



December 5, 1997

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Subject: Hanford Safety Concerns

Dear Messrs. Clarke, Fitzsimmons and Wagoner:

The cleanup of the Hanford Site is predicated on the long term commitment of resources by the federal government. Over time, the strength of this commitment will be tested by a number of national, regional and local issues. One such local issue is the question of whether a proper safety culture is in place and practiced in the accomplishment of the cleanup. If there is a doubt about this, the willingness of the national decision makers to invest the resources necessary to cleanup Hanford will be severely undermined.

However, this is one issue that is within the control and ability of the Department of Energys Richland Office and its contractors to impact. It is mandatory that DOE nurtures a safety-conscious work culture at the Hanford Site. All must ensure that employee concerns and investigation programs are credible by visibly holding management, supervisors and workers accountable to standard environmental, safety and health policies.

The Hanford Advisory Board offers the following consensus advice:

1. There should be visible management and worker accountability for accidents and for any retribution against employees for reporting accidents, injuries, safety concerns, or other safety issues.
2. Incentives for improving safety performance should be structured to encourage open and straightforward identification of safety concerns within both the DOE and contractor organizations.
3. Environmental, safety and health performance objectives and agreements should be incorporated at a significant level into incentive fee arrangements with the contractors.

4. DOE should reaffirm and accelerate its commitment to establishing independent regulatory oversight of health and safety conditions at the Hanford Site.
5. DOE RL management should implement a system like NRCs safety-conscious work environment that promotes reporting of employee safety and health concerns.

We look forward to your response and to periodic progress updates on this matter.

Very truly yours,

Merilyn B. Reeves, Chair  
Hanford Advisory Board

cc: Al Alm, Department of Energy Headquarters  
Alice Murphy, Designated Federal Official  
The Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations  
Randy Smith, Environmental Protection Agency  
Dan Silver, Washington Department of Ecology

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*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.*

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*For questions or comments, please send [email](mailto:Hanford_Advisory_Board@rl.gov) to Hanford\_Advisory\_Board@rl.gov*  
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