no -- or very, very low ability to
have natural disasters here, hurricanes, tornados,
earthquakes. Those things don't happen in San Antonio.

And as far as if there is a disaster, we
are the second most prepared city in the nation in
relation to an emergency response or disaster, second
only to New York City. And we have the people, we have
the technical expertise, we have the research expertise,
we have the airports, we have the land, we have
everything really necessary to make the Bio and
Agro-Defense lab -- the National Bio and Agro-Defense
lab a success in San Antonio, Texas.

And on behalf of the 2000 businesses that
are members of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of
Commerce that employ over half a million people, we
fully support the location of the lab here and would
urge you to agree with us. Thank you.

MS. COGHLIN: Thank you, Mr. Perez.

Gerardo Interiano.

ANGELA MANSON: Welcome. My name is

Angela Manson. I'm a senior policy advisor for

Congressman Charlie Gonzalez, representing San Antonio’s

20th congressional district.

THOMAS HERALDE: I'm Thomas Heralde with

Congressman Ciro Rodriguez, representing Texas's 23rd
district.

GERARDO INTERIANO: And Gerardo

Interiano, representing Lamar Smith, representing the

21st district. We have a joint letter from the San

Antonio delegation.

"Dear Secretary Chertoff and Admiral

Cohen, we are delighted to have the opportunity to

express our support for San Antonio's Texas Research

Park as you consider sites for the National Bio and

Agro-Defense facility.

"San Antonio offers many critical

resources that make it an ideal selection for this

facility. As a result of the unified effort across our

community throughout this process, San Antonio is

arguably the location best prepared for this

opportunity.
"In addition to our local efforts, the state has made ample resources available to bolster our bid and satisfy the Department's requirements, including in the areas of veterinary medicine workforce availability, and research expertise.

"San Antonio's also experienced in building and managing these types of facilities in a safe and secure manner. We have a strong record, free of security breaches and safety compromises, starting from the researchers at the Health Science Center at UTSA to the experts at Southwest Research, which is now considered one of the leading bio-containment centers in the country. San Antonio has enjoyed a reputation as a topnotch research leader in the field of bio-technology.

"All of these facilities place a high requirement on safety and security and the operations that the NBAF will build off that record. Similarly, San Antonio has always led the effort to protect our national interests.

"As a city hailed as Military City USA, we have always played a significant and substantive role in our nation's security. The creation of the NBAF would symbolize the natural progression in our ongoing commitment to keep our country free from harm."
"And finally, San Antonio has proven to be capable of handling rapid growth over the past decades, exactly the type of experience needed when preparing for a facility like the NBAF.

"On account of a strong military, research, and industrial presence in our city, we have expanded greatly over the past decades. To accommodate this growth, our city has made sound investments in infrastructure and transportation that ultimately benefited the community as a whole.

"These investments left us well-equipped to handle the further expansion, ideally positioning us to handle the challenges and demands that the NBAF would present. San Antonio offers many critical resources to the Department of Homeland Security, ranging from ample support assets to experience with operating similar facilities with unparalleled security standards, which make it an ideal location for NBAF.

"Our community has already shown a strong commitment to the success of this project and will continue to do should the Department select San Antonio as the location for its NBAF.

"Sincerely, Charles A. Gonzalez, Lamar Smith, and Ciro Rodriguez, members of Congress."

MS. COGHILL: Thank you very much.
RONALD STEWART: Good afternoon. My name is Ronald Stewart, I'm speaking for Eric Epley. I'm the -- Eric's boss and the Chair of the Southwest Texas Region and Advisory Council for Trauma, which is the regional emergency response and organization set in place to deal with trauma emergency response on a regional basis.

I'm speaking in support of this. I think this is a very natural fit, that San Antonio has a strong history of support for the military and national security. It's very strong with respect to bio-medical sciences and has a very private, sophisticated emergency response system.

So -- and I'm emphatic to the folks who have talked about risk. I think this is not totally risk free but it's a very, very, very, very small risk, and that is outweighed -- I'm not speaking of economic benefit -- that's outweighed by the benefit that would be seen by the increase in more ways for keeping up with these pathogens, so to me this is a very natural fit.

There is some risk, but as a trauma surgeon, I can tell you that there is some risk with respect to automobiles and cars, ATVs, and we're not...
banning those things currently. So from my standpoint
the benefits greatly outweigh the risk, and I would
strongly support this. Thank you.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

Delicia Herrera.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm sorry, she's not
here either. I think we're running ahead of schedule.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: She'll be here before
4:30.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.

A. J. Rodriguez.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: He will also be here
before 4:30.


YORK DUNCAN: Good afternoon, Jamie.

My name is York Duncan, and I'm a
president of the Texas Research Park Foundation. We are
owners of the Texas Research Park, the alternative site
here in San Antonio.

