



MEETING SUMMARY

**HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE (PIC)**

June 23, 2020

Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting and Teleconference

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This is only a summary of issues and actions discussed at this meeting. It may not represent the fullness of represented ideas or opinions, and it should not be used as a substitute for actual public involvement or public comment on any particular topic unless specifically identified as such.

Opening

Jeff Burreight, Oregon Department of Energy and PIC Chair, opened the meeting and welcomed committee members and others attending the meeting. Because this was a virtual meeting held through GoToMeeting and teleconference, all participants were asked to type their name and affiliation into the chat box in lieu of the traditional hard copy sign-in sheet used at in-person committee meetings.

The Committee adopted the February 2020 PIC meeting summary with the clarification that both Liz Mattson and Shannon Cram attended the meeting by phone.

Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) Public Involvement Calendar

Dana Gribble, Mission Support Alliance (MSA) contract support to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), reviewed the items on the TPA public involvement calendar.¹ She noted that the first two items had public comment periods that had been extended:

- Stabilization of Disposal Structures at Risk of Failure and Time Critical Removal Action, and
- 200-BP-5 and 200-PO-1 Proposed Plan for Interim Action Remediation of 200 East Groundwater Operable Units.

She explained that the items in green on the calendar are projects for which the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is the lead. The open comment periods in green are:

- 242-A Evaporator Class 2 Permit Modification,
- Closure Plans at T-Plant and the Central Waste Complex (CWC) Permit Modification, and
- Low-Activity Waste (LAW) Pretreatment System, Operating Unit Group (OUG) 1 Permit Modification.

Looking ahead, public comment periods will open in July for two projects that are heavily interconnected that their public comment periods will run concurrently on the same dates. The joint public meeting for both will be held on August 18, 2020 at 5:00 pm Pacific time.

- Liquid Effluent Retention Facility (LERF) and Effluent Management Facility Class 3 Permit Modification, and
- 242-A Evaporator PC 5000 Transfer Line 2 RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act) Permit Modification.

The public comment period for the Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility (WESF) Permit Modification will begin in August.

Committee members asked questions about the items. In response to a question about more information on the Low-Activity Waste Pretreatment System Operating Unit Group (OUG) 1 Permit Modification, Randy Bradbury, Ecology posted the following link in the chat box: <https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Nuclear-waste/Public-comment-periods>. He explained that there is a link to the LAW Pretreatment System OUG 1 Permit Modification on that site which contains more information.

PIC members expressed appreciation for the combining of the public comment periods and public meeting for LERF and the 242-A Evaporator transfer line. They also asked about how far out the TPA agency vision for public involvement events extends in terms of what is on the horizon for the next five to

¹ [Tri-Party Agreement Agencies Public Involvement Calendar June-August 2020](#)

six months. Dana responded that many of the projects are interconnected, so their progress impacts other projects. Permit work has been continuing, and we can anticipate more public comment periods as the Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste (DFLAW) project makes progress.

With respect to WESF, PIC members were interested in the scope of the project relating to the permit modification. Randy Bradbury said he would check with the appropriate Ecology subject matter expert to find out. Jim Lynch, DOE, recalled that there was a WESF presentation to the River and Plateau Committee (RAP) a few months ago, that also may have provided some of this information.

Some PIC members were surprised to hear of a removal action planned for B Plant in July. Emy Laija, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), explained that this project is for emission units, a small scope of the work, and not for the entire B Plant.

There was a general group discussion about attendance at virtual public meetings. Shannon Cram, University of Washington, observed that she is seeing more non-HAB members being participants in public comments. Carrie Meyer, DOE, will be presenting information and statistics on this topic at the June HAB meeting.

Looking forward, PIC committee members observed that there were potentially four comment periods for which the HAB might provide advice at the September Board meeting. Committee members discussed options for identifying if the HAB wants to issue advice. This included how to work with HAB technical committees and Issue Manager teams during a time when work must be done online instead of through in-person meetings.

Typically, July is a month off for the HAB and its committees. The group discussed the need for committee and perhaps Issue Manager team conference calls in July to prepare for August committee meetings. August committee meetings and Issue Manager team work would need to occur for any draft advice being prepared for consideration at the September Board meeting. Upcoming dates on the revised HAB calendar include:

- No placeholder dates for committee meetings or calls in July
- Placeholder dates for committee meetings on August 4-6
- Placeholder dates for committee calls on August 11-12. These dates are the current placeholder dates for the annual Leadership Workshop.
- PIC meeting on September 23
- HAB meeting on September 24-25

Principles for Effective Public Involvement

Jeff Burrigh opened the discussion with an invitation for people to reflect on the effectiveness of recent virtual public meetings. He started with an invitation to the TPA agency staff.

