

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD

A Site Specific Advisory Board, Chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act

Advising:

US Dept of Energy
US Environmental
Protection Agency
Washington State Dept
of Ecology

Dec 6, 2002

Roy Schepens, Manager

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of River Protection
P.O. Box 450
Richland, WA 99352

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Todd Martin

CO-VICE CHAIRS:

Ken Bracken
Shelley Cimon

Subject: Accelerated Retrieval, Treatment, and Disposal of Tank Waste and Closure of Tanks Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Period

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Dear Mr Schepens,

The Department of Energy (DOE) has informed the Hanford Advisory Board (Board) that the 45 - day scoping period for the Accelerated Retrieval, Treatment, and Disposal of Tank Waste and Closure of Tanks Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is slated to begin December 16, 2002 and has provided the Board with a draft Notice of Intent. We have observed that the Notice of Intent (NOI) is not specific, clear, or informative enough to elicit meaningful comment on the scope of the EIS.

In the NOI, DOE should clearly state that the reason for preparing this EIS is to evaluate proposed alternatives that would replace the decision to retrieve and vitrify all High-Level Nuclear Waste in Hanford's tanks. In addition, the NOI should clearly identify how DOE's intent to change waste classifications would change how the wastes are treated and disposed.

The 1997 Tank Waste Remediation System EIS and its record of decision stated there were inadequate data and characterization of tank waste and soil and groundwater contamination from leaks to consider closure in an EIS at that time. The NOI should contain the basis for the decision to include closure in this new EIS. This is vital for informed public comment on the scope of the EIS.

The Board recommends DOE explain in the NOI what basis it has for its assertion that adding an additional low activity waste vitrification facility in 2012 "is not technically or economically practical." (p. 7)

Considering the importance of this EIS to all stakeholders, the Board strongly recommends that DOE revise the NOI and extend the scoping period to allow more time for the public to comment. The scoping public meetings should be scheduled to avoid conflicts with other scheduled public meetings (i.e., State of the Site) occurring in January and early February.

HAB Consensus Advice #140

Subject: Accelerated Retrieval, Treatment, and Disposal of Tank Waste and Closure of Tanks Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Period

Adopted: December 6, 2002

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Sincerely,



Todd Martin, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

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.

cc: Keith Klein, Manager, U.S. Department of Energy Richland Operations Office
John Iani, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
Tom Fitzsimmons, Washington State Department of Ecology
Wade Ballard, Deputy Designated Federal Official, U.S. Department of Energy
Michael Gearheard, Environmental Protection Agency
Michael Wilson, Washington State Department of Ecology
Martha Crosland, U.S. Department of Energy Headquarters
The Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations

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