

**Scott, Tricia**

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**From:** Francis, Joe  
**Sent:** Friday, June 10, 2016 6:09 PM  
**To:** Christopher L Exstrom; Alex Harness; Brad Kloss; Hall County Hwy Supt - Sherlock; Chad Nability; Dan Purdy; Greg Baxter; John Turnbull; Jon Rosenlund; Karen Bredthauer; Mark B Dekraai; Teresa Anderson; Timothy Smith  
**Cc:** O'Connor, Tom; Scott, Tricia  
**Subject:** RE: alternative technologies - Cease Fire Campaign

Chris and all,

Sorry for the delay in responding, I've had a week of vacation. We are going to open a section in the blue notebooks for any written public input we receive. This document will be filed there; we will bring hard copies to the June 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting. The Open Meetings Act is not a concern in this issue.

Thanks--

Joe Francis  
Associate Director  
Field Services and Assistance  
Nebraska Dept. of Environmental Quality  
402/471-6087

---

**From:** Christopher L Exstrom [<mailto:exstromc@unk.edu>]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 03, 2016 11:10 AM  
**To:** Alex Harness; Brad Kloss; Hall County Hwy Supt - Sherlock; Chad Nability; Dan Purdy; Francis, Joe; Greg Baxter; John Turnbull; Jon Rosenlund; Karen Bredthauer; Mark B Dekraai; Teresa Anderson; Timothy Smith  
**Subject:** FW: alternative technologies - Cease Fire Campaign

Everyone,

I received this e-mail earlier in the week and wanted to pass along this information. I thanked Ms. Olah for the information and directed her to our committee's DEQ website for more information on what we're doing. I assume that we can handle these individual contacts without violating any open meeting laws. Joe and Mark, let us know if there is anything we need to be careful of in this regard.

Thanks,  
Chris

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**Christopher L. Exstrom**  
Professor of Chemistry  
Director, Science/Math Education M.S.Ed. Program  
University of Nebraska at Kearney  
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405C Bruner Hall  
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**From:** Laura Olah [<mailto:info@cswab.org>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 31, 2016 10:22 AM  
**To:** Christopher L Exstrom <[exstromc@unk.edu](mailto:exstromc@unk.edu)>  
**Subject:** alternative technologies - Cease Fire Campaign

Dear Dr. Exstrom,

I read the recent [article](#) about the proposed hazardous waste incinerator at the former Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant and found you listed there.

I am a community activist that has worked on military toxics issues for more than 25 years. This is work that found me as I live near the Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Wisconsin and our local environment has been profoundly damaged by historical activities at this site.

I am currently coordinating a [national campaign](#) calling for safer alternatives to open air burning, detonation and incineration of hazardous waste munitions and munitions-contaminated wastes. Already, more than 50 organizations, including environmental health, labor, and veterans service organizations, have endorsed our goal statement.

As the chemist on the local panel, I thought you the most likely to be interested in [alternative technologies](#) that do not have the inherent problems and risks associated with incineration.

I'm sending this email by way of introduction and I am hoping that this information is of interest and that we might talk by phone.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

Laura

Laura Olah, Executive Director  
Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger (CSWAB)  
Coordinator, Cease Fire Campaign  
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## CEASE FIRE Campaign

*A Grassroots Campaign to End Burning & Incineration of Waste Munitions*



The CEASE FIRE campaign seeks to protect human health and the environment by calling for the immediate implementation of safer alternatives to open air burning, detonation and non-closed loop incineration/combustion of military munitions. These alternatives must incentivize waste prevention and recycling; prevent, to the greatest possible extent, the release of toxic emissions and pollutants; and advance the principles of environmental justice by assuring that all people enjoy the same degree of protection and access to the decision-making process.

**SIGN THE PETITION**

### Participating organizations

- [Alaska Community Action on Toxics](#)
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- [California Communities Against Toxics](#)
- [California Safe Schools](#)
- [Camp Lejeune Community Assistance Panel](#)
- [Center for Health, Environment & Justice](#)
- [Center for Public Environmental Oversight](#)
- [Central Trades & Labor Council of Shreveport and Vicinity, AFL-CIO](#)
- [Citizen Action New Mexico](#)
- [Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger](#)
- [Citizens Task Force](#)
- [CORALations](#)
- [Crawford Stewardship Project](#)
- [Defense Depot Memphis Tennessee Concerned Citizen Committee](#)
- [Environmental Patriots of the New River Valley](#)
- [Environmentalists Against War](#)
- [Florida Veterans for Common Sense](#)
- [Food and Water Watch](#)
- [Fort Ord Community Advisory Group \(FOCAG\)](#)
- [Frederick Citizens for Bio-lab Safety](#)
- [Friends United for a Safe Environment \(FUSE, Inc.\)](#)
- [GAIA \(Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives\)](#)
- [Greenaction for Health and Environmental Justice](#)

