



**DRAFT MEETING SUMMARY**

**HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB)**  
**Health Safety & Environmental Protection Committee (HSEP)**  
*September 24, 2020*  
*Virtual Meeting – Teleconference and GoToMeeting*

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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**

Becky Holland, Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council (HAMTC), Public-at-Large and HSEP chair, welcomed meeting participants.

The HSEP committee adopted the meeting summary for its May 2020 virtual meeting.

Jim Lynch, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), announced that Stan Branch, DOE, will be assuming the role of Deputy Designated Federal Officer (DDFO) for the HAB at the October full Board meeting. He also introduced Gary Younger, DOE, who has replaced JoLynn Garcia, DOE, as the Federal Coordinator for the HAB.

Ginger Wireman, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), announced that Alex Smith is leaving Ecology at the end of October. Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) staff have been informed that they will be teleworking through June 2021.

## **Hanford Tank Farm Vapors**

Jim Lynch, DOE, shared an update on the Tank Farm Vapors program. The actively ventilated farms are now on re is active ventilation now air-purifying respirators (APRS). In addition, the ammonia monitor fields tests were successful and have been implemented across the tank farms. Improvements from the Comprehensive Vapor Action Plan have been institutionalized, and DOE is conducting an effectiveness review to ensure that improvements continue to address concerns.

A number of actions have been taken in the program. There is limited access to the nine single-shell tank farms, and respiratory controls are risk-based. Engineering controls and infrastructure improvements will be dictated by future work scope priorities. An odor management strategy has been implemented outside the fence lines. Some of the most active things being done include active ventilation and source monitoring. DOE is also looking at other industrial hazards from which it wants to protect people, such as diesel generators and sewers.

There is still a lot of infrastructure work, such as the installation of the A-Farm Exhauster. One of the more recent technology updates DOE is looking at is the NUCON Thermal Oxidation System which is being field tested on Tank BY-108, a single-shell tank.

In 2015, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between HAMTC and Washington River Protection Solutions (WRPS). We wanted to look at how we can test our cartridges to be safe from vapors, so we did some sampling and tests on the cartridges. Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) examined the entire respiratory program. DOE wanted to bring it out again this past spring, but it has been delayed due to COVID.

### *Committee Discussion*

With regards to a question about the chemicals found in the vapors, Jim Lynch explained that DOE does exposure assessments and hazard assessments that look at the different effects various chemicals have.

Another question was about the NUCON Oxidation System and how hot the temperature gets to destroy the vapors. Jim said DOE has a lot of test results and tries to monitor each component. Fundamentally, the

system pulls the air out of the head space, treats it through filters, and then sends it through a diesel generator to burn out the chemicals. The PNNL results are available online.

In response to a question about protective equipment and ensuring everything is clean, Jim indicated that there have been a couple of issues, and DOE takes them very seriously. They have examined the cleaning process and offer forms to people if they have concerns, which is part of the integrated process.

Jim did not have all the details on the ammonia monitoring and if the monitors had the capability to handle other chemicals of concern. He indicated that you can smell ammonia before it reaches a hazard level, and the levels have been below standards.

About four years ago, the HAB issued advice on tank vapors. The University of Washington was going to look at long-term effects. The question was about the status of that work. Jim responded that DOE has annual monitoring reports and has reached out to do an exposure assessment. He also said DOE is trying to work with a couple of external places on communication tools that can be used with the workforce. Jim offered to follow up with more information on this for the committee.

Another question was if there was still an effort to remove workers from supplied air. Jim explained that DOE is taken different actions than in the past. For example, there are ventilations in place, engineering controls, and higher stacks. There is also real time monitoring. Monitoring and sampling are important.

### **Implementation of COVID-19 Controls at Hanford's Tank Farms**

Jim Lynch also presented information about COVID controls and some of the good things that are happening in spite of COVID.

