



March 26, 1999

Dan M. Berkovitz
Deputy Assistant Secretary Planning, Policy, and Budget
U.S. Department of Energy, EM-20
5B-80/FORS
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20585

Subject: Hanford Advisory Board Meeting, March 1999

Dear Mr. Berkovitz:

Thank you for attending and participating in the recent March 25-26, 1999 Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) meeting.

As you witnessed, the development of consensus advice for the Fiscal Year 2001 (FY2001) budget is a multi-step process involving a number of Board committees followed by full Board review and debate. In this lengthy review, key U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Office (DOE-RL) officials are available to clarify issues and answer questions. The committees also seek information from the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Your visit marks the first time that anyone from DOE Headquarters (DOE-HQ) has attended and participated in a HAB meeting devoted to the development of consensus budget advice. Members of the Board have been concerned that in the past, HAB budget advice may not have been adequately reviewed by key program managers and as a result, was not fully utilized in the DOE-HQ review of the Hanford Integrated Priority List (IPL).

The HAB has a wealth of experience and expertise which is utilized in our in-depth review of the proposed budget prioritization and strategic choices incorporated in the draft IPL. Our advice represents the diverse views of stakeholders in the Northwest. Local city and county governments; the State of Oregon; regional economic interests; environmental, public interest, and health groups; union and non-management labor representatives; and public-at-large representatives have helped develop and concur in this advice. In addition, tribal experts from the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Nez Perce Tribe work with the Board during the in-depth budget review.

We appreciate the attention that Secretary Richardson has given to the urgent risks at Hanford and his success in achieving an increase in the proposed FY2000 funding.

Thank you for attending our meeting and observing the development of our FY2001 budget advice. We are enclosing a copy of our adopted advice for your information and review.

Finally, during the long Board discussion you heard repeated calls for a compliance-based budget. Tri-Party Agreement milestones and other regulatory requirements are necessary and key indicators of the progress and success of stabilization and cleanup. These milestones and regulatory requirements are needed because Hanford's risks are unacceptable. Delays in addressing these risks equate to higher lifecycle costs and increased risks to workers and the public.

There are many examples of this, such as the recent discovery of the degraded, buried barrels of stored transuranic waste. Delay in recovering these barrels increases costs, and more importantly, increases risks to workers. Similarly, construction and operation of a vitrification plant is essential. However, flat budgets threaten the viability of the tank waste treatment program and ultimately increase future costs.

The HAB believes that the nation can pay now or pay considerably more later, but the radioactive and hazardous wastes must be secured out of harms way for workers and the public. We earnestly solicit your advice and assistance on how local and regional citizens can help influence the process of securing budgets based on full compliance with existing, legally-enforceable federal and state requirements.

We believe the extensive budget analysis by members of the Dollars & Sense Committee and the entire board should be a useful resource. We are willing to discuss our advice or assist as you and others prepare a FY2001 budget that hopefully, will better meet Hanford's compliance and funding needs.

Sincerely,

Merilyn B. Reeves, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

cc: James C. Hall, Acting Manager, U.S. Department of Energy - RichlandSubject:

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

HAB Consensus Advice # 94

Subject: Tri-Party Agreement Milestones and Public Involvement

Adopted: March 26, 1999