

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO MAJOR PUBLIC COMMENTS
(Identified in Fiscal Year [FY] 2002 Integrated Priority List [IPL] Transmittal Letter to the
U.S. Department of Energy [DOE]-Headquarters [HQ], Environmental Management [EM] Program,
dated April 13, 2000)

Comment 1. We should approach cleanup like round two of the Manhattan Project, i.e. a project that is vital to the nation's and its people's health and well being.

Response: The DOE Richland Operations Office (RL) agrees with this concept. With Congress appropriating approximately \$5.8 Billion per year in support of the EM Program, we believe it is clear that they are considering it a critical effort as well.

Comment 2. The new RL prioritization criteria (i.e. protecting the Columbia River, transitioning the Central Plateau, using DOE assets for the future) are not well linked to the draft IPL. RL did not increase its funding for protecting the river, despite it being a top priority.

Response: Current target funding levels are at such a level that the funding of Base Operations and key projects such as Spent Nuclear Fuel and Plutonium Finishing Plant stabilization leaves very little discretionary funding available to refocus or accelerate cleanup in the River Corridor. As reflected on the FY 2002 RL draft IPL, additional funding beyond the target is crucial for making the acceleration of the River Corridor cleanup possible.

Comment 3. DOE must forcefully seek full funding to comply with the Tri Party Agreement (TPA).

Response: RL continues to seek full funding to comply with the Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (Tri Party Agreement). The transmittal of the IPL to DOE-HQ specifically addressed the critical funding requirements to meet compliance. Ensuing dialogue between RL and DOE-HQ has reiterated this need and upcoming budget review forums will provide the opportunity to forcefully reiterate this need.

Comment 4. DOE should shut down the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) and use the savings to fund cleanup.

Response: DOE's Nuclear Energy Program currently funds the FFTF activity. Until the current studies related its use for medical isotopes production are completed and final decisions are made as to FFTF's future use, if any, the conversion of shutdown savings to cleanup cannot be addressed.

Comment 5. DOE should not take \$40 million out of the Hanford cleanup budget and give it to the new National Nuclear Security Agency.

Response: Approximately \$33M was removed from the RL IPL budget for safeguards and security and is now being shown as part of the DOE-HQ budget for the Office of Security within DOE. In the transmittal letter of the FY 2002 RL final draft IPL to DOE-HQ EM, RL has sought EM assistance in assuring that as safeguards and security costs are reduced at RL, those savings are returned to RL for use as additional cleanup.

Comment 6. The IPL does not address the contamination threats from low level waste burial grounds (LLBGs) or the 618-11 burial grounds.

Response: Based on input from the public meetings, funding was included within the target level for the 618-11 burial ground investigations. Regarding the LLBG, RL letter 00-WMD-058 to the Hanford Advisory Board, "Characterization of Burial Grounds and Importation of Waste," dated March 28, 2000, responded to this issue as well as other related LLBG issues. At this time, there are no plans to conduct an extensive investigation of the LLBGs, however efforts to adequately operate, monitor, and maintain the LLBGs will continue.

Comment 7. Instead of addressing the true threats of the burial grounds, RL is shipping safely stored, non-threatening waste to WIPP.

Response: This statement is not clear as to what is meant by "the true threats of the burial grounds," but it is assumed that the lack of funding for Transuranic Waste (TRU) Retrieval is the concern. Retrieval of TRU wastes is a Central Plateau cleanup activity and consistent with our prioritization criteria is a lower priority below other Tri-Party Agreement activities. It should be noted that TRU retrieval activities began in FY 1999 and continue during FY 2000. Performance Incentives that utilize cost efficiencies to fund retrieval are being used to conduct this work during FY 2000. Similar incentives may also be used during FY 2001 and beyond considering current prioritization of this work below targets.

Comment 8. The 200 Area assessments should be funded.

Response: RL has identified funding within the target level to at least address characterization activities in the 200 Area.

Comment 9. Transuranic waste retrieval should be funded.

Response: See response to Comment 7.

Comment 10. The Groundwater/Vadose Zone effort should include characterization work.

Response: Modifications have been made to fund characterization work at the target level on the IPL.

Comment 11. Low (LLW) and mixed low level waste (MLLW) should not be sent to Hanford from across the DOE complex. If it does come, no Hanford cleanup funds should be used to address it (no National Waste site here).

