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December 4, 1998

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

Ralph Lightner  
U.S. Department of Energy, Headquarters  
1000 Independence Ave. S.W. Washington, D.C. 20585

Subject: Openness

Dear Messrs. Wagoner and Lightner:

The Hanford Advisory Board recognizes that openness at Hanford is critical. Trust and confidence are necessary to enable sustainable, implementable decisions. The goal is to promote public involvement in Hanford decisions by creating a completely open environment. In addition, environmental, health and safety information should be accessible, and employees must be able to raise health and safety issues without fear of reprisal.

The Hanford Openness Workshops were a collaboration among regional public interest groups, citizen representatives, Native American tribes, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Richland Field Office, the Washington Department of Ecology, the Oregon Office of Energy and the Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation. Hanford stakeholders and Tribes have been involved in DOE Openness issues since 1986, when thousands of pages of documents were released to the public. Several years later, former Secretary Hazel O'Leary made unprecedented commitments to citizen access and government accountability.

The Hanford Openness Workshops were designed to help DOE-Richland and DOE-Headquarters improve public access to Hanford information by resolving issues impeding the availability of any information important to public understanding and decision-making at Hanford. The Openness Workshops also focused on government and contractor accountability for openness. Four workshops were conducted from October 1997 to May 1998.

In August 1998, the Openness Workshop participants issued 51 recommendations to DOE-Richland and DOE-Headquarters. These recommendations include:

1. continuing openness activities through a second set of workshops, including one workshop devoted specifically to tribal-specific concerns
2. using performance measures to promote openness and compliance with federal and state laws, and treaties and other federal obligations to Native Americans
3. creating an open environment for Hanford employees

4. using information technologies to improve access and openness

The Hanford Advisory Board, with the exception of one member, believes the concepts in these recommendations – if implemented – will help DOE achieve a more open and safety-conscious environment. We encourage DOE-Richland and DOE-Headquarters to embrace these concepts and fulfill Secretary O’Leary’s commitments.

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

Very truly yours,

Merilyn B. Reeves, Chair  
Hanford Advisory Board

Note: Norm Buske, alternate member for the Government Accountability Project, abstained from this consensus advice.

cc: James Owendoff, DOE-HQ  
Alice Murphy, Designated Federal Official  
Chuck Clarke, Regional Administrator, U.S. EPA  
Tom Fitzsimmons, Director Washington Department of Ecology  
The Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations  
Michael Gearheard, 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*  
*HAB Consensus Advice #89*  
*Subject: Openness*  
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