At the end of August, DOE and Benton/Franklin County Health District put a number of guidelines and goals in place regarding remobilization. On August 27, Hanford moved into Phase 2. A lot of the COVID case numbers are not necessarily transmitted on site but are from the community.

There are enhanced cleaning protocols, and DOE has looked for environmentally friendly cleaning products. There are health checks on site, but we like folks to check before they come on site by doing self-screening. A lot of work has been accomplished through teleworking. The use of video has helped people telework and still examine important work and cleanup components and even do inspections.

Resuming more normal work requires things like providing masks and reconfiguring conference rooms and other shared spaces. It also can mean adding panels between work areas and spreading out tables and desks for training. There is now special signage on the walls and on the floors to remind people about safety.

There is regular engagement with manager to ensure good communication and engagement with the workforce.

#### *Committee discussion*

Committee members were not just interested in COVID issues in the tank farms, but across the entire Hanford site. They indicated that workers are concerned about the new Centers for Disease Control

(CDC) guidelines and at what point you should quarantine. There appears to be a disconnect between what CDC is saying and what the contractor companies are telling their workers. There is also a concern that the CARES Act is ending on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Jim did not have answers to all of the questions and offered to take the questions to Hanford management.

Gary \_\_\_\_, HPMC, explained the medical contract and agreement with the County. In Spring 2020, DOE decided it wanted to help the County with occupational contact tracing on the Hanford site. DOE asked HPMC to help with that. When someone gets tested for COVID, s/he has the option to share that information with an employer. HPMC reaches out to that individual and takes a history, including gathering information of potential close contacts in the work environment. Reaching out to people is the real challenge. When HPMC has that information, it is forwarded to the County health department.

In response to a question, Gary further explained what an employee should do if they think they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive but has not been contacted. The employee can contact his/her supervisor, their company point of contact, or the HPMC COVID team.

The question was asked how the phases at Hanford are different than the phases in the local community as defined by the State of Washington. Jim Lynch explained that there are different requirements, guidelines, and controls for the two sets of phases. Hanford workers can still go out and work on site but with stringent controls.

Jim did not know the answer to the question about the quality of the ventilation in Hanford buildings and trailers and offered to look into that for the committee. One of the major challenges right now is that we do not really know how many people are infected with COVID.

A final thought was that with the increase in teleworking, traffic impacts and issues on site have been reduced.

### **Committee Business**

Becky Holland, HSEP chair, and Jim Lynch, DOE, gave a brief overview of the recent Leadership Workshop. The Fiscal Year 2021 HAB draft workplan that was developed included some specific items for HSEP.

Gary Younger, DOE, announced that the HAB membership packet has one more desk to pass through at DOE-Headquarters before being signed.

Nominations are currently open for HAB chair, HAB vice chair, and national liaison. Susan Leckband will not be running for HAB chair again. The election will be at the December full HAB meeting, and the new officers will take on their new roles at the first full Board meeting in 2021.

The committee identified a number of topics for future meetings:

- Briefing about the safety culture
- How communications are being planned about supporting ethical employees when there is fraud
- Worker exposure issues and the extent of contamination in the population in terms of chemical exposures from the vitrification plant, tank vapors, and other sources.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1: [Hanford Tank Farm Vapors Presentation to Hanford Advisory Board](#)

Attachment 2: [Implementation of COVID-19 Controls at Hanford's Tank Farms](#)

**Attendees**

**Board Members and Alternates:**

Becky Holland, Member	Bob Suyama, Member	Antone Brooks, Alternate
Liz Mattson, Member	Richard Bloom, Alternate	Mike Korenko, Alternate

**Others:**

Jim Lynch, ORP-DOE	Lindsay Strasser, AttainX	Solo Greene
Gary Younger, ORP-DOE	Gary, CHMC	Dan Storm
Ginger Wireman, Ecology	Coleen Drinkard, MSA	
	Dana Gribble, MSA	
	Tyler Oates, MSA	
	Ashley Herring, ProSidian	
	Ruth Nicholson, HAB facilitator, ProSidian	