# Alternatives to Burning

Ending Open Air Burning, Detonation and  
Incineration of Hazardous Waste Explosives

The Military is the largest generator of toxic waste in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The Government Accountability Office estimates that 557,000 tons of old surplus munitions will need to be disposed of over the next few years.<sup>2</sup> Many of the ingredients in these munitions are dangerous to human health, causing cancer, birth defects, reproductive problems, and other health problems.<sup>3</sup> We have a responsibility to ensure that these waste munitions are destroyed without releasing toxic chemicals into the environment.

The military has tried many methods to destroy old munitions. After World War I and until 1970, the United States, like many other countries, routinely dumped its chemical weapons into the ocean.<sup>4</sup> Open burning or open detonation of conventional munitions has long been the preferred disposal method. However, the legislation on hazardous waste (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act) outlaws the open burning of hazardous waste, with an exception for military explosive waste for which there is no alternative disposal method. In the past the military has opened burned chemical weapons. The military has also burned both chemical weapons and conventional munitions in incinerators.

## What's wrong with burning?

When hazardous waste is burned either through open burning/open detonation or with an incinerator, not all of the hazardous material is destroyed. Some of hazardous chemicals go into the air and disperse into the environment, contaminating soil and water and affecting human health. Some of the hazardous material remains in the ash and must be disposed of in a hazardous waste landfill. Even worse, as the hot gases cool, new chemicals called *Products of Incomplete Combustion* form and are dispersed into the environment; some of these new chemicals are even more dangerous and persistent in the environment than the original hazardous material.<sup>5</sup>

## Are there alternatives?

Advanced treatment technologies to disposal of military munitions have been available for several years. Thanks to the hard work of communities across the country who opposed the incineration of chemical weapons in their communities, the United States has invested hundreds millions of dollars<sup>6</sup> in researching and developing new technologies that are much safer and are able to destroy military hazardous waste more effectively, without creating new dangerous chemicals and releasing them to the environment.

(over >)

Cease Fire Campaign  
PARTICIPATING  
ORGANIZATIONS

Alaska Community Action on Toxics  
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League  
California Communities Against Toxics  
California Safe Schools  
Camp Lejeune Community Assistance Panel  
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Physicians for Social Responsibility-WI  
Protect All Children's Environment  
Sierra Club (national)  
Tennessee AFL-CIO Labor Council  
Tewa Women United  
Texas Campaign for the Environment  
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Watauga Group of the Tennessee Chapter Sierra Club  
Waukesha County Environmental Action League  
Wisconsin Environmental Health Network

CEASE FIRE Campaign

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## Examples of Safer Alternatives

### Gas Phase Chemical Reduction

Gas Phase Chemical Reduction uses hydrogen and heat to break down toxic chemicals into their basic components. Because hydrogen is used for the reduction reaction and no oxygen is present, no harmful chlorinated byproducts can be formed. This technology was used to destroy PCBs and obsolete pesticides in Australia.<sup>7</sup> It was specifically developed for the Assembled Chemicals Weapons Destruction program.<sup>8</sup>



### Supercritical Water Oxidation

Supercritical Water Oxidation uses the unique forces of supercritical fluids to breakdown the chemical bonds which form munitions, propellants, and energetics. Supercritical Water Oxidation uses super pressurized, heated water to tear apart the chemical bonds in toxic organic compounds, breaking them down into basic components such as water, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen gas.<sup>9</sup> The lower temperature (compared to combustion) and the high pressure of the water keep harmful byproducts from being formed.<sup>10</sup>



### Detonation Chambers with 'Hold, Test, and Release'

There are several types of detonation chambers that can be used to safely destroy waste munitions. These detonation chambers are much safer than open burning or incineration because they hold and test the gases to ensure all the toxic components have been destroyed before releasing them. One kind of detonation chamber, the DAVINCH chamber, detonates explosives in a vacuum. Without the presence of oxygen, harmful products of incomplete combustion cannot be formed.<sup>11</sup>



