

2011I-217

11-HAB-0037

MAR 16 2011

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

Dear Ms. Leckband:

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB) CONSENSUS ADVICE #239, "INCORPORATING PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING INTO THE COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN"

The U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the State of Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology), collectively known as the Tri-Parties, would like to thank the HAB for their advice on public involvement strategic planning in the Community Relations Plan (CRP) (enclosed). We appreciate the amount of time and effort the HAB's Public Involvement and Communications Committee dedicated to discussions on the characteristics of successful public involvement.

The Tri-Parties agree that it is important to understand the elements of successful public involvement. Proposed edits to the CRP describe the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) Public Involvement Evaluation Process and list guidelines that the regulatory agencies (EPA and Ecology) will use to evaluate the success of public involvement efforts at Hanford.

Examples of expectations within the guidelines include "publishing effective advertisements and advance meeting notices" and "providing decision-makers who listen to public comment and consider input to decisions" during public meetings. Additionally, the overarching principles described in the advice are useful for further guiding public involvement efforts at Hanford.

The agencies recognize that people nationwide are concerned and affected by the Hanford Site and agree early and sustained involvement of the public can play a vital role in decision-making. Efforts are made to use non-technical terms to explain the importance and potential impacts of cleanup decisions to the public. We strive to design public notices that attract a wide range of participants and believe in working collaboratively with stakeholders early during the design process.

Public comment periods, meetings, hearings, and workshops are advertised in many formats and the agencies continue to look for new methods of announcing public participation

Washington State Department of Ecology – U. S. Environmental Protection Agency – U. S. Department of Energy


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opportunities. The Tri-Parties believe that continuous improvement is important to ensure that future generations are encouraged to engage in the public participation process at Hanford.

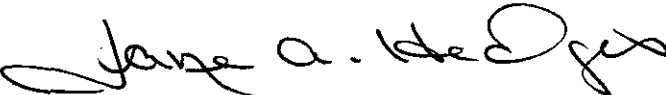
We agree that strategic planning for public involvement is important and have incorporated many of the HAB's advice points during revisions of the CRP. However, we do not agree that a strategic plan should be added to the document. As we expressed in a previous letter to the HAB (10-HAB-0004) in March 2010, the frequent updating required for a strategic plan requires that it be a stand-alone document that identifies public involvement activities for upcoming projects. The Tri-Parties have created the "TPA Agencies Public Involvement Calendar" (http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/nwp/PI/pdf/TPA_PI_Calendar.pdf) to highlight anticipated upcoming public involvement activities and use it regularly at TPA Quarterly and HAB Public Involvement Committee meetings. This calendar is updated frequently as activities are added or changed.


The Tri-Parties agree that a strategic plan should be developed for Hanford projects as they are identified. This is accomplished by determining the purpose, goals, potential tools, and, when appropriate, the timeline for public involvement activities. It is important to note that no two public participation processes are the same and will vary dependant on governing regulations, anticipated impacts and sensitivity.

The Tri-Parties thank you for your advice on this topic and look forward to hearing from the HAB in the future. We also encourage the HAB to provide comments on the revisions of the CRP when it is made available for public comment. If you have any questions, please call Paula Call (509) 376-2048, Pamela McCann (509) 376-7663, Emy Laija (509) 376-4919, or Dieter Bohrmann (509) 372-7954.


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cc w/encl: See page 3

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