



Hanford Advisory Board

Executive Summary

February 5-6, 1998
Seattle, Washington

Tank Waste Remediation System Workshop

The Tank Waste Remediation System (TWRS) at Hanford was the focus of the Board's two-day meeting. After the Board identified TWRS as an urgent cleanup issue for 1998, an ad hoc group designed a workshop to educate Board members on the TWRS program, balancing the need to have a common level of understanding about the program without overwhelming members with too much information at one time. The objective of the workshop was to determine what issues relating to TWRS the Board needs to explore over the coming year, why they should be addressed, and how they will be addressed. The Board heard presentations on and discussed the history of the tank waste program, alternative perceptions of TWRS strategies, the overall structure of TWRS, and the 60-day review of TWRS program management. More detailed information was also provided on waste characterization, interim stabilization, safety issue resolution, and preparations to retrieve tank wastes, store vitrified high-activity waste, and dispose of vitrified low-activity waste.

Following discussion of the various aspects of the TWRS program, the Board designated a sub-group to draft a statement outlining the critical need for treatment capability for tank wastes at Hanford. This statement will be sent to the Secretary of Energy, the northwest Congressional delegation, and the Governors of Washington and Oregon along with signatures from Board members.

Process for FY2000 Budget Development

The budget process and allocations for FY98, FY99, and FY2000 were reviewed. The overall Hanford funding for FY99 was increased primarily due to TWRS privatization. The Environmental Management program is funded at \$1.114 billion and privatization was increased from \$115 million in FY98 to \$330 million in FY99. The remainder of the funding allocation to Hanford, \$366 million, is primarily for national laboratory work such as fissile and nuclear energy work for Pacific Northwest National Laboratories. The funding for the Fast Flux Test Facility is now being funded from the Nuclear Energy program; both the workscope and funding were moved to that program. Also, \$20 million was added to the FY99 budget from Defense Programs to fund stabilization of nuclear facilities. Most of the cleanup funding remains level for FY99. The involvement of regulators and stakeholders in the FY2000 budget development process has begun. DOE-RL is assuming that the target funding level will be about the same as FY99. A public meeting will be held February 26 on the Integrated Priority list and it will be submitted to DOE-HQ on April 15. The Dollars and Sense Committee will be meeting to identify issues and discuss committee input to the process.

The Board reviewed and approved a letter regarding its position on funding medical monitoring of downwinders by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry. The letter clarified the Board's support for medical monitoring and its objection to use of clean up funds as the source of money for this.

Spent Nuclear Fuel Program

The Board received a presentation on the spent nuclear fuel program. Fuel retrieval is currently targeted

to start in late 1999 with retrieval completed by late 2001. Fuel retrieval was originally scheduled to begin in 1998 and was accelerated in 1995 to begin in late 1997. The cost of the program was originally estimated in \$2 billion in 1994. Schedule accelerations reduced the cost estimate to \$740 million in April 1995. The current cost estimates are \$1.088 billion and appear to be increasing.

Regulatory perspectives were provided from the Washington Department of Ecology, (Ecology) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Ecology and EPA have met and discussed regulatory oversight of Hanford, including the spent nuclear fuel program. There was agreement that the lead responsibility for the program should shift from Ecology to EPA as well as shifting the regulatory structure being used. DOE supports the change in regulatory pathways, which will require more effort and a complicated process. The Board affirmed its decision to focus on spent fuel at the April meeting and outlined topics to be discussed.

Administrative Matters

The locations for the June and July Board meetings have been changed; June will be located in the Tri-Cities and July in Spokane.

A memo on the proposed committee structure was distributed to Board members. This issue will be further discussed by the Executive Committee based on the input received today and a recommendation will be brought back to the Board.

Public Comment

Catherine O'Neill, resident of Olympia, spoke to the Board regarding the transportation of waste into Hanford from other waste generating facilities for treatment and disposal. Concerns that must be addressed if this occurs include protection against espionage activities and exposure from shipments to nearby vehicles and residents.

Tom Leschine introduced himself as chair of the National Academy of Sciences panel on remediation of buried tank wastes. He said the biggest problem within DOE is the lack of integration; by separating the agency into different programs, turf battles begin and efforts are stovepiped. The National Academy of Sciences does not advocate leaving the waste in place, but is encouraging looking at how caps and barriers might be used temporarily. The Board can help by determining what the questions are, such as what should the end state of the tank farms look like and if some waste can be left in the tanks.

Elaine Faustman, Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation (CRESP-UW), introduced herself and the work CRESP is doing on how risk information is incorporated into the decision-making process. CRESP believes that risk information supports the decision-making process, makes it credible, and allows for an accountable process. A letter was submitted to John Wagoner, DOE-RL, which called attention to how risk is incorporated into decision-making processes and CRESP's intention to further study this issue.

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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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