



Hanford Advisory Board

Revised Meeting Summary

September 9-11, 1998

Pendleton, Oregon

Executive Summary

FY99 PERFORMANCE AGREEMENTS

Alice Murphy, DOE-RL, provided a comparison of the performance agreement and fee award process for FY97, FY98, and FY99. In FY97, the Project Hanford Management Contract (PHMC), had \$54 million available in performance fee and earned approximately \$29 million. The total incentives available were 244; 208 were met and 36 were not met. In FY97, the PHMC earned 30% of the critical fee available for the spent nuclear fuel program, 31.5% of the fee available for site management; 68.6% available for infrastructure; 74.7% available for facilities stabilization; 75% available for tank waste remediation; and 100% available for waste management. For the mega incentive, there were a total of 79 incentives which were crosscutting over several projects and programs. The PHMC met 66 of those incentives (61 had to be met in order to earn any fee) and earned \$8.5 million or 41.3% of the available fee.

For FY99, DOE has been meeting with the Board's committees to discuss what the performance agreements might look like. The issues discussed with the committees have been considered in finalizing those agreements and the consensus advice adopted at this meeting will also influence the final agreements. Input has also been solicited from regulators and the tribes. Last year, DOE did not receive its final funding amounts until December and so delayed finalizing the performance agreements. This year, the performance agreements are being developed and signed based on the President's budget, with the understanding that if the final allocations are changed from that budget, then the performance agreements will be revised accordingly. The Board adopted consensus advice on the FY99 performance agreements. It is Consensus Advice # 87.

PLUTONIUM DISPOSITION EIS

The Board agreed on a transmittal letter to Secretary Richardson of the Board's past advice on nuclear materials and waste disposition and outlined the Board's long history of interest in public participation related to disposition decisions. It will serve as a input to the public comment period on the Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

HAB TRIP REPORTS

Board members reported back on several meetings that have been attended over the past several months. This included the Intersite Workshops held in Chicago and San Diego in June which were intended to bring stakeholders together with DOE to share information on the sites and differing ideas and perspectives between DOE and stakeholders concerning waste transfer. One of the major themes that came out of the workshops is the need to address the most urgent risks.

The Board also heard an update on the Nevada Low-Level Waste Forum held in Las Vegas

and sponsored by the Nevada site-specific advisory board. The purpose the meeting was to share information between the sites. Out of the meeting came an action for the site-specific advisory boards to rank the six alternatives in the Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. After extensive discussion, the Hanford Advisory Board agreed not to rank the six alternatives and provided a letter to DOE identifying the importance of a full public involvement process and an open decision-making process. It is Consensus Advice #86.

Two members of the Board met with a panel from the National Research Council that was asked by DOE to review its project management structure. The general themes discussed during that meeting included lack of continuity and consistent policies, lack of funding, and the importance of stakeholder and tribal input.

TWRS VITRIFICATION

The Board heard about the current status of the contract between BNFL and DOE to privatize the treatment of tank wastes. Also, Walter Howes, Director of the Contract Reform and Privatization Project Office, discussed with the Board DOE-HQ approach to privatization and the efforts to ensure that the funding and management skills are in place to make TWRS vitrification a success. The contract between BNFL and DOE covers a 24-month period after which the contractor will produce a vitrification facility at 30% design. That work will be used to obtain financing as well as prepare permit applications. The current contract covers the treatment of 10% of the tank waste and up to 25% of the radioactivity in the waste. Ecology stressed the urgency of getting tank waste treatment capability at Hanford. Time is running out; with each new tank leak, there is an increased risk to the Columbia River and public. Ecology believes that the current contract between DOE and BNFL is the most viable path forward. However, Ecology is seeking accountability, commitment, and program integrity as well as enforceable milestones for the construction and operation of the facility. The Washington Department of Health noted that air permits cannot be obtained until the facility is at 100% design.

Board members provided their individual perspectives on the TWRS program which included the continued delay in the treatment of tank wastes, the increased risks to the public and environment, and the uncertainties that remain in the current contract approach. After considerable discussion, the Board agreed to closely track the 24-month design process to ensure that the long-term success of the project remains viable.

SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL PROGRAM

An agreement was announced between EPA and DOE that addresses the schedule, costs, and project management issues of the Spent Nuclear Fuel program. This agreement will be going out to the public for review and then incorporated into the TPA as enforceable milestones. EPA spent considerable time with DOE and its contractors over the summer going through a detailed review of the program and was able to reach an agreement on a framework for project improvement.

GROUNDWATER/VADOSE ZONE INTEGRATION

Prior to presentations by DOE, several Board members expressed frustration at the report of the potential dismissal of Bob Alvarez, DOE-HQ, who was intimately involved with the

Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration program. Based on a continued lack of effectively including stakeholder involvement in the program, these Board members stated their decision to discontinue their involvement in any discussions or meetings regarding the Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration program.

DOE reported that the goals of the program includes integrating the many cleanup programs that involve groundwater and vadose zone issues, providing a set of tools with which cumulative impacts can be assessed, and making technically defensible cleanup decisions. DOE also reported that public participation has been key to the activities conducted to date; project workshops, weekly update meetings, and a draft consultation plan have all contributed to that effort. Problems remain with stakeholder involvement and the program is committed to fixing those problems. The program is facing a severe lack of funding with \$10 to \$11 million needed for FY99. EPA and Ecology both expressed their frustration with program and the lack of progress to date. There needs to be better involvement of both stakeholders and regulators.

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