First of all, let me thank you, all of
the NBAF team, for being so professional and so
responsive. It's been a pleasure to work with you, and
I thank you for your hard work and especially your
service to the nation.

Secondly, we want NBAF in San Antonio,
Texas. I'd like to recount for the record why we believe San Antonio is the ideal location for NBAF. We will also supply you with corrections in writing to the Draft EIS that will more accurately reflect issues in the final EIS before August 25th.

Texas was just named America's top state for business by CNBC. It has more Fortune 500 companies than any state in the union, and Texas was named the best state to do business in by CEO Magazine three years in a row. I say this because we have a lot of support for our commercial support and private enterprise support for the NBAF facility.

The San Antonio International Airport is undergoing $450 million of renovation to accommodate more flights and professionals. We are centrally located between both coasts.

The San Antonio community's a diverse one, many saying it is the reflection of America now and in the future. More minority groups are represented with a higher percentage of total population than any other site being considered. Our workforce is trainable, talented, and in the case for NBAF, experienced, many having worked on similar projects and are going through the Plum Island training.

There are 50 scientists working on select...
agents at this time in the community today, and at least
eight board certified vets in pathology, immunology, and
infectious disease, all available here in San Antonio.
Our quality of life is unsurpassed, our cost of living
low.
Many organizations find it easy to
recruit talent. Our energy provider, CPS Energy,
supplies energy at lost cost. It is, by the way, the
largest user of wind power in the entire country. They
receive 14 percent of their entire energy supply from
wind power at this time, and that will be growing.
San Antonio is a military friendly city,
Military City USA, and is comfortable with federal
projects and issues. We have a 400,000 square foot BSA
facility, the Air Force training activity at Randolph,
Brooks City Base experience with the Air Force.
The recruiting effort for -- all the Air
Force recruits go through Lackland Air Force Base.
Homeland Security K-9 training center is at Lackland.
Fifth Army, South Com at Fort Sam, and the military
medicine buildup also at Fort Sam, San Antonio's
military medical centers, SAMMC, is the largest buildup
of military medicine activity ever, over $2.1 billion.
There's Level-3 space available at the
Research Park and at Brooks City Base, a crown jewel of
the bio-sciences of the Southwest Foundation with the
only privately owned BSL-4 laboratory.

Emergency responders in San Antonio are
among the best trained in the country, as you have
heard. They go through annual exercises with FBI, EMS,
fire, police.

The ideal site is at the Texas Research
Park in San Antonio. The Park was master planned for
facilities like this, and I'll end there. Thank you
very much.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you.
At this point in time, ladies and
gentlemen, we have called everyone who signed in.

However, we are ahead of schedule. We want to make sure
that we accommodate two things: the folks that will be
coming in a little bit, and in the event that there's
anyone here who did not sign in, who would like to
speak, we'd like to open the floor up to that and then
we'll take a break and reconvene.

So at this point in time, is there anyone
who did not speak or did not sign up that would like to
speak right now? Okay.

Next what we'll do is we'll take a break
right now. We'll reconvene at around 4:10 to work with
the folks that are coming in around that time to speak.
Thank you.

(Recess from 3:47 to 4:14 p.m.)

MS. COGHILL: All right, folks. We're going to reconvene the meeting. There's a few speakers that signed up that were not here earlier because we were running ahead of schedule. So I will go ahead and start with those two folks.

The first person is Delicia Herrera. Is she here at this point? Pardon me?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: About five minutes.

How about A. J. Rodriguez?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: About five minutes.

MS. COGHILL: Well, those are the only two folks that we have left to accommodate this afternoon, so we won't -- the meeting is open until it closes at 4:30, so I'll wait a few minutes and hopefully they'll show up.

(Recess from 4:15 to 4:20 p.m.)

MS. COGHILL: If I understand, our last two speakers are here. As a reminder, if you missed the first portion of the meeting, the parameter is -- what we'd ask the speakers to follow is, please keep your presentation to three minutes, and at two minutes 30 seconds I'll hold up the yellow card and at three minutes the red card. And if you have not finished your...
The first speaker is Delicia Herrera.

DELICIA HERRERA: Good afternoon and welcome not only to San Antonio but to the area that I represent, which is City Council District 6. And I just actually came from our Council meeting that's going on right now.

First, let me commend the excellent work performed by the Department of Homeland Security, addressing the need for the National Bio and Agro-Defense facility and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Next, I do want to emphasize the city's strong support for the proposed site at the Texas Research Park in San Antonio. The city led the way in establishing the Park in 1989, investing over $7 million in infrastructure, and we continue to invest in bio-science activities at the Park.

This community's standards set the national presence of the NBAF project, and we will gladly welcome the presence of a federal laboratory.

