



March 26, 1999

Subject: U.S. Department of Energy Fiscal Year 2001 Budget

Dear Senator/Congressman:

The Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) has completed its review of the proposed Fiscal Year 2001 (FY2001) budget and submitted consensus advice to the U.S. Department of Energy Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) and Headquarters (DOE-HQ). As a courtesy, we are sharing the consensus advice with you and other Washington and Oregon Congressional members. If you have questions, please contact Marilyn B. Reeves (c/o EnviroIssues, 101 Stewart Street, Suite 1101, Seattle, Washington 98101, FAX: 206-269-5046, e-mail: rsiguenza@enviroissues.com).

This HAB advice was developed by the Dollars and Sense Committee and reviewed by all other Committees prior to submittal to the full Board. It has been intensively analyzed, debated, and was adopted by unanimous consensus. The entire advice is deserving of careful review and timely response by the DOE-RL and the U.S. Department of Energy Headquarters (DOE-HQ). We are especially concerned about the following three issues:

- The proposed FY2001 budget reflects a compliance gap of \$232 million which follows a FY2000 gap of \$98 million. These gaps and proposals for level funding are not adequate to perform the minimum work required to meet safety standards and mandated cleanup schedules;
- The high-level wastes in the aging 177 underground tanks remain the most expensive, highest priority, and longest term program at Hanford. Obtaining necessary funding is vital to keep this program on schedule, including consideration of alternative financing mechanisms; and
- Proposals to eliminate cleanup work along the Columbia River are unacceptable and will increase future costs.

The HAB notes that costs will escalate in the future if necessary cleanup work is deferred. The nation has received a commitment from President Clinton that "my administration has made a priority of accelerating toxic waste cleanup, and we remain committed to the principle that all federal facilities must comply with their environmental obligations". (Letter from President Clinton to Governor Gary Locke, August 7, 1998).

Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management James Owendoff has also acknowledged in a letter to HAB Chair Marilyn B. Reeves, June 25, 1998 that "the Department of Energy will request full funding...for all legally required activities at Hanford... We are also committed to honoring our compliance agreements."

Governor Gary Locke in an April 30, 1998 letter to President Clinton urged the President "...

to make the cleanup of Hanford and the Department's other nuclear weapon sites a top priority on your environmental agenda and to ensure that the Department has sufficient funding..."

Numerous items of our advice relate specifically to DOE-HQ decisions or policies. These are in italics.

The 31-member HAB is an independent, non-partisan, and broadly representative body consisting of a balanced mix of the diverse Northwest interests that are affected by Hanford cleanup and stabilization of radioactive and hazardous wastes. Its primary mission is to provide informed recommendations and advice to DOE-RL, DOE-HQ, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington State Department of Ecology.

The HAB expects a timely response to its Consensus Advice from DOE-RL and DOE-HQ to permit its review prior to the FY2001 budget submittal to the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

Merilyn B. Reeves, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

cc: James Owendoff, U.S. Department of Energy - Headquarters
Paul Kruger, Designated Federal Official, Hanford Advisory Board
Michael Gearheard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Dan Silver, Washington Department of Ecology

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 # 94
Subject: Tri-Party Agreement Milestones and Public Involvement
Adopted: March 26, 1999*