



U.S. Department of Energy

~~OFFICE OF RIVER PROTECTION~~

P.O. Box 450
Richland, Washington 99352

03-ORP-151

OCT 08 2003

Mr. Todd Martin, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board
1933 Jadwin Avenue, Suite 135
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Mr. Martin:

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB) CONSENSUS ADVICE #149: TRANSURANIC
WASTE IN THE TANKS

Reference: HAB letter from T. Martin to R. J. Schepens, ORP, "Transuranic (TRU) Waste in the Tanks," dated September 5, 2003.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of River Protection (ORP) would like to take this opportunity to provide updates relative to the three points contained in the above referenced letter regarding: (1) interactions with the State of New Mexico and DOE-Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP); (2) consultations with the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC); and (3) the need for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analyses to support our proposal.

ORP appreciates your support of our approach, and looks forward to continued dialogue and feedback from the HAB as we move forward.

Relative to the first point, ORP and CH2M HILL Hanford Group, Inc. have consulted with WIPP and the State of New Mexico and will continue that dialogue. ORP will keep you apprised of those discussions.

Relative to the second point regarding NRC consultations, ORP met with NRC staff on June 25, 2003. Those discussions were focused on the Tri-Party Agreement closure process and the classification of tank waste residuals. While ORP believes that the Environmental Protection Agency is the regulator interface for this waste, we will consult with the NRC as appropriate.

Relative to the third point, ORP has performed a supplemental NEPA analysis and has initially concluded that the activities and potential impacts do not constitute a substantial change to the Tank Waste Remediation System Environmental Impact Statement and would not result in significant new information or circumstance relevant to environmental concerns. This supplemental analysis is being reviewed by DOE Headquarters and will be approved by ORP management in mid October 2003, provided that no other insights are raised in the review.


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If you have questions, please contact Gregory A. Jones, Stakeholder Interface, (509) 373-4183.

Sincerely,


Roy J. Schepens
Manager

ORP:TEO

cc: S. L. Waisley, RW-2E
K. A. Klein, RL
Michael Wilson, Ecology
Penny Mabie, EnviroIssues
Michael Gearheard, EPA
Al Conklin, WDOH
TPA Administrative Record

U.S. Senators (OR)

Gordon H. Smith
Ron Wyden

U.S. Senators (WA)

Maria Cantwell
Patty Murray

U.S. Representative (WA)

Richard Hastings