Ginger Wireman, Ecology, described her experience with several public meetings. The first one had good content but had some glitches. In general, the meetings have been fine apart from the lack of information at the budget meeting. She raised a concern about not leaving the chat function open during meetings so

that all meeting participants can see what is in it and what questions have been asked. Ginger likes it when people use their cameras and thinks presenters should show their own presentations. Although there has been good audio, she worries about those who are hearing impaired if they cannot see the speaker.

PIC members also indicated that they liked it when people used their cameras so they could see people's faces, and that they liked an open and visible chat box. Dana Gribble explained that DOE is concerned about a potential chilling effect that may frighten people away if they are required to show their names in chat. DOE is also concerned that chat during a meeting could be disruptive. There was group discussion of about whether people could or should be able to participate anonymously in chat and whether people at a virtual public meeting should be required to register with their name. There is value to know who is speaking or contributing via chat but in Washington, people are not required to sign in or identify themselves in order to attend or participate in a public meeting.

Other concerns raised by PIC members included:

- The ability to read the information on presentation slides (print size),
- The speed at which presentations and slides were shared, including a perception of moving too fast and participants asking presenters to return to prior slides,
- How to make meetings more engaging and interactive, not just information sharing via presentations,
- The importance of answering everyone's questions while noting that TPA agency notifications for meetings require end times, and
- The budget meeting was at 3:00 pm in the afternoon which made it difficult for those who work during the day to attend and participate.

PIC members liked a suggestion from Ecology about offering slides rolling on screen prior to a virtual meeting that reminded participants about how to best manage technology and participate in the meeting. The group discussed ideas about engaging participants in virtual meetings (in addition to chat), such as polling, taking public comment, not being hemmed in by a formal end time, breakout rooms, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodations, and holding questions until after presentations are completed. The group also discussed specific features they liked from several online platforms such as Zoom, Reddit, Microsoft Teams, Canvas, Panopto, and Mural.

The conversation turned to the specific example of public involvement in respect to Waste Incidental to Reprocessing for Vitrified Low-Activity Waste, then continued on in a broader context following that example.

Public Involvement Case Study: Waste Incidental to Reprocessing (WIR) for Vitrified Low-Activity Waste (VLAW)

Jeff Burrigh opened the discussion by building off the morning's discussion on best practices for virtual meetings. He specifically asked, with respect to the WIR, what else should be done from a public involvement perspective?

One suggestion was to have multiple check-in points during a technical presentation.

PIC members discussed some of the technical points of the WIR in terms of reclassifying the waste to low-activity waste. The question was asked: what if the waste does not meet the disposal criteria or the requirements of the Integrated Disposal Facility (IDF) at Hanford? The observation made was that the Tank Waste Committee is addressing WIR technical issues, and the PIC is concerned more with public involvement process. The suggestion was made that it would be helpful to see initial comments from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) before a public comment period opens. It did not appear that final NRC comments would be available.

JoLynn Garcia, DOE, indicated that there would be two additional public meetings in the future on the WIR. However, the timing of these meetings has not been set yet. PIC members noted that a public comment period is not required for the HAB to develop and issue advice.

The conversation evolved from the implications of the WIR and waste disposal at Hanford at IDF (as compared to potential off-site options) into a discussion of the fall 2020 Committee of the Whole (COTW) that is planned to be on looking at what Hanford will look like when cleanup is completed. This led to a request for a COTW Issue Manager team call in early August.

The facilitator identified all requested HAB calls:

- July calls requested: EIC, PIC, RAP, and TWC
- August calls requested: EIC and COTW Issue Manager team

After committee discussion specifically focused on the WIR, the group moved back to the broader topic of public involvement during the time of COVID. Jeff Burrigh opened this follow-on discussion using a matrix based on HAB Advice #239 issue on November 5, 2010. The matrix contained three parts regarding public involvement principles. The group was invited to share its observations about how the principles from 2010 apply in the current COVID-19 situation. The committee talked through the items in the first two parts of the advice. The facilitator captured the observations in the following tables.

