

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD

A Site Specific Advisory Board, Chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act

Advising:

US Dept of Energy
US Environmental
Protection Agency
Washington State
Dept of Ecology

April 1, 2011

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Re: Cleanup Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2012, 2013 and Ensuing Years

Dear Ms. Triay, Mr. McCormick, Ms. Charboneau, Ms. Hedges and Mr. Faulk,

Background

The Board appreciates the President's budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 and the information provided by DOE-ORP and DOE-RL at the recent FY 2013 Budget Workshop. However, the Board remains concerned that funding levels will drop in FY 2012 and 2013. DOE- HQ has stated: *"Our mission is not discretionary – it is a Federal obligation to address cleanup of the Cold War environmental legacy and honor our regulatory*

EnviroIssues

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HAB Consensus Advice # 244

Subject: Cleanup Budget Priorities for FY 2012, 2013 & Ensuing Years

Adopted: April 1, 2011

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commitments.”¹ The Board urges an increase in funding for FY 2012 and 2013 to ensure that DOE-RL and DOE-ORP are able to fulfill this mission.

The Board has serious concerns about the impacts of the proposed cuts to major Hanford Site cleanup programs in FY 2013, such as suspending all retrieval and treatment of transuranic (TRU) and mixed wastes from unlined burial grounds and work to clean-out and remove the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP). In the past year, the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) has been changed to relax milestones explicitly due to budget constraints.

The Board is concerned that the President’s FY 2012 budget request for DOE-RL and DOE-ORP will not meet TPA requirements. DOE-HQ is required to ask Congress for adequate funding to meet all TPA milestones and other regulatory requirements.

Lastly, the Board believes DOE should explain the assumptions that support Hanford budget priorities and how suspending cleanup projects in FY 2012 and 2013 will impact future cleanup costs.

FY 2011 President’s Budget Request to Congress: \$2.2 billion

- DOE – RL: \$972 million, (\$1.042 billion minus safeguards & security line item \$69.234 million)
- DOE-ORP: \$1.158 billion (\$740 million for vitrification plant construction)

FY 2012 President’s Budget Request to Congress: \$2.3 billion

- DOE-RL: \$936.753 million², (\$1.006 billion minus safeguards and security line item \$69.234 million)
- DOE-ORP: \$1.361 billion (\$840 million for vitrification plant construction)

FY 2013 DOE-RL and DOE-ORP Budget Requests to DOE-HQ for submittal to Congress: \$2.9 billion

- DOE-RL: \$1.429 billion
- DOE-ORP: \$1.489 (\$970 million for vitrification plant construction)

¹ U.S. Department of Energy, Environmental Management, Richland Operations Office, FY 2013 Budget Briefing, Public Workshop,” dated March 16, 2011, page 2, third bullet.

² Figure from FY 2012 Request Table for Richland Field Office, Pages 119 and 120, Volume 5 (EM) of the DOE Budget Request to Congress.

If the total Hanford Site cleanup budget is level from FY 2011 through FY 2013, almost no active cleanup work would be funded within DOE-RL. Instead, only \$170 million above maintenance, services, security, and management building blocks would be funded.

DOE-RL Concerns

The Board identified the following concerns related to DOE-RL's Analytical Building Blocks (ABB) for FY 2013:

RL-0011: PFP Demolition

- The proposed funding for FY 2013 will not allow the workforce to maintain their momentum on decontamination, deactivation, decommissioning, and demolition activities at PFP with the objective of completing the demolition to slab on grade by 2013.
- The planned slow down of this activity in FY 2012 and 2013 will also result in added future costs due to loss of expertise and trained workforce and the need to hire and train new workers when the work is reinitiated.
- The Board does not understand how DOE-RL will meet TPA Milestone M-083-43, "Complete Transition of the 242-Z Waste Treatment Facility and 236-Z Plutonium Reclamation Facility to Support PFP decommissioning," due September 30, 2013, by performing only "minimum safe" work at the PFP Complex in FY 2012 and 2013.
- The Board reminds DOE-RL and ORP that dollars spent getting out of a facility (D&D) eliminate the need to continue reinvesting in that facility via "minimum safe" expenditures.

RL-0013C: TRU Retrieval and Waste Treatment

- The Board is concerned that in the FY 2012 Request to Congress and the FY 2013 plan, DOE proposes to halt all retrieval and treatment of TRU and mixed wastes from the unlined burial grounds. Further DOE will not begin characterization of the wastes in the forty linear miles (of varying widths) of unlined trenches. Shutting down retrieval and treatment will increase overall cleanup costs as well as add years of delay. The Board finds this unacceptable.

RL-0040: Zone 18 (U Plant Zone)

- The Board is concerned that funding is inadequate to meet regulatory requirements. Without funding to continue this work, compliance with TPA milestones M-016-200A and 200B are in jeopardy.

RL-0040: Zone 29 (Outer Area) – This refers to field specific work in support of D&D related to remediation of the Central Plateau.

- The Board is concerned that funding is inadequate to meet regulatory requirements. It is important to maintain a level of remediation activity in the Outer Area of the Central Plateau to continue shrinking the contaminated area down to the Inner Area of the Central Plateau to comply with the associated M-016-00 series milestones. Reducing the contaminated area has long been a stated interest of the Board.

