



**U.S. Department of Energy
Hanford Site**

SEP 17 2015

15-HAB-0001

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 JUNE 11, 2015, CONSENSUS ADVICE #284, "FISCAL YEAR (FY) 2016 AND FY 2017 BUDGET PRIORITIES"

Thank you for your letter on Advice #284 on the FY 2016 Presidential budget and FY 2017 budget request. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) appreciates the Hanford Advisory Board's (HAB or Board) continued interest in understanding our budget process and providing us with consensus advice on cleanup priorities.

Each year DOE, the DOE Richland Operations Office (RL), and the DOE Office of River Protection (ORP) conduct a public meeting on fiscal year budget formulation, and we welcome the feedback we receive from the Board. RL and ORP provide an opportunity for stakeholders to address priorities and concerns based on FY 2015 accomplishments and FY 2016 Analytical Building Blocks (ABBs) handout, and FY 2016 and FY 2017 planned activities.

Advice Point #1: The Board advises DOE-RL to fully fund and support hazardous and radioactive waste cleanup, including treatment and removal of the thousands of stored containers on-site with removal and treatment of deteriorating or improperly stored containers in the Central Waste Complex on a pace as fast as the commercially available treatment capacity allows for the waste to be removed.

Response: RL accepts this advice in part. RL's annual budget request is for funding levels required to meet Hanford Federal Facility-Agreement Consent Order or Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) compliance obligations. The waste is currently stored in accordance with safety basis and permit requirements. Furthermore, RL's annual budget request places 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.

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Advice Point #2: Due to high safety risks, Board advises DOE-RL to fund removal of cesium (Cs) and strontium (Sr) capsules from Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility (WESF) into long-term dry cask storage.

Response: RL accepts this advice. Funding is planned in the future to meet TPA milestone M-092-05, *Determine Path and Establish Cs/Sr Interim Milestones*. RL is funding the replacement of the WESF K3 ventilation system, scheduled to be complete by the end of FY 2016. This is a necessary ventilation replacement to enable capsule transfers for dry storage.

Advice Point #3: The Board advises DOE-RL to restore funds for continued installation and activation of the strontium barrier along the Columbia River and other groundwater protective activities.

Response: RL accepts this advice and, we anticipate completion of the barrier in 2018.

Advice Point #4: The Board advises DOE-RL to fund characterization and remediation of all (deep vadose zone) (DVZ) sites to the limits of technology. The Board supports a vision of future protection of the Columbia River ecosystem, all fauna and the future health of human populations to come.

Response: RL accepts this advice and will continue to request funding to meet regulatory requirements. Also, characterization of the DVZ operable unit under Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA), 200-DV-1 is in progress.

Advice Point #5: The Board advises DOE to prioritize retrieval of the waste under the 324 Building in FY 2016. The Board concurs with members of Congress who have expressed concern to DOE officials regarding this waste and the risk it poses to the Columbia River. The Board also supports Congress adding funding to the DOE-RL budget under development for FY 2017 to continue remediation of that waste.

Response: RL accepts this advice and funding requests are commensurate with TPA requirements. Furthermore, RL took this advice into consideration for the FY 2017 Budget Request.

Advice Point #6: The Board advises DOE-RL to proceed as soon as possible to remediate the (vertical pipe unit)(VPUs) in the 618-10 and 11 Burial Grounds. Funding to begin the process for 618-11 should follow the increased priority to complete 618-10 to ensure the continuity of a trained workforce.

Response: RL accepts this advice and funding requests are commensurate with TPA requirements. RL also took this advice into consideration for the FY 2017 Budget Request.

Advice Point #7: The Board advises DOE-ORP to focus on resolving technical issues still outstanding on pre-treatment, tank farm vapors, and the High Level Waste Facility when prioritizing funding requests. The Board appreciates and expects DOE-ORP to support the commitment that the Board and public will have at least 30 days to review and comment on the proposed DOE-ORP FY 2017 budget priorities with sufficient ABB detail, prior to submission to DOE Headquarters (HQ).

