



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

April 22, 2011

Ms. Susan Leckband, Chair  
Hanford Advisory Board  
c/o Enviroissues  
713 Jadwin, Suite 3  
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Ms. Leckband:

Thank you for your February 11, 2011, letter transmitting Hanford Advisory Board Advice #240. In that advice, the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) encourages the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Environmental Management (EM) to adopt an EM Open Government Plan and the Hanford site Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies to update the existing Community Relations Plan with site-specific Open Government elements.

DOE-EM understands the value and importance of a robust public participation program. Our efforts to meaningfully involve stakeholders early in cleanup decisions date back to the early 1990s when the EM Site-Specific Advisory Board was established. President Obama's Open Government Initiative and the December 8, 2009, Office of Management and Budget Open Government Directive have instructed all agencies, including DOE, to strengthen their commitment to transparency, participation and collaboration.

To improve openness and access to information related to its work, EM has strengthened existing efforts and added new communications tools in each of these areas:

- **Transparency:** Making more information available to the public, EM has added to its website offering – RSS Feeds, Flickr, YouTube, and Gov Delivery, a digital subscription service, among other features. News Spotlight and a Media Gallery provide press releases related to the EM program, along with photographs on cleanup activities from across the EM complex. Within the last year, EM began publication of a monthly newsletter on program activities and ongoing progress reports of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) effort.

To provide the public better access to needed information, the EM website now hosts three databases, including the Groundwater Database, the Considered Sites Database, and the Central Internet Database that integrates waste management and cleanup data from multiple DOE data sources into a single, accessible resource. In addition, the site provides links to social media and reports, such as a site-by-site Environmental Compliance Performance Scorecard and Contractor Fee information. Additional enhancements to the EM website are currently being developed.

- Participation: EM has an active public participation program that fosters discussion and input among its various stakeholder groups to include the EM Site-Specific Advisory Board, EM Advisory Board, intergovernmental groups, tribal governments, and other community groups. It ensures timely information exchange and response to stakeholder concerns.
- Collaboration: EM participates in ongoing dialogues between EM and external groups, such as the recent Federal Facilities Community Dialogue, sponsored by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Lessons-learned features on the EM website openly share experiences of the various cleanup sites and DOE program offices. The ARRA Jobs Transition website promotes collaboration with communities for local employment opportunities. Working to improve electronic access to information, EM's Office of Corporate Information represents EM in several broad DOE initiatives, such as Data.gov reporting of high value data sets, DOE Web Management Council, and Energy.gov website redesign.

EM is committed to continuously improve and explore ways to be more open and accessible to the citizens we serve. Your suggestions for additional improvements are important to ensuring that EM knows and remains responsive to the information interests of our stakeholders.

EM's Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) and the Office of River Protection (DOE-ORP) share and reflect EM's commitment to openness and transparency as they carry out the vital cleanup mission at Hanford. These values are reflected through a commitment to continued early engagement and collaboration with the HAB and other stakeholders on key cleanup activities and regulatory decision-making processes. To support this approach, DOE-RL and DOE-ORP have recently worked with the EPA and the Washington State Department of Ecology to revamp and provide monthly updates to the *(TPA) Public Involvement Calendar*. The calendar provides a look at what public meetings, technical workshops, and decision-making processes are scheduled over the next 12 months, including those driven by National Environmental Policy Act; Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act; and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act requirements, as well as non-regulatory activities. This allows stakeholders to assess and communicate their respective interests in given projects and their desires for specific public involvement activities. DOE Hanford managers view the calendar as a valuable tool that fosters early collaboration with stakeholders far in advance of formal public comment periods.

DOE-RL and DOE-ORP are working with EPA and Washington State Department of Ecology to update Hanford's Community Relations Plan (CRP), which will undergo formal public comment later this year. The CRP embodies the principles of the Open Government Initiative by clearly describing Hanford site public involvement processes, identifying ways the public can get involved and explaining how the public involvement efforts will be evaluated for improvement.

Hanford is developing ways to strengthen transparency through improving search capabilities for the on-line Administrative Record and by posting to the TPA website all

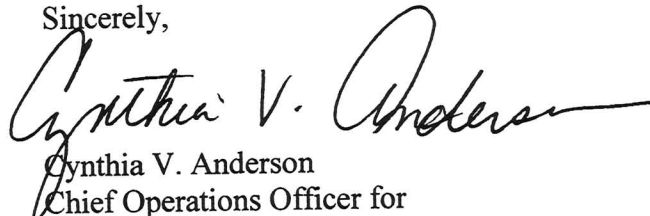
draft and final change packages and associated comment response documents. The Hanford Site is also placing an emphasis on increasing public access to environmental data. The site has developed a publicly available website for such data and is currently working toward participation in the EPA National Environmental Exchange Network Water Quality Exchange. In addition, the Hanford Site Collaboration Zone, an innovative web-based mechanism, is being developed to allow information-sharing and collaboration between DOE, regulatory agencies, and stakeholders.

Addressing other aspects of your advice:

- In order to avoid duplication, EM does not plan to create a separate Open Government Plan, and DOE will not be revising its Open Government Plan in the near-term. However, EM views its ongoing public participation activities as complementing and enhancing DOE's Open Government Plan.
- EM encourages public meetings and operates all activities in compliance with the law regarding open meetings. We appreciate the interest in open proceedings and support the principle behind them.
- The Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Division/Office is responsible for administering policies, programs, and procedures to ensure DOE compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). It also provides resources to aid in finding answers to questions about DOE and to facilitate obtaining requested information without submitting a FOIA request. EM strives to make high-interest information public in a timely manner. Both headquarters and site personnel are ready to assist you when you have difficulties obtaining information.

If you have any additional comments or concerns, please contact Mr. Nicholas Ceto, HAB Co-Deputy Designated Federal Officer, Richland Operations, at (509) 376-6144, or Ms. Stacy Charboneau, HAB Co-Deputy Designated Federal Officer, Office of River Protection, at (509) 373-3841.

Sincerely,



Cynthia V. Anderson  
Chief Operations Officer for  
Environmental Management

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cc: Nicholas Ceto, RL  
Stacy Charboneau, ORP