Response: RL baselines currently include receipt of some offsite LLW and MLLW. However, there are no plans for RL to receive additional offsite MLLW beyond what is presently forecasted. In fact, at present, the Secretary of Energy has put a hold on this until early 2001. There may be confusion related to UA# 07T, LLW and MLLW Disposal Capacity Development. The scope of this Unit of Analysis includes work necessary to continue to provide sufficient disposal capacity for "current forecasts" of onsite (RL and DOE Office of River Protection [ORP]) and offsite wastes currently being received. This does not include providing capacity for possible future increases of offsite waste resulting from the recent issuance of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Comment 12. Funding the accelerated 300 Area cleanup project is premature; the IPL should target Tri-Party Agreement compliance requirements first.

Response: DOE has allocated funding for the 300 Area Accelerated Cleanup effort in the beyond Target funding case. We believe that initiatives such as this to finish the 300 Area earlier than planned are needed to generate support for the beyond Target case. We also believe that this is Tri-Party Agreement work insofar as it is targeted at completing cleanup along the river. Included in this scope are waste sites in the FF-2 Operable Unit and facilities already covered by the Tri-Party Agreement. Should the beyond Target case be supported by DOE-HQ EM and Congress, we would work with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Washington Department of Ecology to develop appropriate Tri-Party Agreement milestones for this activity.

Comment 13. Stakeholders should have been more involved in the spent nuclear fuel baseline change request.

Response: DOE has the responsibility to keep stakeholders advised of the approach being taken, and this was done as soon as RL was in a position to do so.

Comment 14. RL did a poor job of coordinating these public meetings with the regulators and the stakeholders. There was too little time for real input before the IPL had to go to DOE-HQ.

Response: The approach this year was to engage the Regulators, Stakeholders, and Tribes in the development of the prioritization criteria and then have the IPL reflect that criteria without having to have follow-on public meetings on the initial draft IPL. The delay in reaching agreement on the acceptability of this approach severely restricted the available review time of the IPL once agreement was reached to have the follow-on public meetings. This issue is clearly an opportunity for improvement for next years cycle.

Comment 15. The IPL was not clear enough about the true size of the compliance gap.

Response: As a result of this comment, the transmittal letter of the IPL to DOE-HQ EM was modified to more clearly delineate the compliance gap.

Comment 16. RL should not fund the Regulatory Unit-ORP.

Response: In order to avoid the possibility of an inherent conflict of interest, it was decided that the Regulatory Unit activity would be under the responsibility of RL rather than ORP.

Comment 17. DOE should get an independent validation of baselines and cost efficiencies claimed by the contractors, i.e. the Fluor Hanford restructuring process (Cleanup cost not realistic).

Response: DOE has changed the way it manages the site. We are now focused on outcomes. Our performance incentives are based on outcomes and we are not requiring the contractor to report savings. We see the result of their savings through increased work.

Comment 18. DOE should give more details about the indirect/overhead reduction efforts and successes (tell the truth about indirect costs).

Response: Consistent with our new approach of managing the contract, not the contractor, DOE no longer provides the contractors with indirect targets or ceilings. The contractors are no longer required to report that information to RL but to manage it the best way possible to achieve the site outcomes and performance incentives they have signed up for.

Comment 19. Cleanup money should not fund non-cleanup activities, such as HAMMER, downwinder litigation, and PNNL (Don't fund FFTF or other non-cleanup work with cleanup dollars).

Response: Approximately 90% of the HAMMER activities are in direct support of the Hanford cleanup activities; Pacific Northwest National Laboratory activities funded from the cleanup budget are in direct support of cleanup; FFTF is funded from the Nuclear Energy Program not the EM Program; with the EM Program having landlord responsibility for the Hanford Site, the responsibility for downwinder litigation falls within their purview.

Comment 20. All TPA milestones should be funded .

Response: We agree and our total request at the Critical Needs level provides for staying on schedule for all Tri-Party Agreement milestones (except for the 100-BC Pipeline Remedial Action which is no longer achievable). It is only in the event we do not receive full Critical Needs funding from the final Congressional appropriation that some of the Tri-Party Agreement milestones come into jeopardy.

Comment 21. The new administration will impact the Hanford fiscal year 2002 budget.

Response: We agree.

Comment 22. People making decisions at DOE headquarters and OMB should know how strongly the people of the Northwest feel about cleanup and full funding to get the job done.

Response: RL continues to seek full funding to comply with the Tri-Party Agreement. The transmittal of the IPL to DOE-HQ specifically addressed the critical funding requirements to meet compliance. Ensuing dialogue between RL and DOE-HQ has reiterated this need and upcoming budget review forums will provide the opportunity to forcefully reiterate the need.

(Note: This Summary of Responses to Major Public Comments does not reflect the public comments related to ORP. Those comments will be addressed separately by ORP.)