U.S. Department of Energy
Hanford Site

NOV 06 2014

14-HAB-0026

Mr. S. E. Hudson, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board
Enviroissues Hanford Project Office
713 Jadwin Ave., Suite 4
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Mr. Hudson:

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB) JUNE 5, 2014, CONSENSUS ADVICE #277, "2015 PRESIDENTIAL BUDGET AND 2016 BUDGET REQUEST"

Thank you for your letter on advice #277 on the 2015 Presidential Budget and 2016 Budget Request (enclosed). The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) appreciates the time HAB members spent on this advice and for their continued role in providing advice for the cleanup work at Hanford.

The Department's Headquarters (HQ) acknowledges the advice point (Advice Point #1) requesting full funding from Congress to meet all legal requirements of the ongoing cleanup work in Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 and 2016. The Richland Operations Office (RL) and Office of River Protection (ORP) prepared responses to the other advice points in your letter:

Advice Point #2: The Board advises DOE-ORP to quantify the need and request funding to proceed to empty leaking tanks.

Response: The Department accepts this advice point and will continue to factor actions to address leaking tanks into our funding request, based on existing conditions, regulatory agreements, and other considerations.

Advice Point #3: The Board advises DOE-ORP to quantify the need and request funding to obtain additional tank capacity for FY 2022, as Washington State has formally requested.

Response: The Department cannot accept this advice point at this time because we believe that the best path forward is to begin operations of the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant as soon as practicable. Building additional tanks for storage at this time is not necessary and could divert focus and resources from the ultimate goal of treating and disposing of the waste in Hanford's tanks.

Advice Point #4: The Board advises DOE-ORP to request funding to test new technology that would dry liquid radioactive waste.

Response: ORP has requested technology development support in a number of areas. We were successful in receiving funds for technetium-99 management. There is no near-term funding for drying liquid radioactive waste; however, we are exploring other options within the Low-Activity Waste Pretreatment System alternative analysis process.

Advice Point #5: The Board advises DOE-RL to restore funding for removal and treatment of thousands of stored containers of hazardous radioactive wastes at Hanford's Central Waste Complex (CWC), on a schedule as fast as available treatment capacity will allow.

Response: The Department accepts this advice in part. RL's annual budget requests have requested funding levels required to meet Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) compliance obligations. The waste is currently stored in accordance with safety basis and permit requirements. RL's annual budget requests place priority on funding for minimum safe operations, including funding to safely manage (e.g., repackage or treat, as necessary) waste currently stored at the Central Waste Complex.

Advice Point #6: The Board advises DOE-RL to begin designing and seeking procurement funding to remove extremely radioactive cesium and strontium capsules stored in WESF and put them in dry cask storage.

Response: The Department accepts this advice. In FY 2014, RL is preparing an acquisition strategy, a request for proposal, a performance specification, and a graded approach to implementing the Department's directive on capital asset acquisition for an activity to move the capsules. Funding is planned in the future to meet TPA milestone M-092-05, Determine Disposition Path and Establish Cs/Sr Interim Milestones. RL is funding the replacement of the Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility K3 ventilation system, scheduled to be complete by the end of the FY 2016. This is a necessary replacement to enable capsule transfers for dry storage.

Advice Point #7: The Board advises DOE-RL to restore funds for continued installation and activation of the strontium barrier along the Columbia River and other groundwater protection activities.

Response: The Department accepts this advice and, to date, funding has not been reduced for this effort. RL provided funding in FY 2014 to install and activate 1,000 feet of the strontium barrier in the aquifer during high water river stage (approximately May through July). The installation of apatite barrier in the upper wells located in the aquifer is best at high water, when the wells are fully wetted with groundwater. The apatite injections in the vadose zone are planned and funding has been requested for the fall of 2014 (FY 2015) when the river stage is low, to ensure full coverage of the vadose zone. The remainder of the installation in the aquifer is planned and funding has been requested to support additional placement for the summer of 2015 when the river stage is high once again. RL is working with the Tribal Nations to address cultural resource concerns to support an agreement that can be in place to support the vadose zone injections and some lower aquifer wells (continuously wetted) in the fall and completion of the remaining aquifer installation in the summer of 2015. RL anticipates completion of the barrier in 2015. The funding identified in FY 2014 is planned to be carried into FY 2015 to support these activities.

Advice Point #8: The Board advises DOE to provide a more detailed level of budget information to enable the Board and public to make more well-informed comments and priorities.

Response: Several members of the Board's Budget and Contracts Committee attended the budget workshop RL and ORP facilitated on May 14, 2014. At the workshop, we provided an Analytical Building Blocks report, which is the most detailed budget information available to the public. The report describes specific work activities and related cost estimates for planned activities in FY 2016.

Advice Point #9: The Board advises DOE to request an increase in funding for FY 2015 in the PBS RL100 to ensure the Board has adequate funding to support necessary subcommittee meetings and a minimum of six full Board meetings per year to meet expectations from DOE-HQ.

Response: RL believes it has requested adequate funding to support anticipated Board and subcommittee activities for FY 2015. In general, however, the FY 2015 budget will require RL to look for ways to mitigate impacts due to funding in order to meet its commitments.

Thank you again for your advice on this subject. If you have any questions, you may contact us or you may contact Kristen Skopeck at (509) 376-5803.

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OCE:KPS

Enclosure

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