

December 7, 2001

Jessie Roberson, Assistant Secretary, Environmental Management
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Re: Headquarters Priority Memo

Dear Assistant Secretary Roberson,

The Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) noted with great interest your memorandum addressed to Director, Office of Management, Budget and Evaluation, Chief Financial Officer, dated, November 19, 2001 and the attached priorities for the Environmental Management (EM) organization. We support the need to aggressively pursue efficiencies in the EM program to assure continued funding and the acceleration of clean-up of the Department of Energy (DOE) sites, while protecting the workforce and the public. However, items 5 and 8 outlined in the attachment to the memorandum represent a potential shift in DOE policy direction and have serious potential implications for the clean-up work at DOE sites:

- Item No. 5, "Eliminate the need to process High Level Liquid Waste," stipulates elimination of "the need to vitrify at least 75% of the waste scheduled for vitrification."
- Item No. 8, "Get Wastes To Disposal Facilities Quickly" stipulates opening "Nevada Test Site (NTS) and Richland for out-of-state disposal of low-level mixed waste (LLMW)."

The uncertainty of the meaning and effect of these directives clouds the ongoing work and creates serious confusion. We would like to have more details of the rationale for and the effort to achieve them.

The HAB would like to understand the basis for the target numbers and dates in the attachment to your memorandum. For example, item 5, which would eliminate the need to vitrify at least 75% of the waste currently scheduled for vitrification, raises concerns about how this might be done and what the environmental and legal consequences might be.

The HAB values handed to you during your August visit to Hanford (attached for your convenience) fully endorse completing clean-up more efficiently under the umbrella of compliance with applicable laws. The initial decision to vitrify tank waste was taken after an exhaustive National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process including public input. Changes to the approach can have major implications for the ongoing construction of the Office of River Protection's Waste

Treatment Plant and place this program back again at the point of planning and not doing meaningful cleanup.

The HAB has a long record of identifying cost savings for cleanup. We note, however, the legal obligations to meet the Federal Facility Compliance Agreement milestones.

The HAB is willing and eager to discuss with you and your staff clarification about the proposed top priorities of the Environmental Management organization. We stand ready to work with you in the efforts to assure timely and cost-effective cleanup of the Hanford site.

Sincerely,

Todd Martin, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

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

cc: Spencer Abraham, Secretary of Energy, U.S. Department of Energy
Headquarters
Bob Card, Under-Secretary of Energy, U.S. Department of Energy
Headquarters
Keith Klein, Manager, U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations
Office
Harry Boston, Manager, U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations
Office
John Iani, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Tom Fitzsimmons, Washington State Department of Ecology
Wade Ballard, Deputy Designated Federal Official, U.S. Department of
Energy
Michael Gearheard, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Martha Crossland, U.S. Department of Energy Headquarters
Site Specific Advisory Boards
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
Peter DeFazio
Darlene Hooley
Greg Walden
David Wu

U.S. Representatives (WA)

Norm Dicks
Jennifer Dunn
Richard Hastings
George Nethercutt

State Senators (WA)

Pat Hale
Mike Hewitt

State Representatives (WA)

Jerome Delvin
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