

June 8, 2001

Keith Klein, Manager
Department of Energy
P.O. Box 550 (A7-50)
Richland, WA 99352

Re: Hazardous Materials Management and Emergency Response Training and Education Center (HAMMER)

Dear Mr. Klein

Worker, public, and environmental health and safety are a fundamental concern at the Hanford Site. Protection requires prevention of accidents and disease, and prevention requires a work force that is well-trained and drilled in safe work practices. The Site's Integrated Safety Management System would fail without such training. At Hanford, the Hazardous Materials Management and Emergency Response Training and Education Center (HAMMER) is necessary for continuing training to ensure worker protection and public safety.

The Hanford Advisory Board vigorously objects to proposed budget cuts to the HAMMER program that would effectively shut the facility down and leave all cleanup missions at risk for lack of effective training for Hanford workers. This situation would leave workers poorly equipped to deal with the hazards associated with Hanford cleanup, putting at risk their safety, the safety of the general public and the environment. These cuts also eliminate HAMMER's ability to train emergency responders along the transportation corridors on which radioactive and hazardous materials move.

Working at the most polluted site in the DOE Complex cannot be made as safe "as reasonably achievable" without the level of training that has been made possible by the various programs provided by HAMMER, its staff and its worker trainers.

The Hanford Site recently witnessed the award of U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) "Star" status for Protection Technologies' and Dyn Corp Tri Cities Services' participation in the Voluntary Protection Program. Neither accomplishment would have been possible without workers and management who received effective hands-on training. This training has been the hallmark of HAMMER.

Without the support necessary for the HAMMER facility, it is certain that Hanford cannot maintain the level of training required to protect Hanford workers and the

public. The Hanford work force, stakeholders, and Tribes recognize the importance and utility of HAMMER. We urge DOE to do the same.

Hands-on training is absolutely required for worker safety. The Board strongly advises that HAMMER be retained at the current level of effectiveness in order to protect worker and public safety.

Very truly yours,

Todd Martin, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

cc: Carolyn Huntoon, Department of Energy Headquarters
Chuck Clarke, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Tom Fitzsimmons, Washington Department of Ecology
Wade Ballard, Deputy Designated Federal Official
The Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations
Michael Gearheard, Environmental Protection Agency
Acting Assistant Secretary, Department of Energy, Environmental, Safety,
and Health

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