

HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD

A Site Specific Advisory Board, Chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act

Advising:

US Dept of Energy
US Environmental
Protection Agency
Washington State
Dept of Ecology

November 4, 2011

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Washington State Department of Ecology
3100 Port of Benton Blvd.
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Re: Hanford Public Involvement Plan

Dear Messrs. Samuelson, McCormick, Faulk and Ms. Hedges,

Background

The Hanford Advisory Board (Board) has issued many pieces of advice addressing the importance of improving public involvement in Hanford cleanup decisions. The Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies' plan for public involvement at Hanford is captured in a document used both by agency staff and members of the public. This plan is called the TPA Community Relations Plan (CRP), and is now proposed to be titled the *Hanford Public Involvement Plan*. Board Advice 225, 239 and 240 addressed the revision of the CRP. This advice addresses the 2011 revised draft *Hanford Public Involvement Plan* (Plan).

In reviewing this fifth iteration of the Plan, the Board finds that several of the mechanical, technical, and organizational adjustments identified in Board Advice 225 have been addressed; however, many of the critical content issues identified in Board Advice 225, 239, and 240 have not been satisfactorily resolved.

Envirolssues

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HAB Consensus Advice # 251
Subject: Hanford Public Involvement Plan
Adopted: November 4, 2011
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This piece of advice addresses these critical content issues, which range from the need to refine content language to improve clarity and readability, to provide clearer and more accurate descriptions of the opportunities for the public to effectively and meaningfully participate in Hanford cleanup decisions.

It is important to note that the Board is prepared to offer a compilation of concrete examples to help shape and focus the refinement of the Plan's content, structure, and technical/mechanical readability.

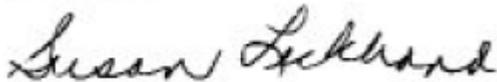
Advice

- The Board advises that because the Plan is used by the TPA staff for public involvement efforts and is a guide for the public, the Board advises the agencies revise the Plan with both audiences in mind.
- The Board advises that a statement of purpose be added to the Plan as a preface to explain the characteristics and the goals of the document.
- The Board advises the Plan should more fully explain the importance of public involvement (Plan, page 8). The document should expand on and further explore the statement “when the public is involved in the decision-making process, better long-term decisions are made” with specific examples of how this is the case.
- The Board advises the TPA agencies include an appendix to, and references within the text of, the Plan that clearly describe the specific, legal requirements for public involvement at Hanford.
- The Board advises that the decision making requirements in Section 2 (‘Hanford Decision Making Process’) of the Plan be more carefully defined so that public involvement requirements and expectations are clear.
- The Board advises the agencies include a statement on page 18 of the Plan under the heading ‘Email list’ that reflects an intention to increase the number of interested citizens on the TPA Hanford Listserv and regular mailing list.
- The Board advises the agencies conduct an annual evaluation of public involvement, using surveys in addition to event evaluation forms distributed at public meetings as referenced on page 11 of the Plan.
- The Board advises that the public involvement goals referenced on page 8 of the Plan be measured in conjunction with the evaluation identified in the preceding advice point.
- The Board advises the agencies develop an annually updated public involvement action plan that is referenced in the Plan. This action document should identify upcoming events, public involvement goals (e.g. increasing the number of people on the TPA Hanford Listserv),

public involvement strategies, and decisions for the calendar year. Ideally, this action document will serve as a blueprint for TPA agencies public involvement activities.

- The Board advises the agencies add language to the “Public Comment Periods” segment of Section 1 of the Plan to clarify how documents may be found on the Hanford Website and in related information repositories. The added language also needs to clarify how comment periods shall be extended when key documents are unavailable.
- The Board advises the TPA agencies that it is important to hold public meetings in diverse locations in order to reach an expanded public. This commitment to hold public meetings in diverse locations should be clarified in the Plan. This would ensure that the public in key locales which have had few or no meetings will have the opportunity for meetings in the future. Furthermore, language identifying how the public may request a public meeting, including specific contacts, should be included.
- The Board advises that the TPA agencies revise Figure 3 in the Plan (page 15), and add additional figures as necessary to align and coordinate the information with the Washington Dangerous Waste regulatory requirements.
- The Board advises the TPA agencies add language to the Plan to reflect how public input was incorporated into decisions as a response to the public comment process. Furthermore, the Board reiterates the point in Board Advice 225 that the TPA agencies provide their responses to public comment two weeks prior to formal decisions.
- The Board advises and urges the TPA agencies update the Plan with Hanford-specific elements on implementing the U.S. DOE’s Open Government Plan as it relates to the Hanford Public Involvement Plan (Board Advice 240).

Sincerely,



Susan Leckband, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

This advice represents Board consensus for this specific topic. It should not be taken out of context to extrapolate Board agreement on other subject matters.

cc: Stacy Charboneau, Deputy Designated Official, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of River Protection
Catherine Brennan, U.S. Department of Energy, Headquarters
The Oregon and Washington Delegations