



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

July 10, 1998

Ms. Marilyn B. Reeves
Chair, Hanford Advisory Board
723 The Parkway, Suite 200
Richland, Washington 99352

RECEIVED

JUL 14 1998

Dear Ms. Reeves:

Thank you for your letter of June 5, 1998, which details some of the important concerns of the Hanford Advisory Board regarding the fiscal year (FY) 2000 budget. The Department of Energy remains committed to the cleanup of the Hanford site and the protection of the Columbia River. We intend to meet our obligations under the Tri-Party Agreement.

The Balanced Budget Agreement between the President and the Congress imposes severe constraints on the Federal budget. In fact, for FY 2000, the budget targets for the Department of Energy and the Environmental Management Program are lower than the levels in the President's request for FY 1999. The Department of Energy is faced with difficult choices as it seeks to meet its priorities within these funding limits.

The Department has just begun its internal deliberations to determine the appropriate priorities and funding requests for FY 2000. The proposed funding for the Hanford Site to which you refer reflects the initial allocation for the Site under the Environmental Management Program's budget target for FY 2000. We are ascertaining what can and cannot be done at these funding levels. Let me assure you that the Office of Environmental Management recognizes the need to seek adequate funding from Congress in order to maintain compliance and support continued progress in cleaning up sites. We are also continuing to pursue cost and program efficiencies to achieve as much as possible with our funding. As we balance our competing needs, every effort will be made to fund not only compliance activities but also other important work such as funding the Hanford Advisory Board and several other stakeholder initiatives.

Sincerely,

James M. Owendoff
Acting Assistant Secretary for
Environmental Management