<sup>1</sup> <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/2377-military-hazardous-waste-sickens-land-and-people#1>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.guns.com/2014/04/30/report-finds-1-billion-in-forgotten-ammunition-to-be-scrapped-by-military/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.truth-out.org/news/item/2377-military-hazardous-waste-sickens-land-and-people#1>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL33432.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [http://www.no-burn.org/downloads/Greenpeace\\_Incineration\\_HumanHealth.pdf](http://www.no-burn.org/downloads/Greenpeace_Incineration_HumanHealth.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.acq.osd.mil/parca/docs/2011-ida-rca-acwa-p-4677.pdf>, [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/budget/fy2013/sar/18\\_chemdemil-acwa.pdf](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/budget/fy2013/sar/18_chemdemil-acwa.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> [https://cfr-in.org/download/partner/vijgen/NATO\\_EcologFactSheet\\_3.pdf](https://cfr-in.org/download/partner/vijgen/NATO_EcologFactSheet_3.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.nap.edu/read/5274/chapter/8>

<sup>9</sup> Howell, John R. (NAE), Chair, Committee to Assess Supercritical Water Oxidation System Testing for the Blue Grass Chemical Agent Destruction Pilot Plant, 2013, Assessment of Supercritical Water Oxidation System Testing for the Blue Grass Chemical Agent Destruction Pilot Plant, Board on Army Science and Techogy, National Research Council.

<sup>10</sup> "Supercritical water oxidation for the destruction of toxic organic wastewaters: A review" Veriansyah Bambang and Kim Jae-Duck. Supercritical Fluid Research Laboratory, Korea Institute of Science and Technology. Department of Green Process and System Engineering. Journal of Environmental Sciences 19(2007) 513-522.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-03/documents/9545947.pdf>

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# Local company gets contract to dispose of smoke grenades

Story Comments

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Posted: Saturday, May 28, 2016 11:21 pm

By Tracy Overstreet  
tracy.overstreet@theindependent.com

A Grand Island-based ammunition recycling company is planning a major expansion.

Heritage Disposal and Storage has applied for a permit to install a hazardous waste incinerator at its 900-acre site at 345 S. 80th Road. The site is part of the former Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant west of Grand Island and includes 117 bunkers that were used to store ammunition manufactured at the plant when it was active from World War II through the Vietnam War.



Posted on May 28, 2016 by Tracy Overstreet

Heritage bought the site back in 2004. Since that time, some 2.86 million pounds of munitions, largely ammunition, explosives and fireworks, have been neutralized at the site, according to Heritage President Mark Vess. Heritage has also stored munitions for the Department of Justice and the Department of Transportation. Those items typically had been confiscated by law enforcement and were in storage awaiting the outcome of court cases.

But now Heritage has a new opportunity that Vess said will "turn the page" for the company and provide about 70 new jobs for the Grand Island area.

The U.S. Army recently awarded Heritage a contract to dispose of smoke grenades and related materials.

"It's for the thermal treatment of HC smoke canisters and smoke pots," Vess said of the contract.

Vess said smoke munitions, which emit a thick white smoke, have long been used in many military branches to serve as a screening tool both in training and in the battlefield. The Department of Defense has a large stockpile of old HC (hexachloroethane) smoke munitions to dispose of.

Heritage is proposing to install a \$15 million rotary kiln that would be used to incinerate the smoke munitions, capture emissions and leave by-products of fly ash, which can be used to make concrete, and metal scraps.

Under a proposal presented Tuesday by engineers, the kiln would be sized to process up to 15,000 tons of munitions each year.

Heritage's awarded contract calls for about 3,300 tons of munitions to be processed every 242-days, the length of the base contract. That contract can be followed with two additional 242-day contracts. Vess expects that even more incineration contracts will follow.

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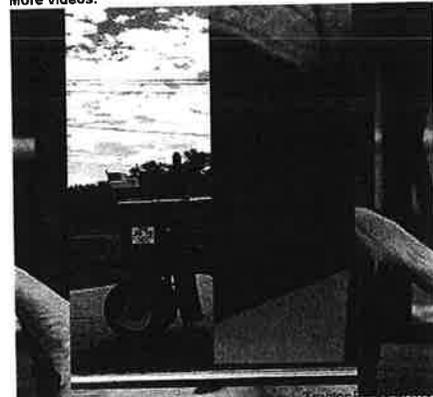
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At full-operation under the base contract, Vess said he expects to run a day shift and night shift over 24 hours and process 1,153 pounds of product per hour.