Response: ORP appreciates the feedback received from the regulatory agencies (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Washington State Department of Ecology), Board, and members of the public during the annual budget formulation process. ORP is unable to provide a FY 2017 Prioritized Budget List or FY 2017 ABB for review at this time. However, ORP did provide our FY 2016 and FY 2017 planned activities for feedback by the Board and will continue to update the Board as information is available.

Advice Point #8: The Board advises DOE-ORP to provide its FY 2016 and FY 2017 budget materials in the ABB format in descending priority order in a timely manner to allow for an adequate review and well-informed comments from the Board and the public.

Response: ORP appreciates the feedback received from the regulatory agencies, Board, and members of the public during the annual budget formulation process. ORP is unable to provide a FY 2016 and FY 2017 Prioritized Budget List for review at this time and will continue to update the Board as information is available.

Advice Point #9: The Board advises that DOE-ORP proceed to fund new tank storage capacity (see HAB Advice #275) and removal of waste from aging single shell tanks on an expedited schedule.

Response: ORP appreciates the feedback received from the regulatory agencies, Board, and members of the public during the annual budget formulation process. ORP believes that the best path forward is to begin operations of the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP) as soon as practicable.

Advice Point #10: The Board advises DOE-ORP to fund early startup of the Low Activity Waste Facility and for completion of the WTP.

Response: Based on a flat funding profile, the WTP line item construction project priorities for FYs 2015 through FY 2021 are 1) Low-Activity Waste Facility, Balance of Facilities, Analytical Laboratory, and Direct Feed Low Activity Waste; 2) High-Level Waste Facility; and 3) Pretreatment Facility.

Advice Point #11: The Board advises that DOE-ORP provide a five-year budget projection for its programs so the Board can have a high level of confidence that there will be adequate funding to keep WTP construction on track.

Response: ORP appreciates the feedback received from the regulatory agencies, Board, and members of the public during the annual budget formulation process. ORP is unable to provide a five-year budget projection for review at this time and will continue to update the Board as information is available.

Advice Point #12: The Board advises DOE to request full funding from Congress to meet all legal requirements of the ongoing cleanup work at Hanford for FY 2016 and FY 2017. This will provide stable, multi-year funding sufficient to maintain the continuity of trained work force and procurements over the duration of Hanford cleanup.

Response: Both RL and ORP request enough funding from the DOE Office of Environmental Management to meet compliance obligations, where they are still technically achievable. Both RL and ORP requests place priority on funding for minimum safe operations, including funding required to address emerging risks as necessary.

Advice Point #13: The Board advises DOE to request adequate funding for FY 2017 in the project baseline summary DOE-RL-100 to support a minimum of six full Board meetings per year and the necessary subcommittee meetings required to meet DOE-HQ expectations and work plan needs. Funding in FY 2016 and FY 2017 should be sufficient to provide for at least one Board meeting outside of the Tri-City region to meet expectations of the Tri-Party (TPA) agencies and regional public stakeholders. By doing so, DOE ensures increased transparency and opportunities for broader public attendance.

Response: RL accepts this advice in part. RL requests funding to support RL-100 activities, which include regulatory costs as required by Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, CERCLA, TPA, Clean Air Act, and other state and local laws and regulations; grants to Washington State and Oregon State; Payment in Liew of Taxes and payments to three host counties; HAB, and related activities. Once we have a final appropriation, we will evaluate the funding and determine the logistics and frequency of these areas. The HAB is encouraged to work within its allotted budget to determine the logistics and frequency of these meetings as warranted by the work plan. DOE will continue to, and encourage the Board to, seek new methods to increase information transparency, as well as opportunities for broader public attendance at Board meetings.

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Thank you again for your advice on this subject. If you have any questions, please contact us, or your staff may contact Kristen Skopeck, RL, at (509) 376-5803, or Sharon Braswell, North Wind supporting ORP, at (509) 376-9292.



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