



U.S. Department of Energy
Hanford Site

2008I-108

SEP 20 2007

07-OEC-0063

Ms. Susan L. Leckband, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board
1933 Jadwin Ave., Suite 135
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Ms. Leckband:

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB) ADVICE #197, GROUNDWATER VALUES

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) appreciates the time and thoughtful discussion to develop the groundwater values flowchart. Protection of the groundwater remains a priority for DOE and we remain committed to prioritizing increased funding for groundwater activities.

The Hanford groundwater strategy is reflected in the Integrated Groundwater and Vadose Zone Management Plan. Our strategy is currently focused on stopping key contaminants from reaching the river. In the next several years we will implement systems to contain the plumes as we go through the regulatory processes to restore groundwater per the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). We believe this strategy is consistent with the Board's groundwater values advice. We also agree that management of groundwater activities should be integrated in an effort to protect the Columbia River. The DOE Richland Operations Office and the Office of River Protection have jointly implemented an integrated plan to manage all of Hanford's groundwater and vadose zone activities to: 1) Consolidate modeling and risk assessment work; 2) consolidate all groundwater and vadose zone activities under the Groundwater Remediation Project; and, 3) Integrate groundwater, vadose zone, and source area cleanup decisions.

We also believe goals and schedules are an important element to our success. Specific goals and schedules addressing Hanford groundwater are described in the Hanford Groundwater Strategy signed by the Tri-Party Agencies. This strategy lays the foundation for aquifer restoration per CERCLA and emphasizes cleanup strategies to address overall groundwater cleanup, including characterization of the deep vadose zone. Currently, we are working to complete the Remedial Investigations and Feasibility Studies for the groundwater operable units that will lead to final Record of Decisions (RODs). These final RODs will outline the specific goals in the Remedial Action Objective and schedules for achieving them.

DOE maintains a consistent set of priorities, supporting an aggressive approach addressing plumes that affect the River. This approach allows us to apply immediate focus to these priority areas as a result of additional 2007 project funds. In addition, we are currently working to further define additional interim groundwater milestones that are supportive of final groundwater cleanup milestones. We are also working with the Office of Science and Technology to address technical challenges.

Office of River Protection
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Response to HAB advice #197
HAB Consensus Advice: Groundwater Values
Letter from David Brockman & Shirley Olinger dated 9/20/07

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In regards to your advice regarding a plume registry, DOE has an extensive monitoring system in place to characterize plumes and determine volume, chemical gradient, velocity and directional movement. However, we believe a user friendly, web-based tool to describe groundwater activity for interested stakeholders and the public is of value. We plan to pursue this effort in the coming months and look forward to discussing our progress with the Board.

We look forward to continued discussions with the Board on these priorities and the application of new technologies. If you have questions, please contact Karen Lutz at (509) 376-4766.


David A. Brockman, Manager
Richland Operations Office


Shirley J. Olinger, Acting Manager
Office of River Protection

OEC:KEL

cc: See page 3

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