



Hanford Advisory Board

Draft Meeting Summary

July 9-11, 1997
Spokane, Washington

Explosion at the Plutonium Reclamation Facility

A panel of investigators provided a status report on the investigations of the May 14, 1997, explosion at the Plutonium Reclamation Facility, in which workers were exposed to a chemical plume. Preliminary findings identified the cause of the explosion as the evaporation of hydroxylamine nitrate and nitric acid. Other issues discovered include inadequate and conflicting emergency preparedness and medical procedures, as well as gaps in the oversight and overall understanding of the risks associated with chemical evaporation. Discussion by the Board and members of the audience focused on treatment of the exposed workers, conflicting communications regarding radiation releases, and the delay in notification of local emergency response centers.

Public Comment

Gai Oglesbee and Beulah McCulley expressed concern over the treatment of the workers exposed to the chemical plume from the Plutonium Reclamation Facility explosion. They asked the Board to follow the investigation carefully and said they would also continue to follow the issue.

Update/Status Report on DOE-HQ Initiatives

The status of complex-wide activities that impact Hanford was discussed. DOE staff are still awaiting approval for the National Dialogue from Secretary Peña (a. The surplus plutonium and waste management EIS's are inter-related. Regarding the Focus on 2006 Plan, the Executive Committee met with Al Alm on June 18 and presented Board views on long-term stable funding and accelerated cleanup. The Board, including all three Committees, will be reviewing the PHMC Management and Integration Plan.

Budget Status

Budget projections for FY97, FY98 and FY99 were presented and discussed at length. In addition, the Integrated Priority List and its effects on meeting milestones in both high and low case funding scenarios were discussed. Of main concern is the funding projection for FY99. Both the high and low case scenarios jeopardize cleanup and could potentially result in non-compliance with the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA). The Board prepared a letter to be distributed to the Northwest Congressional delegation, the Governors of Washington and Oregon, and the Attorney General of Washington State to transmit a Board statement for the "Performance and Budget At Hanford Management Work Session" in Salt Lake City between DOE (Headquarters and Richland), regulators and stakeholders. The statement stressed the importance of adequate funding to meet TPA commitments, concerns over risk to workers, the public and the region, protection of the Columbia River, and the need to support cost savings activities. The letter also addressed the need for full funding of two Phase I vitrification facilities, to ensure the privatization set-aside fund, and to involve the Hanford Advisory Board prior to the initiation of each phase of privatization. The Board also requested that the regulatory infrastructure for the privatization fully protect public and worker health and safety and the environment throughout the entire tank waste privatization effort.

Tank Waste Remediation Systems

The Hanford tank farm vadose zone and privatization programs were discussed. As a result of previous borehole sampling, it was determined that cesium has moved deeper in the vadose zone than expected. Another borehole will be drilled in FY97 to extend down to the water table. Several individual HAB members worked with DOE to develop an information paper for Congress alerting them to the need for sufficient funding in the tank farms. As a result, another \$35 million for the TWRS program may be obtained. The Board discussed the funding for the privatization effort for vitrification of the tank wastes. Currently, there is concern that the funding for two facilities is in jeopardy. The Board decided not to issue further advice on TWRS privatization at this time.

TPA Change Package For K Basins/Spent Fuel

A TPA change package for the Spent Fuel program at K Basins has been prepared. There are still some outstanding technical and safety issues that are being addressed. The Board adopted advice that urged the quick resolution of technical and regulatory issues associated with PCB-contaminated sludge in the K Basins. The Board also recommended that the TPA agencies consider adding target dates to provide early warning of impending technical problems that could jeopardize project schedules and budget.

PHMC Management Plan

The Project Hanford Management and Integration Plan was released in July by Fluor Daniel Hanford and DOE. The plan outlines the management principles for Fluor Daniel Hanford, its subcontractors and the enterprise companies. Board members expressed concern that an opportunity was not provided to review and comment on the plan prior to release. More specifically, Board members wanted to comment on cost savings, outsourcing and overhead and indirect management. DOE informed the Board that their comments would be accepted and considered prior to release of the modified plan next quarter. A letter was prepared by the HAB to express concern over not being able to provide input on a viable cost savings performance plan, the outsourcing approach/methodology, layered overhead costs, and the specific approach underlying the Fluor Daniel Hanford commitment to create 3,000 new non-Hanford jobs in a five year performance period.

Surplus Plutonium Environmental Impact Statement

The Board heard a report on the July 1 scoping meeting for a follow-on environmental impact statement (EIS) on storage and disposition of fissile material. This EIS will address where the steps to convert the surplus plutonium into ceramics/glass or mixed oxide fuel will occur. The Board discussed the need to use the framework of the National Dialogue to establish a clearly defined process that allows for adequate time for discussion and public comment on proposed locations for plutonium, pit and metal conversion, mixed oxide fuel preparation, vitrification, treatment, and storage or disposition of other radioactive waste. The Board adopted advice on this point and the need to define a decision-making schedule and rationale as well as transportation logistics, linkages to international disposition, wastes that will be generated and their management. The advice also states that the disposition should not impact Hanford cleanup budgets and schedules.

TPA Change Package for Reactors on the River

The Board considered and adopted advice on the TPA change package for Reactors on the River. The advice endorses the proposed changes, including interim safe storage of C and F Reactors and the competitive procurement to reassess interim safe storage and ultimate disposition. The advice also

commends the agencies for the approach to preservation of B Reactor.

200 Area Soils Remediation Strategy

The Board briefly discussed a proposed 200 Area Soils Remediation Strategy. The strategy considers combining soil waste sites in the 200 Area, with the exception of the TWRS vadose zone. The strategy also addresses prioritization for characterization and remediation. Implementation of the strategy would require a change package being put through for the M-13 and the M-20 milestones. However, some FY99 funding scenarios do not provide for implementation of this strategy. DOE, regulators and stakeholders agreed that the proposed strategy is the correct path forward; however, a lack of funding may prevent DOE from signing a TPA change package.

Canyon Disposition Initiative

A technical report outlining initial stakeholder issues and concerns was discussed. The Board approved submission of the report to the TPA agencies. While the report outlines initial stakeholder issues and concerns, the Board will continue to review this initiative and may provide additional comments in the future.

Updates

A proposed plan for the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility expansion is almost ready for release. The public comment period will begin around the first of August.

Four Openness Initiative workshops will be held by July 1998. The workshops will aid DOE on openness issues, including declassification of documents relating to environmental releases of radioactive materials, and provide public access to Hanford information. DOE-Headquarters and the Consortium for Risk Evaluation and Stakeholder Participation (CRESP) will provide funding.

The TPA change package for FFTF will be suspended, pending a decision to proceed with cleanup or defense production. Board discussion addressed NEPA and SEPA compliance and public participation for any change to the TPA and using cleanup funds for non-cleanup work.

The annual CRESP meeting addressed integration of the research into real issues and practical applications. CRESP is reviewing how risk is used by everyone participating in some of the decisions such as the Focus on 2006 Plan.

National Dialogue pilot workshops will occur in October in Spokane, Portland, Tri-Cities, and Seattle. Oregon will conduct focus groups in mid-September.

New travel rules were outlined, including (1) $\frac{3}{4}$ of the per diem rate applies to the first and last day of travel, (2) no per diem for less than 12 hours on travel, (3) no receipts are required for expenses under \$75 dollars, and (4) prior authorization is required if actual expenses will exceed the allowable amount.

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

URL: <http://www.hanford.gov/boards/hab/execsum/jul.htm>

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