

Hanford Advisory Board Draft Advice

Topic: DOE-ORP Budget Requests

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Originating Committee: Budgets and Contracts

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Background

An important task with which the Hanford Advisory Board (Board) is charged by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is to provide advice on DOE budget/cleanup priorities. The Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (HFFACO or the Tri-Party Agreement [TPA]) recognizes the importance of having regulator (U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Washington State Department of Ecology), Board, and public review and input to the upcoming year's proposed budget requests and prioritizations (see Article XLVIII, Paragraphs 148[d] and 149[m] of the TPA). The Board reviews budget and cleanup priority information provided by the local DOE offices and expects an opportunity to provide comments based on Board values in advance of submission of these budgets and cleanup priorities to DOE Headquarters.

The Board is dismayed that the DOE Office of River Protection (DOE-ORP) has again declined to provide timely budget information that is detailed enough for the Board to develop informed comments and advice. This lack of information has been the practice for DOE-ORP for several years and negatively impacts the Board's (and the public's) ability to comment on the work scope or budget priorities for the fiscal year 2015 (FY2015) DOE-ORP budget request.

For the upcoming fiscal years, for example, the Board, public, and regulators are struggling to develop informed, values-based advice on the priorities of emptying leaking Single Shell and Double-Shell Tanks, tank farm operations, WTP construction, and so forth, without being provided with more detailed budget and work scope information. The Board fears that the opportunity to provide input on funding levels and relative work scope prioritization needed to respond to the emergency posed by leaking tanks, for example, will be lost without DOE-ORP providing its proposed funding for tank farm operations and cleanup by activity level for FY2015.

Advice

1. The Board advises DOE-ORP to provide timely and adequately detailed budget and tank farm activity level work scope information.
2. The Board advises DOE-ORP to provide FY2014 and FY2015 detailed budget proposals for tank farms within 30 days of issuance of this advice.
3. The Board advises DOE-ORP to implement an open and transparent process now and for the future that provides the level of budget information detail required for the Board and the public to be able to develop timely and informed comments and advice. This should include annual provision of activity level detailed proposed budgets with an integrated prioritization list in the spring as outlined in the Tri-Party Agreement.
4. The Board advises Ecology to take appropriate action to ensure the requested information is provided in a timely manner to enable both regulatory and public input.