Public Involvement Should Include (Five items):

	Element from Advice	How does it apply during COVID-19?
1	Tailoring information to be understandable to all levels of knowledge to diverse audiences with varying levels of education and language or cultural differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) • Requires early information for participation rather than handouts. Recognize it is more difficult to ask questions • Meetings need to be more iterative and interactive • Check in moments throughout the meeting • An “I am lost” button • Remember people could be participating from anywhere. Do not know their level of familiarity
2	Collecting values and input from diverse perspectives and different levels of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way conversation concept • Consider diversity of HAB Issue Manager teams

	Element from Advice	How does it apply during COVID-19?
3	Providing both educational and interactive public involvement activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amazingness and unique challenges of online formats • Keeping people engaged through interaction – not just watching
4	Communicating openly how public values could be impacted by proposed actions and how public values influence decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Example – DOE did not indicate how HAB advice had been incorporated into its budget info for the public meeting • Reflecting what you heard, e.g. what Jim Lynch and JoLynn Garcia do in online meetings can make a huge difference • One HAB member stated that they thought virtual public meetings have ignored the TPA public involvement plan expectation of an alternative public regional stakeholder viewpoint to be presented at the meeting. The HAB member said that for example, the HAB should have been able to provide a presentation at the budget public meeting. The HAB member continued that they were thankful that John Price of Ecology read excerpt of the HAB’s advice at the budget public meeting. The HAB member closed with a recommendation that the HAB Chair should have been on several of these public meeting agendas to present HAB advice and perspective. They also recommended that alternative views should be added to virtual public meetings, similar to what was done at the opening for the Hood River Hanford Regional Dialog (e.g. alternative view from Columbia River Keeper).
5	Ensuring government agencies are open and accountable to the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Idea of let’s not close down a meeting until all questions have been asked • Open chat • Experiment with different formats that allow ability to receive comments throughout the day. More open forum. • Have check in – even more important in virtual environment. Hard to get sense of back-and-forth with format of presentation then questions and answers (power dynamics, openness, relationship-building) • Language can be ambiguous. Need for clarity. • Ask: What did you hear? • Framing questions. Identify common themes. Identify the importance of different things. Bigger picture in mind. • Learn from our COVID-19 experiences to use remote tools in the future (even after we can meet in person). • What are the things we need to do to comply/compliance issues? Lead time issues to make meetings happen? Communicate the issues.

Overarching Principles for Public Involvement at Hanford (Eight items):

	Element from Advice	How does it apply during COVID-19?
1	Engage the public early and often.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shorter more frequent meetings/updates are easier to handle when you are on the phone a lot. More check in meetings. • Too much information at once can be overwhelming.
2	Provide effective notice to all interested or potentially affected segments of the public. Include how proposed decisions may affect public values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data on open rates of email/ListServ. Can it be done? • Hard to guess how it could affect public values. A difficult standard to meet. Unrealistic? (Easier to identify physical impacts) • Unsure what other methods of doing public notice during COVID-19 when some methods are not available. Hard to go to usual places where people used to gather. • Tribes, agriculture, business, public/environmental interests. Different media. • Effective notice – do we have ways to rely on larger community to get the word out? • Values – how does it affect safety, taxpayer dollars (really simple) • If we cannot meet in person, do we need a shift in how money is allocated in the future to get our work done? Example, shift money to reach the population of the organizations that HAB members represent.
3	Educate the public by providing timely, accurate and understandable information and public involvement materials that are easily accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos. • Presentations available before meetings • Materials out sooner (not always easy to do)
4	Ensure open and transparent decision-making (including easy, timely access to public records).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues with Stabilization draft advice (#306) and finding if documents had been posted online
5	Prepare future generations for informed engagement and participation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recording meetings • Engaging distance learners • Conversation. Interactive. Engaged. Not just listening. (Assumptions about the structure of meetings) • Virtual Hanford Regional Dialogue. Virtual breakout rooms for different topics. Not just DOE meetings.
6	Build a sense of community around Hanford (locally, regionally, and beyond).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to make the meeting itself feel like a community event • Seeing people by video • For future generations, appreciate that student was able to participate today. But students get far more out of in-person than virtual meetings because you all have been generous with time in person when I brought students (may go with #5 above)

