

Feasibility of Assessing Veteran Health Effects of Manhattan Project (1942-1947) Related Waste

Statement of Task

An ad hoc committee of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) will conduct a feasibility assessment of the congressionally requested study on the health effects of radioactive materials or waste related to the Manhattan Project on veterans who served on active duty in the military in accordance with PL 117-168, Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022 [PACT Act]. The feasibility assessment will identify, understand, and delineate the process for accessing available records. To the extent that records or data dictionaries for these records are available, the committee will characterize the information they contain as well as the quality and completeness of those records related to the following aspects:

1. The approximate number of veterans exposed to toxic substances during the Manhattan Project (January 12, 1942- August 15, 1947) at the following sites across the United States:
 - A. St. Louis County, MO
 - i. Coldwater Creek
 - ii. St. Louis Airport Site
 - iii. The West Lake Landfill
 - B. Oak Ridge, TN
 - C. Hanford, WA
 - D. Other pertinent locations “proximate to covered waste” as determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs located in the following areas:
 - i. Los Alamos, NM
 - ii. Alamogordo, NM
 - iii. Lake Ontario Ordinance Works, Buffalo, NY
 - iv. University of Chicago, IL
 - v. Iowa State, Ames, IA
 - vi. Dayton Project, Dayton, OH
 - vii. Monticello, UT
 - viii. Uravan, CO
2. Demographic and military characteristics of the veterans determined to have participated in the Manhattan Project (e.g., age, sex, race, tasks performed related to the Manhattan Project).
3. Types of exposures (e.g., chemical, radiation, combined exposures).
4. Other missions these veterans were involved in before or after the Manhattan Project that may have exposed them to toxic substances and may have contributed to their overall health risks during their military service.

5. Health outcomes including cancer occurrence and cause of death of the exposed veterans. The committee will provide a report on the format (e.g., electronic, paper, other) and sources of available records as well as their contents to the extent possible. Site visits may be conducted to covered sites to better understand possible exposures or availability of paper records.

The committee will also provide conclusions regarding its assessment of the ability to conduct the congressionally requested study. If conducting the study as requested by Congress is found to be possible based on the committee's assessment, the committee will recommend a design framework for the study and an estimate of the time and funding required to conduct such a study. If conducting the study as requested by Congress is not found to be possible given the availability or state of data, the committee will explore possible alternative options for understanding the health effects on the veterans due to exposures from the Manhattan Project.