RL-0041: River Corridor Project

- The Board is concerned that reduced funding will impact DOE-RL's ability to meet those portions of TPA milestones M-016-00C for the completion of site remediation in the 100K Area as well as TPA milestones M-16-53, "Complete the Interim Response Actions for the 100K Area...for Phase 1 Actions," due December 31, 2011, and M-16-143, "Complete the Interim Response Actions for the 100K Area...for Phase 2 Actions," due December 31, 2015.
- Continuation of progress in the River Corridor 100 K area including facility Deactivation, Decontamination, Decommissioning, and Demolition and waste site remediation, which contributes to DOE-RL's goal of reducing the site footprint and further protecting the Columbia River, is one of the fundamental tenets of the 2015 Vision for the River Corridor.

DOE-ORP Concerns

DOE-ORP also has substantial unplanned work, now being identified in system plans, such as characterization. Potential costs need to be identified and disclosed in budget requirements.

The Board has urged in prior advice (Advice #234 and Advice #224) that the Low Activity Waste plant (LAW) be started earlier than the other portions of the Waste Treatment Plant (WTP), for which design has not yet been completed and numerous safety and engineering process issues remain. Early start up of LAW provides for staggered commissioning and the opportunity to begin processing waste and making progress in emptying Single Shell Tanks (SSTs). The total budget for WTP appears to be increased over the \$12.2 billion official total estimated cost, with costs as commissioning (which is part of the construction contract) being shifted out of construction and into the tank farms operating budget, and a forward increase in contingency reflected in proposed appropriation levels increasing to nearly \$1 billion for WTP construction in FY 2013. DOE notes that this increase for WTP reflects funding contingencies.

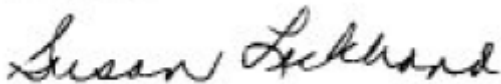
Advice

- The Board advises DOE-HQ to request full funding from Congress to meet all TPA milestones and regulatory requirements. It is not enough for field offices to simply “identify” costs to comply. The field offices are obligated to request full funding pursuant to the TPA requirements.
- The Board advises the Tri-Party agencies that a lack of budget does not justify changing milestones (e.g. dropping enforceable milestones has led to a suspension of TRU retrieval and waste treatment until late 2013).
- The Board advises DOE-RL to request additional funding in FY 2013 for PFP decontamination, deactivation, and decommissioning activities to complete the demolition to slab on grade by 2013 and comply with associated TPA commitments.
- The Board advises DOE-RL to request funding in FY 2012 and 2013 DOE-RL for Central Plateau characterization, solid waste burial ground work, and continuation of work to retrieve and treat buried mixed wastes. The Board has emphasized a need to request funding levels that enable characterization and/or removal, treatment, and disposal of pre-1970’s transuranic waste sites (e.g. Purex Tunnel). These funds make it possible to reduce potential risks to the public and environment from various waste sites such as chemical and pre-1970’s TRU wastes, radioactive, and non-radioactive burial ground waste and solid waste landfills.
- The Board advises DOE-RL to request funding in FY 2013 for U Canyon Demolition and remediation to permit continuation of field work and compliance with TPA associated milestones.
- The Board advises DOE-RL to request funding in FY 2013 to ensure cleanup of the Outer Area of the Central Plateau complies with the TPA milestones associated with this work.
- The Board advises DOE-RL to request funding in FY 2013 and out-years to support additional remediation work along the Columbia River.
- The Board advises DOE-RL to request funding in FY 2013 for 100K area Deactivation, Decontamination, Decommissioning, and Demolition and waste site remediation to continue progress in the River Corridor and comply with associated TPA commitments.
- The Board advises DOE-HQ to fund safeguards and security through a different DOE program office than DOE-EM. Funding should not be taken from the DOE-EM cleanup budget.
- The Board advises DOE-RL and DOE-ORP to scrutinize the minimum safe and site services ABB to find efficiencies. Some service upgrades may need deferral. DOE-ORP and DOE-RL should disclose the portion of its funding which goes to

site services. Reductions in funding of site services should not compromise worker and public health and safety or risk failure of mission.

- The Board advises DOE's Hanford field offices to request the funding needed to meet "target milestones" and remain on pace for final milestones. Under the FY 2012 Request to Congress and DOE-RL's 2013 plan, DOE proposes to stop for two years all retrieval and treatment of TRU and mixed wastes from the unlined burial grounds, and treatment of stored wastes. Shutting down retrieval and treatment will increase risks and increase overall cleanup costs, as well as add years of delay. The Board also advises the Washington State Department of Ecology, as the regulator, to ensure that treatment requirements are met.
- The Board advises DOE-RL to plan and identify in their budget proposals the significant amount of cleanup work not yet in the TPA. This includes Central Plateau characterization and further remediation work along the Columbia River.
- The Board has long supported accelerating waste retrieval from Hanford's SSTs. That objective is complicated by limited space available in Hanford's double-shell tanks. The Board advises that DOE-ORP determine its needs for waste blending tanks as part of the WTP complex and determine how to integrate blending tanks into its SST retrievals. The Board also advises that DOE-ORP identify funds to move forward with designing and constructing these new blending tanks.
- The Board supports DOE-ORP's FY 2013 request for funding start up of the LAW facility as stated in previous advice (Advice #234 and #224).
- The Board advises DOE-ORP to identify the total contingency funding and commissioning costs for the WTP.
- The Board advises DOE-HQ to share "target" budgets for FY 2013-2017 with the Board.
- The Board advises DOE-RL and DOE-ORP to define the following terms and identify how these items justify or drive budget requests (making progress, minimum safe, essential, ready to serve, compliant, compliance, enforceable milestones, target milestones, good project management, TPA, and Consent Decree).

Sincerely,



Susan Leckband, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

This advice represents Board consensus for this specific topic. It should not be taken out of context to extrapolate Board agreement on other subject matters.

cc: Stacy Charboneau, Co-Deputy Designated Official, U.S. Department of Energy,
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