



## Hanford Advisory Board

### Executive Summary

June 1-2, 2000

La Grande, Oregon

---

#### **Tank Waste Treatment**

Kay Fick, U.S. Department of Energy-Office of River Protection (DOE-ORP), updated the HAB on tank waste treatment activities. There are a number of parallel DOE activities now underway to keep tank waste treatment on track: termination of the BNFL contract, implementation of a bridge contract to continue technical design work, and selection of a new design and construction contractor. The failure of the BNFL contract was a great disappointment to the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). A major concern is DOE's ability to maintain the tank waste treatment schedule laid out in the Director's Final Determination.

DOE and Ecology have agreed to amend the existing interim stabilization consent decree to add the following dates related to tank waste treatment: issuance of the Request for Proposals for the new contract in August 2000, award of the new vitrification contract by January 15, 2001, and a 15-month negotiation period for DOE and Ecology to develop a new consent decree to cover the entire tank waste treatment program. Ecology wants to begin a public involvement process this summer focused on the development of the second consent decree. Facility licenses and regulatory approval to start construction are contingent upon facility design.

Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) members discussed the importance of reviewing lessons learned from the BNFL experience so mistakes are not repeated. They felt that the contracting process must be fair, open, and competitive, which will be a challenge considering the timelines and complex technical issues. Issues that remain to be addressed include retaining technical expertise for the project in light of contractor changes, minimizing project delay, the possible need to build new tanks, negotiating the new consent decree, and public confidence and public involvement.

The HAB adopted advice from the Tank Waste Treatment Ad Hoc Committee concerning the path forward for tank waste treatment that encouraged the program to move forward with minimal delay. This advice will be shared at the June 7 contractor and public meeting on the upcoming Request for Proposals for the new tank waste treatment contract.

The HAB also adopted advice from the Public Involvement Committee concerning the availability of public information about the procurement process for the new tank waste treatment contract. A major concern was that the "business sensitive" designation has been used repeatedly to withhold information from the HAB and the public. This advice will also be shared at the June 7 Request for Proposals meeting.

#### **Past Worker Issues - Setting the State for Integrated Safety Management**

The discussions at this HAB meeting focused on worker protection, one of the three components of an Integrated Safety Management System (ISMS): protection of workers, the environment, and the public. Tim Takaro reviewed data from his former worker exposure studies to provide a local perspective of past worker health issues. Dr. David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Energy, joined via telephone to discuss ISMS from a national perspective. The September deadline is approaching for all DOE sites across the country to verify their ISMS implementation. Doug Shoop, DOE-Richland also discussed the

Hanford Occupational Health Process and the Employee Job Task Analysis program.

The HAB discussed the importance of implementing work and troubleshooting systems that protect workers and balance the ability to shut down work for safety reasons and the pressure to ensure that meaningful work continues. Strong concerns about integrating safety across the site between DOE-Richland, DOE-Office of River Protection and through all contractors and subcontractors were also discussed.

### **Groundwater/Vadose Zone Integration Project Expert Panel**

Ralph Patt, member of the Groundwater/Vadose Zone (GW/VZ) Integration Project Expert Panel, spoke to the HAB about the Panel's January 2000 meeting report and recommendations to the GW/VZ Integration Project. The four main areas of discussion in January were science and technology programs, systems assessment capability, model transport, and subsurface investigations. The Expert Panel concluded that the GW/VZ Integration Project was moving forward, but progress has been impaired by factors beyond the control of the Project. The Panel noted that permanent and effective leadership, oversight, defined end states, and significant funding are necessary for Project success. The Expert Panel recognized the following areas of success: 200 Area remedial action subsurface investigation, River Protection Project subsurface investigation, and slant bore drilling under the SX tank farm.

### **Draft Advice - DOE-Headquarters Authority over Site Records of Decision**

The HAB adopted advice from the Environmental Restoration Committee directed at DOE-Headquarters expressing opposition to the recent DOE-Headquarters decision to rescind full authority from local DOE field offices and to require concurrence by DOE-HQ on all site cleanup Records of Decision. The HAB concluded that because this decision affects all DOE sites, copies of the advice would be sent to all Site-Specific Advisory Boards.

HAB members noted that if decision authority now lies at DOE-Headquarters, DOE-Headquarters staff should attend HAB meetings and participate in local public involvement efforts prior to making decisions. Concerns were also raised about whether adequate technical expertise exists at DOE-Headquarters to support informed decision-making. Fears were expressed that this decision will result in slow-downs in signing decision documents and in implementing cleanup activities.

### **DOE Response to HAB Budget Advice for Fiscal Year 2002**

Wade Ballard, DOE-Richland, gave an overview of the DOE-Richland's response to HAB budget advice for Fiscal Year (FY) 2002; a summary of comments received at the public meetings held in Portland, Richland and Seattle in March 2000; and the DOE-RL budget transmittal sent to DOE-HQ for FY 2002.

### **Board Business**

Each of the HAB committees gave an update on the issues they are working on. These updates were followed by an update on the activities of the Environmental Management Advisory Board (EMAB) by Todd Martin who sits on both the HAB and the EMAB.

Merilyn Reeves and Norma Jean Germond gave an update on the developing Site-Specific Advisory Boards' (SSABs) Statement of Common Interest that is expected to be finalized at the SSAB chairs' meeting in August 2000. The SSABs are also sponsoring a second stewardship workshop at Rocky

Flats in the fall.

Other topics of discussion included the upcoming transition of the HAB chair, the annual HAB self-evaluation, the annual HAB Progress Report, distribution of adopted HAB advice, HAB representation on the Hanford Site Technology Coordination Group, the National Academy of Sciences Peer Review Panel, and topics for the September HAB meeting.

---

**Hanford Home Page | HAB | Summary List**

*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/jun2000.htm>*

*Last Updated: 01/26/2001 10:35:40*