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and its Director Jim Macy are handling the request for the hazardous waste facility permit. State law requires that a special committee be appointed to review the application.

It's the second time in Nebraska's history that such a committee has been convened for this purpose. The last time was 25 years ago to review an Omaha project, which never came to fruition.

Macy has named the committee, which met for the second time May 24 in Alda to review its task.

"We have six months to study the impacts of this facility," said site review committee Chairman John Turnbull, who retired in January as the general manager of the Upper Big Blue Natural Resources District in York.

The committee is to study eight things — economic considerations, the function of the facility, technological considerations, site characteristics, environmental quality, transportation, emergency response, and applicable regulations and enforcement.

"This will have a significant impact on this area," Turnbull said.

The committee will be working closely with Heritage's engineering firm, Parametrix of Seattle, to evaluate the impact on the soil, ground, water and air, as well as evaluating every other aspect of the business and the proposed incinerator.

"We're reviewing to see if this is a reasonable site for this to be at and how it will affect the locals," Turnbull said. "We want to know how the stuff will get transported in, what does he do with the metal at the end of the process, are the emissions meeting air quality standards, does it have any impact on water or water quality — things that neighborhoods would be concerned about."

There are no residences in the vicinity of the incinerator location on the former 20-square mile Cornhusker Army Ammunition Plant site. The Army prohibited houses there after it spent years and millions of dollars in environmental cleanup before selling the plant land back into private ownership.

Regional Planning Director Chad Nabity, who was elected vice chairman of the committee, said the committee and its work is a learning situation for all involved, but it's a valuable task.

"The big thing that stood out to me is ... this will result in a substantial expansion of their operation," Nabity said.

While that's great economic news, both Turnbull and Nabity said, environmental questions and safety questions have to be answered.

"We need to know what it's going to do for water runoff, how they're going to handle water on site — both water that is falling on site and water they are using in processing," Nabity said. "We'll need to know how efficiently the kiln is burning the chemicals and what the results are for the stuff that's left over and be assured those can be handled appropriately."

The committee includes representatives from the medical and university community, as well as environmental interests, residents within five miles of the proposed incineration site and representatives from all the neighboring governmental bodies.

The committee is to meet twice in June — once to tour the proposed site and once to discuss emergency situations and transportation factors.

The committee's final report to Macy and the DEQ is to be presented in October. The Hall County Board of Supervisors will also be asked to make a recommendation on the permit before Macy makes a final decision on the permit.

Should the permit be issued, Vess said construction on the site should begin in the summer of 2017 and be operational by the summer of 2018.

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- Chairman John Turnbull, retired NRD manager, York, environmental representative.
- Vice-Chairman Chad Nabity, Regional Planning director, Grand Island, community planner.
- Teresa Anderson, Central District Health Department director, Grand Island, medical community.
- Timothy Smith, Crane Trust, Wood River, public interest group.
- Alex Harness, CNH, Grand Island, industry representative.
- Chris Exstrom, UNK Department of Chemistry, Kearney, academic representative.
- Casey Sherlock, Hall County Public Works director, Alda, local government representative.
- Jon Rosenlund, Grand Island/Hall County Emergency Management director, Grand Island, local government representative.
- Brad Kloss, Village of Alda, Alda, local government representative.
- Dan Purdy, Hall County supervisor, Grand Island, local government representative.
- Karen Bredthauer, developer, Grand Island, local government representative.
- Greg Baxter, T&E Cattle Co., Grand Island, local government representative.

For more information: Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality website at <http://deg.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/Heritage>.

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**Cease Fire Campaign**

Zinc oxide (military designation, HC or HC smoke) is a chemical warfare obscurant that contains equal percentages of zinc oxide and hexachloroethane, with approximately 7% grained aluminum. Depending on the intensity of the exposure, a wide range of clinical effects occurs; exposures as brief as 1 minute may lead to death (U.S. Department of Army, Office of the Surgeon General). There are proven safer cost-effective alternative technologies to incineration that are more protective of workers, soldiers, residents and the environment, and have been successfully implemented in other communities. Has there been an open public dialogue in your community about alternatives?

The Cease Fire Campaign is a national grassroots coalition of environmental justice, labor, health and veterans service organizations calling for safer solutions to open air burning, detonation and incineration of hazardous waste munitions. More at <http://cswab.org/resources/cease-fire-campaign/>

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