The city is also working to make our supporting infrastructure even better to accommodate future growth. For example, we are making $636 million...
in capital improvements to our international airport,
and we have a 550 million, voter approved, 2007-2012
bond program underway, the largest in the city’s
history, consisting of 150 projects, a design to improve
and enhance existing as well as acquire, construct new
local streets, bridges, sidewalks, drainage facility,
parks, athletic facilities, libraries, and public health
centers, all comprehensive.

Now let me offer a few comments on the
Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I would recommend
the report include emphasis on community emergency
preparedness and public support for the project.

San Antonio’s a great location because we
are relatively free of national disasters such as
earthquakes, floods, and tornados. That is the primary
reason why Toyota and Microsoft recently established
major operations here in the city. Microsoft is just
down the street from here. That really is the selling
point, the huge selling point when we solicited major
corporations to San Antonio.

We are also a location that the national
and state officials call on extensively for disaster
relief assistance because we have outstanding emergency
operations infrastructure, extensive emergency training,
and resources, and well-trained and cooperative
August 7, 2008, San Antonio, TX, San Antonio Afternoon

Page 82 of 86

1 community volunteers, including faith-based community
2 organizations.
3 When Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hit a
couple years ago, this community stepped up to assist
both federal and state officials in responding to the
needs of the citizens. In addition, we have three
Level-1 trauma facilities in San Antonio, which include
the University Hospital, Wilford Hall, and Brooke Army
Medical Center, also known as BAMC.

All of these trauma centers operate
through excellent formation between city, county, and
the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army. In fact, San
Antonio’s considered by many as a center for excellence
for trauma care research.

I want to thank you for allowing us this
opportunity to share with you our comments.

MS. COGHLIN: Thank you.

A. J. Rodriguez.

A. J. RODRIGUEZ: Well, welcome, bien
tenidos San Antonio. It's good to see all of you. My
name is A. J. Rodriguez, I'm the Deputy City Manager,
and I'm here on behalf of our city manager, Sheryl
Sculley, to really express the city's strong support for
locating the National Bio and Agro-Defense facility in
our community.

Comment No: 1 Issue Code: 24.6
DHS notes the commentor's support for the Texas Research Park Site Alternative.
San Antonio is committed to being selected as the preferred choice for this cutting edge project, and we are honored to be among the five sites that are still competing for such a prestigious research facility. I can assure you that the City of San Antonio is fully behind the effort to locate this facility in our community.

Over the past two years, our City Council has approved $150,000 to support the efforts of the Texas Bio and Agro-Defense Consortium. The city's also committed up to $10 million toward the infrastructure requirements for the construction of the actual facility in San Antonio, subject, of course, to the approval by our City Council.

Our commitment to the development of the bio-technology and health care industry in the San Antonio has been a long-standing one. It was the city which led the efforts to establish the Texas Research Park in 1989 by investing $7.3 million for the Park's infrastructure, and we continue to invest in projects at the Park.

Since that time, the bio-technology health care industry has become one of our largest, employing almost 113,000 people and registering an annual economic impact of 15.3 billion. Furthermore,
San Antonio has long been the home of army medicine. With the ongoing changes from the last round of base closures and realignment activity, San Antonio will soon become the center for all Department of Defense enlisted medical training and the location of one of only two DOD regional medical centers.

Fort Sam Houston also is the location of the Center for Battlefield Health and Trauma, making our city a center of excellence for trauma care and trauma research.

There are many other world-class research and medical facilities located in San Antonio, such as the University of Texas Health Science Center, the Southwest Foundation for Bio Medical Research, Southwest Research Institute, and the Cancer Therapy and Research Center. It's also worth mentioning that the Southwest Foundation for Bio-Medical Research is also the location of one of only three functioning Bio-Safety Level-4 labs and the only private one in the country.

The research done by these labs is fully accepted by the community and has an impeccable safety record. Furthermore, this lab along with the other labs at the Southwest Foundation were designed and built by San Antonio companies, so we also have the local capability for construction of such facilities.
The presence of these great institutions in San Antonio, along with excellent public infrastructure, extremely competitive utility rates, a deep and sustainable pool of qualified workers, and a quality of life that is second to none makes us confident that our city is the ideal location for this facility.

Again, the City of San Antonio wants to echo its strong commitment to bringing this research facility to our world-class city. Thank you so much.

MS. COGHILL: Thank you. At this point in time, that closes the formal comment period for this afternoon's meeting. I'd like to turn it back over to Jamie.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Catherine. I want to thank everyone again for their comments, taking time out of your schedules, to attend the meeting and provide its input on the Draft EIS and making sure we've got all that information.

If you think of a comment later, again, you can submit it by August 25th. It should be addressed to and responded in the final EIS, and, again, using any of the mechanisms that you see here on the slide.

So with that I will adjourn the meeting.
and thank everyone again for coming.

(Proceedings ended at 4:28 p.m.)