



Hanford Advisory Board

Revised Meeting Summary

March 25-26, 1999
Richland, Washington

FY2001 Budget

The Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) adopted consensus advice regarding the Hanford site's proposed Fiscal Year 2001 (FY2001) budget. The U.S. Department of Energy-Richland (DOE-RL) is scheduled to send its final budget request to DOE-Headquarters (DOE-HQ) in mid-April. A representative from DOE-HQ attended the Board meeting and shared perspectives from Washington DC with the Board.

Recent DOE public meetings held in Portland, Seattle, and Spokane gave stakeholders the opportunity to express concerns with the FY2001 budget submittal. The major programs funded under the submission were discussed, as well as the programs which would not be funded. The Board heard suggestions and recommendations from the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and DOE regarding the funding of various programs.

The Board expressed concern over the possibility of receiving level funding again for the Hanford site. Discussion identified many reasons for needing a larger sum of money in coming years to support cleanup progress. Members emphasized the need to change the strategic decision to cut funding to the Environmental Restoration (ER) program. Without funding for this program, critical cleanup along the Columbia River will not occur.

There was general agreement among Board members and the regulators that the current budget proposal is unacceptable.

Tank Waste Treatment

The Board was updated on the status of filling positions in the Office of River Protection (ORP). Dick French was introduced as the new manager of the organization.

The Board received an overview of the results of 18 optimization studies. The three most significant findings were highlighted for the Board. First, BNFL found that it will be less expensive to construct a new tank than to move one of the tanks out of the tank farms. Second, the waste treatment facility will be constructed in such a way to allow for expansion at a later date. Third, the Hanford site should continue to pursue vitrification of the waste, rather than switching to grout.

The committee expressed frustration that the Agreement-in-Principle (AIP) negotiations have not successfully concluded. Perspectives were provided by all agencies and a resolution is promised in the near future. The Board will receive a written explanation of the outcome of the negotiations.

The Board adopted advice that recommends TPA milestones in response to its frustration the lack of progress in negotiations between the agencies. The milestones reflect short-term activities based on DOE's current project timelines. The advice also contains a plan to develop a public involvement plan for tank waste treatment based on the creation of a steering group to examine the facility and vitrification process, identify opportunities, and develop a public participation plan best suited to each opportunity. A list of key principles to guide public involvement is also included in the advice.

Public Involvement

The Public Involvement Committee introduced, and the Board adopted, consensus advice regarding Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies' process for responding to public input. The committee stressed the need for all agencies to respond in a timely and productive manner to the public. The consensus advice recommended several modes of communication and mechanisms for creating an increased level of trust and communication between the agencies and the public.

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For questions or comments, please send [email](mailto:Hanford_Advisory_Board@rl.gov) to the Hanford_Advisory_Board@rl.gov

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