



September 11, 1998

Howard R. Canter
Acting Director
Office of Fissile Materials Disposition
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585

Subject: Plutonium Disposition

Dear Mr. Canter:

The Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) has a keen interest in nuclear materials and plutonium disposition, and has been closely following the issue since the Board's inception in 1994. There are approximately 11 metric tons of plutonium at Hanford (11.4% of the nation's total), a significant proportion of which is surplus pure metal or oxide and subject to the Surplus Plutonium Disposition (SPD) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (July 1998). On a dozen different occasions, the Board has issued advice related to plutonium and other nuclear materials disposition (HAB Advice Numbers: 13, 29, 34, 38, 43, 45, 46, 56, 66, 68, 74 and 78). Much of this advice has focused on the need for the Department of Energy to stop making its disposition decisions in a piecemeal fashion. A summary of these pieces of advice is submitted to be part of the public comment on the SPD-EIS.

At the Plutonium Roundtable in Seattle in October of 1995, in the presence of Governor Mike Lowry and Russian Deputy Minister Nikolai Egorov, Assistant Secretary Grumbly personally committed the Department to disclose and integrate impact and alternative analyses into one public process. The intent was to include all wastes and nuclear materials which the USDOE is considering treating, storing and disposing of at Hanford and throughout the complex. Such an open and integrated policy is required in order to realistically analyze the cumulative impacts of future transportation and disposition decisions and to adequately inform the public.

The fact that the SPD EIS and the preferred alternatives therein were not officially addressed at this past summer's USDOE sponsored Intersite Discussion Workshops on Nuclear Material and Waste demonstrates that the Department remains unresponsive to requests from stakeholders to implement a credible and sustainable dialogue on the disposition of nuclear materials. With a citizenry which has grown increasingly wary as it anticipates what will be the next disposition decision for which USDOE will ask for support, such a dialogue is clearly in the Department's best interest. It would systematically address public concerns regarding both current and future disposition decisions and could permit a truly integrated approach to decisions of long-term national importance. All of these decisions will require public support in order to be efficiently implemented.

We ask that you include in the plutonium disposition siting decision the impacts of other nuclear

materials dispositions, as committed to by Assistant Secretary Grumbly. Thank you for your consideration in this matter. We look forward to your written response.

Very truly yours,

Merilyn B. Reeves, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

cc: John Wagoner, DOE-RL
Chuck Clarke, Environmental Protection Agency
Tom Fitzsimmons, Washington Department of Ecology
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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HAB Consensus Advice #

Subject:

Adopted:

URL: <http://www.hanford.gov/boards/hab/letters/98-012.htm>

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