	Element from Advice	How does it apply during COVID-19?
7	Incorporate public values in the decision-making process and in the decisions made.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above
8	Provide feedback to the public on what decisions did or did not reflect public input.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See above • HAB members reach out to their organizations and stakeholder groups • The public saying “this is what I heard” • Virtual sticky notes, e.g. Mural.co, to reflect and gather public feedback to gauge what people are hearing/gathering

PIC members discussed the desirability of putting together draft advice for consideration at the September HAB meeting. Jeff Burright had compiled a list of potential advice points from this meeting as the meeting progressed. *(Points have been numbered for reference and do not represent any priority order or any consensus of PIC.)*

1. Guidance
2. When someone who asks a question drops, wait for them to come back.
3. Be accessible to hearing impaired and sight impaired
4. Meetings should have no end times if there is still public input or questions
5. Show slides before meeting starts with helpful tips about view zoom, camera, controls, etc.
6. Communicate the whole context and arena behind a specific scope discussed at a public meeting (e.g., WIR meeting vs. Evaporator meeting)
7. Allow public members to attend anonymously (should this extend to chat comments and questions also?)
8. Let’s experiment and test our assumptions about what will work in a virtual meeting. Start with the chat box.
9. 3:00 p.m. not a good time for a public meeting (timing general)
10. Have an open chat function to allow all participants to see questions. An ability to have sidebar conversations without being too disruptive would also be of benefit.
11. Encourage presenters to show video while presenting. Same for all speakers while speaking.
12. Stay current on what technologies are allowable for use by federal government from a security standpoint. Be at the forefront of trying new technological options.
13. Design more interactivity into virtual meetings, e.g., polling, open questions to participants, etc. Make it more like having a conversation rather than just giving information.
14. Agencies should clearly communicate how public comments are affecting the decisions that we are meeting about.
15. Allow all participants to see who is attending.

Path Forward

Concerns were raised that there was not enough time to develop draft advice in time for the September HAB meeting. There was interest in forming an Issue Manager team to continue work on this topic. Issue Managers for this topic include:

- Jeff Burright
- Shannon Cram
- Susan Leckband
- Liz Mattson
- Gerry Pollet

HAB Member Self Assessments

Jeff Burrighat invited PIC members to share recent outreach stories.

Susan Leckband explained that in her role as HAB chair, she has contributed to articles for the *Tri-City Herald* and interviews for scientific magazines. For these publications, she always goes back to what the HAB has said and does not insert her personal opinions. When legitimate reporters call her, she talks about the continuation of Hanford cleanup, the importance of the HAB and public engagements, and the obligation this is not just for local people, but for the entire country.

Ginger Wireman had also contributed to the *Tri-City Herald* articles. She has also talked with local Rotary on a Zoom meeting, and it seemed to have gone well.

Committee Business & Open Forum

The committee ran out of time to discuss topics for the next meeting. The facilitation team did make the PIC Topics Table available with the 2020 June meeting topics.¹

Attachments

Attachment 1: Public Involvement & Communications Committee Meeting Agenda

Attachment 2: Draft Summary from February 4, 2020

Attachment 3: 2020 June Meeting Topics

Attachment 4: Tri-Party Agreement Agencies Public Involvement Calendar June-August 2020

Attendees

Board Members and Alternates:

Jeff Burrighat, Alternate	Susan Leckband, Member	Gerry Pollet, Alternate
Jan Catrell, Member	Liz Mattson, Member	Dan Solitz, Alternate
Shelley Cimon, Member	Ken Niles, Member	Bob Suyama, Member
Shannon Cram, Member	Tom Sicilia, Alternate	

¹ [2020 June Meeting Topics](#)

Others:

JoLynn Garcia, DOE	Randy Bradbury, Ecology	Dieter Bohrmann, CHPRC
Jim Lynch, DOE-ORP	Ryan Miller, Ecology	Dana Cowley, MSA
Scott Stover, DOE	Ginger Wireman, Ecology	Coleen Drinkard, MSA
	Emy Laija, EPA	Lindsay Strasser, North Wind
		Abigail Zilar, North Wind
		Ashley Herring, ProSidian
		Jasmine Martinez, ProSidian
		Ruth Nicholson, HAB facilitator

Members of the Public:

Deborah Culverhouse	Seth Lockheart, HOANW	Leslie Koenig
Joseph James	Juan Lucas	MM
Lori		