

June 4, 2004

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

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

Linda Hoffman, Director
Washington State Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

John Iani, Regional Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

Re: Diversity Outreach

Dear Mssrs. Klein, Schepens, Iani and Ms. Hoffman,

The Hanford Advisory Board (Board) commends the efforts of the Department of Energy (DOE) and its regulators to reach across language and cultural borders to achieve the goal of serving a more diverse audience with information about Hanford and opportunities for input into decision-making. DOE and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have specifically asked the Board for help in reaching out to new audiences.

The Board strongly encourages DOE, EPA and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) to expand their public information and public involvement outreach activities to engage the broadest range of affected communities. As we have stated in the Hanford Advisory Board Public Involvement White Paper (2001), two key criteria for good public involvement are that it be “broad and inclusive” and “open and accessible.” A diversity of viewpoints fosters fresh approaches to identifying previously unrecognized issues and offers opportunities to “reframe” and address issues productively. Involving diverse segments of the

population is not only good practice but is also a basic prerequisite for environmental justice and fair and democratic decision-making. As a matter of good public involvement policy, DOE and its regulators have a responsibility to inform and involve all potentially affected communities.

As one step toward this goal, the Board recommends that the agencies develop focused efforts to engage Hispanic communities. Many members of these communities live and work in the area surrounding the Hanford site but may not have had access to information about the risks at Hanford because of differences in language, culture and media use.

We urge the agencies to be open to exploring alternative approaches to seek Hispanic community involvement, including using a variety of media outlets, translating materials into Spanish, developing public gatherings and/or presentations that meet community cultural needs, and identifying influential community leaders and others who can provide access to the community. Information gathered from Hispanic communities should be acknowledged and considered in Hanford decision-making processes. Gathering and responding to this and all public input is integral to building regional support for a safe and timely cleanup.

The effort suggested here will not only serve the interests of Hispanic communities; it can also serve as a model for subsequent efforts to engage with other affected communities.

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: Howard Gnann, Deputy Designated Federal Official, U.S. Department of Energy
Michael Gearheard, Environmental Protection Agency
Michael Wilson, Washington State Department of Ecology
Sandra Waisley, U.S. Department of Energy Headquarters
The Oregon and Washington Congressional Delegations

U.S. Senators (OR)

Gordon H Smith

Ron Wyden

U.S. Senators (WA)

Maria Cantwell

Patty Murray

U.S. Representatives (OR)

Earl Blumenauer

Peter DeFazio

Darlene Hooley

Greg Walden

David Wu

U.S. Representatives (WA)

Brian Baird

Norm Dicks

Jennifer Dunn

Jay Inslee

Richard Hastings

Rick Larsen

Jim McDermott

George Nethercutt

Adam Smith

State Senators (WA)

Pat Hale

Mike Hewitt

State Representatives (WA)

Jerome Delvin

Shirley Hankins