



U.S. Department of Energy Hanford Site

September 16, 2022

22-HAB-002699

Ms. Janice Catrell, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board Office
245 Torbett Street
Richland, Washington 99354

Dear Ms. Catrell:

RESPONSE TO HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD MARCH 24, 2022, ADVICE NO. 313,
RESPONDING TO LEAKING HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE TANKS

Thank you for the Hanford Advisory Board's (HAB) March 24, 2022, Advice No. 313, regarding responses to leaking Hanford single-shell tanks (SST) to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). DOE values the perspectives the members of the HAB contribute through consensus advice on cleanup priorities and recognizes the time and effort the HAB put into producing this advice.

DOE and our contractor partners are committed to safely progressing our important cleanup mission in a way that is protective of our workers, our community, and the environment of the Pacific Northwest. Safely managing, treating, and dispositioning all Hanford tank waste is a top priority for DOE and the Hanford Site team.

An important effort to mitigate the risk of SST leaks was the completion of interim stabilization in 2004 when most pumpable liquids in the SSTs were transferred to newer double-shell tanks. Today, DOE and our tank operations contractor, Washington River Protection Solutions LLC, effectively manage SSTs through a robust Tank Integrity Program. This robust program includes visual inspections inside tanks, monitoring of waste levels inside tanks, monitoring of wells around the tanks, and a standardized leak-assessment process when data indicates a possible tank leak. The program is also reviewed by academic and industry experts. Leak detection, monitoring, and initial response actions are executed consistent with requirements agreed upon between DOE and Ecology in the Tri-Party Agreement.

Beyond the extensive tank integrity program, Hanford's groundwater program extraction wells continue to treat more than 2B gallons of groundwater annually, capturing contaminants in the soils that have migrated to groundwater. Extraction wells are routinely placed to maximize the removal of contamination from groundwater to continue to reduce the risk of contaminants reaching the Columbia River.

DOE and Ecology signed an Agreed Order on August 25, 2022, to establish a framework for responding to Tanks B-109 and T-111 as well as potential future leaks at the Hanford Site. The leaks from B-109 and T-111 represent no risk to our Hanford workforce or our community. Additionally, groundwater mitigation is in place to eliminate the risk of contaminants reaching the Columbia River. DOE appreciates the effective collaboration with the Ecology team in reaching an agreement that supports our continued focus on safe, efficient, and effective stewardship, treatment, and disposition of tank waste.

If you have any questions, please contact Mike Berkenbile, Deputy Designated Federal Officer, on (509) 372-9125.

Sincerely,

Brian T. Vance Digitally signed by Brian T. Vance
Date: 2022.09.16 06:46:53 -07'00'

Brian T. Vance
Manager

HAB:GLY

cc: R. C. Armijo, EPA
D. B. Bowen, Ecology
D. R. Einan, EPA
J. M. Granholm, S-1
R. M. Miller, Ecology
G. D. Schramm, EPA
W. I. White, EM-1
E. B. Wireman, Ecology