

March 4, 2005

Keith Klein, Manager
U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations
P.O. Box 550 (A7-50)
Richland, WA 99352

Roy Schepens, Manager
U.S. Department of Energy, Office of River Protection
P.O. Box 450 (H6-60)
Richland, WA 99352

Re: Budget Workshops

Dear Messrs. Klein and Schepens,

Background

The Tri Party Agreement (TPA) requires that the budget be shared with the regulatory agencies and the public with the intent that there be time for review and comment. This process was developed to ensure that the regulators and the public understand what cleanup work will be funded or not funded. In addition to the TPA requirements found in paragraphs 148 and 149 and in the Community Relations Plan, there is a need for sound and comprehensive public involvement on the 2006 and 2007 budgets and long-term cleanup priorities.

The Hanford Advisory Board (Board) is concerned the Tri Party Agencies' process for communicating the Hanford cleanup budget to the Board and the public does not meet the most basic requirements of public involvement: (1) early access to budget information; (2) an opportunity for public input, and; (3) feedback on how that input is/is not used.

Holding only one public budget meeting in the Tri Cities will not meet stakeholder needs. With anticipated significant budget cuts, critical decisions concerning which work should be performed, deferred or cancelled will be made. Without sound public involvement on these decisions, the Department of Energy (DOE) will have failed in its effort to ensure that Hanford cleanup reflects the values and principles of the citizens of the Northwest.

Advice

The Board advises DOE to:

1. Share budget information with the public early in the budget process.
2. Host a sufficient number of regional public meetings to foster public involvement in the budget process.
3. Allow opportunity for public input early enough for the input to be meaningful and to impact the budget process and long-term baseline priorities.
4. Provide feedback to the regulators, the Board and the public on how the input was/was not used.

Sincerely,

Todd Martin, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

This advice represents HAB consensus for this specific topic. It should not be taken out of context to extrapolate Board agreement on other subject matters.

cc: Ron Kreizenbeck, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Jay Manning, Washington State Department of Ecology
Howard Gnann, Deputy Designated Federal Official, U.S. Department of Energy
Nick Ceto, Environmental Protection Agency
Michael Wilson, Washington State Department of Ecology
Sandra Waisley, U.S. Department of Energy Headquarters
The Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations

U.S. Senators (OR)

Gordon H Smith
Ron Wyden

U.S. Senators (WA)

Maria Cantwell
Patty Murray

U.S. Representatives (OR)

Earl Blumenauer Greg Walden
Peter DeFazio David Wu
Darlene Hooley

U.S. Representatives (WA)

Brian Baird Cathy McMorris
Norm Dicks Jim McDermott
Jay Inslee David Reichert
Richard Hastings Adam Smith
Rick Larsen

State Senators (WA)

Jerome Delvin
Mike Hewitt

State Representatives (WA)

Larry Haler
Shirley Hankins