



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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January 10, 2014

Steve Hudson, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board
713 Jadwin, Suite 3
Richland, Washington 99352

Re: Hanford Advisory Board Advice #273, "Openness and Transparency Related to Tank Waste Treatment"

Dear Mr. Hudson:

Thank you for the thoughtful advice on openness and transparency in the decision-making process for Hanford Site issues. I agree that early engagement by stakeholders and the public on issues like the path forward for the Waste Treatment Plant are beneficial. Such participation will assist both the U.S. Department of Energy and Washington State in developing our path forward.

As you are aware, Washington State is committed to public and stakeholder involvement. We also have very open public disclosure requirements. I was personally very concerned about the veil of confidentiality that was placed over the Department of Ecology's team as part of the technical evaluation process undertaken by former Energy Secretary Chu. Because of my concerns about openness, on May 6, 2013, I informed the Department of Energy that the State was withdrawing from the confidentiality (non-disclosure) agreement that we entered into in October 2012.

Treating Hanford's tank waste is crucial and complex. We need input and understanding from committed stakeholders like the Hanford Advisory Board and their constituents on whatever technical and policy path forward we take. Your recent "sounding board" on the *Hanford Tank Waste Retrieval, Treatment, and Disposition Framework* provided helpful perspectives on these issues for Ecology's Nuclear Waste Program.

If you have any questions regarding this issue, please contact Jane Hedges, Nuclear Waste Program Manager, at (509) 372-7905.

Sincerely,

Maia D. Bellon
Director

cc electronic: Ernest Moniz, USDOE-HQ
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