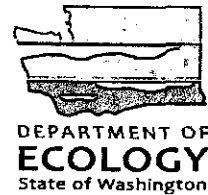


U.S. Department of Energy

**Office of River Protection**



11-HAB-0036

FEB 07 2011

Ms. Susan L. Leckband, Chair  
Hanford Advisory Board  
Enviroissues Hanford Project Office  
713 Jadwin, Suite 4  
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Ms. Leckband:

**RESPONSE TO HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB) ADVICE #238, "SYSTEM PLANNING PROCESS"**

Thank you for your letter (enclosed) and continued interest in the system planning employed in Hanford's ongoing efforts to safely store, retrieve, treat, and immobilize tank waste. The U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of River Protection (ORP) and the State of Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) appreciate the HAB's input and understanding of the complexities involved in this process.

ORP's System Plan describes how the River Protection Project's (RPP) mission could be achieved given an underlying set of assumptions and communicates the potential mission impacts of key issues and uncertainties. The plan is a living document detailing complex interactions between operations of the RPP's system components including single-shell tank retrieval, waste feed delivery, supplemental low-activity waste treatment, potential transuranic packaging, and operation of the Waste Treatment Plant.

As noted in Advice #238, System Planning Process:

"Comprehensive system planning is a critical element in retrieving and treating Hanford's tank waste and in operating the Waste Treatment Plant. ... Since 2000, the Department of Energy - Office of River Protection (DOE-ORP) has invited members of the Tank Waste Committee (TWC) of the Hanford Advisory Board (Board) to participate in a series of discussions and planning by DOE-ORP and its contractors on systems planning, secondary wastes and waste retrieval, processing and disposal."

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A review of previous HAB Advice (#233, #209, and #189) highlights the maturation of the system planning process since 2000. The focus of previous advice includes, but is not limited to:

- Performance of baseline and alternative analyses;
- inclusion of key risks and uncertainties;
- interconnectedness of the system including facility capabilities and infrastructure needs;
- specification of disposal options for waste streams;
- necessity of annual plan preparation and issuance; and
- coherence of plan assumptions with the Lifecycle Report.

Institutionalization of these items is demonstrated through scope and content of the System Plans, contractual commitments for annual plan preparation, and active participation of both ORP and Ecology in the development of the Lifecycle Report.

Advice #238 focuses on communicating the system planning process to identify opportunities for dialogue. The shift from plan content to process is another reflection of the maturation of system planning activities.

As you are aware, the Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order, Milestone M-062-40 was recently adopted. As a result, both ORP and Ecology personnel are actively involved in the development of planning scenarios every third year, with System Plan Revision 6 as the first opportunity for public input. Personnel from both agencies have met and carefully considered each of the HAB's specific recommendations. We would like to respond to each of your advice points individually.

**Advice point #1:** The Board advises ORP and Ecology to conduct the system planning process in a manner that is as open and transparent as possible. Early and collaborative committee dialogue with ORP and Ecology on the assumptions will ensure the concerns of the Board and public are considered before the revision to the system plan begins.

**Response:** The system planning process is structured around the production of an annual update. Key activities include scenario definition, assumption definition, model development, model execution, results interpretation, and report creation.

System Plan Revision 6 is scheduled to be published in October 2011 and System Plan Revision 7 in October 2012. Due to the cyclic nature of the reports, activities directly supporting System Plan 7 initiate and proceed concurrently during the production of System Plan 6.

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**Advice point #2:** The Board requests that DOE-ORP and Ecology identify the specific decision point(s) in the System Plan timeline for the Board to provide meaningful input on the scenarios under consideration for revision 7.

**Response:** Input on scenarios under consideration for revision 7 is required by July 2011 to support scenario definition. Scenarios will be selected by the end of FY2011, and assumptions should be finalized by January 2012.

To support the July 2011 date, the HAB will be provided with the set of System Plan Revision 6 assumptions used in the modeling activities. The agencies anticipate providing this information in February 2011. These assumptions will be revised, as necessary, to align with scenarios selected for System Plan Revision 7 analysis.

**Advice point #3:** The Board advises the agencies to engage the Board in early dialogue regarding the System Plan development to enable meaningful and timely participation and potential advice development.

**Response:** The agencies have met to identify timely opportunities for productive dialogue with the Board regarding system planning, status, and key schedule items.

- The agencies have requested time on the agenda of the Tank Waste Committee (TWC) meeting in February 2011 to highlight the results of the System Plan Revision 5, communicate the scenarios that will be evaluated in System Plan Revision 6, and to provide the assumption set that forms the basis for modeling System Plan Revision 6.
- The agencies will provide an update on our work with the TWC on the System Plan Process at the HAB meeting in February 2011.
- The agencies request time on the agenda for the Tank Waste Committee meeting in July 2011 to discuss the status of the System Plan Revision 6 development.
- Additionally, the agencies request that HAB input on scenarios and assumptions for System Plan Revision 7 be provided during the July 2011 Tank Waste Committee meeting to align with scenario definition.

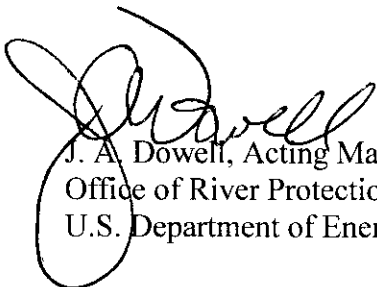
The timing of opportunities is anticipated to repeat annually.

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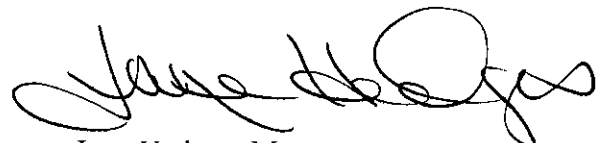
**Advice point #4:** The Board advises DOE-ORP and Ecology to consider the Board's previous advice (Advice #233, #209, and #189) in developing the System Plan process and future system plans.

**Response:** As noted above, members of both agencies have met to consider Board Advice #238 in conjunction with the previous advice cited.

Both DOE and Ecology look forward to sharing the RPP System Plan Revision 6 scenarios and assumptions in future discussions. If you have any questions, please contact Ron Koll (ORP) at (509) 376-4434 or Dan McDonald (Ecology) at (509) 372-7998.



J. A. Dowell, Acting Manager  
Office of River Protection  
U.S. Department of Energy



Jane Hedges, Manager  
Nuclear Waste Program  
Washington State Department of Ecology

cc w/encl: See page 5

Ms. Susan L. Leckband  
11-HAB-0036

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cc w/encl :

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