



## U.S. Department of Energy Hanford Site

May 26, 2022

22-HAB-001543

Mr. Steve Wiegman, Chair  
Hanford Advisory Board  
245 Torbett Street  
Richland, Washington 99354

Dear Mr. Wiegman:

### HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD CONSENSUS ADVICE NO. 311, HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Thank you for the Hanford Advisory Board's (HAB) March 29, 2022, Advice No. 311, regarding HAB membership changes. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) values public engagement and since its formation in 1993, continues to support the efforts of the HAB.

No restructuring of the HAB or change in mission has been proposed. The HAB operations and membership terms continue to be governed by the DOE Office of Environmental Management (EM) Site Specific Advisory Board (SSAB) Charter, as well as a 2008 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between DOE, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). The HAB's mission, as stated in the EM SSAB Charter, remains the same:

Provide the Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management or the appropriate EM official, with advice and recommendations concerning issues affecting the EM program. At the request of the Assistant Secretary or the Field Managers, the Board may provide advice and recommendations concerning the following EM site-specific issues: clean-up activities and environmental restoration; waste and nuclear materials management and disposition; excess facilities; future land use and long-term stewardship. The Board may also be asked to provide advice and recommendations on any EM program components, such as risk assessments, communications, and funding priorities.

DOE appreciates the ongoing and extensive dialogue with the HAB regarding membership. As DOE discussed, steps consistent with the existing EM SSAB Charter and MOU have been taken to expand and strengthen the HAB to increase opportunities for new and diverse opinions and perspectives representative of the local communities and tribes most affected by the Hanford cleanup mission. For example, under an agreement between DOE, Ecology, and EPA, six additional public-at-large membership seats were added to the HAB last year to increase opportunities for public participation. In addition, DOE is boosting efforts to recruit new and diverse HAB participants and maintain existing term limits, including considering term-limit exemptions in certain circumstances.

These actions are not only consistent with the existing EM SSAB Charter and the MOU, but are also reflective of the Biden Administration executive orders that promote diverse and inclusive public participation in federal missions. EM has prioritized improving diversity in viewpoints and demographics on all its advisory boards and has consistently communicated this priority to board members and stakeholders. Executive Order 14035, “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce,” issued in June 2021, reinforced this priority by requiring federal agencies to ensure advisory boards were diverse, inclusive and accessible. Enhancing diversity and inclusion provides opportunities for all community members to share their unique experiences and perspectives, ultimately supporting enhanced cleanup decisions.

Although some organizations have filled HAB public-interest seats year after year, this practice is not in line with the MOU. It has created the impression that some public-interest organizations “own” the seats and has resulted in limited opportunities for new organizations and individuals to participate on the HAB. Therefore, this year DOE expanded its recruitment efforts by contacting interest groups and individuals who have not previously participated or may not have been aware of HAB membership opportunities.

The following guidance was issued to all site boards in 2021 and included in the most recent EM SSAB Charter renewal:

Field managers may request a term-limit exception only after a thorough effort to recruit new members has been conducted and no viable candidates were identified. Documentation outlining all recruitment efforts must accompany the exception request to be considered. Exception requests are granted at the discretion of the DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management (or designee) and are not guaranteed.

Recognizing that institutional knowledge is beneficial, all EM SSAB board member appointments, including HAB appointments, will continue to be staggered so that approximately one-half of the membership is retained for continuity.

DOE Hanford has completed its recruitment activities for 2022 and is in the process of finalizing the membership package that will be sent to DOE Headquarters for review and approval.

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Again, thank you for taking the time to provide input. DOE appreciates the HAB's commitment to the Hanford cleanup mission. If you have any questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Stanley Branch, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, on (509) 376-9450.

Sincerely,

Brian T. Vance  
Manager

HAB:GLY

cc: D. B. Bowen, Ecology  
D. R. Einan, EPA