

Originating Committee: Community Outreach and Engagement

Issue Manager Team & Authors: Dan Solitz, Bob Quirk, Steve Anderson, Miya Burke, Tom Sicilia, Jim Conca

Version #: 4

Date Revised: 07/17/2024

Update the version number and revision date with each iteration.

Color: Pink Yellow Green Buff Purple Blue Goldenrod

Letter Heading:

To: **[This is who the letter is directed to; Add names, titles, and organizations, as appropriate]**

The CC list is separate and provided at the end of the template.

Subject: HAB Advice on TPA Agency Response to Comments on Material without Mandated Requirements

Background/Executive Summary:

The Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies have frequently taken the admirable step of holding public comment periods on some products where there is no statutory requirement to do so. This practice is an important pathway for the public, Tribal Nations, and stakeholders to provide input in the planning and budgetary process. However, when agencies request public feedback for work products that fall outside of TPA or regulatory frameworks (e.g., Hanford 5-Year Plan; Cleanup Priorities; Lifecycle Scope, Schedule, and Cost Report; etc.), there is no mandate that the comments received be published, responded to, or even acknowledged. The lack of follow-up can result in commentors feeling unheard and unvalued, as evidenced in a TPA Public Involvement Survey administered by WA Department of Ecology¹. In the survey, more than half of respondents reported that they felt their comments had no influence on Hanford decisions. This advice builds on recommendations made by the Board in Advice 92², providing best practices to enhance perceived value in engagement.

Advice:

The Board appreciates the TPA agencies’ commitment to meaningful public engagement, even when it is not required. To build trust and reduce the appearance of “Decide-Announce-Defend” policymaking, the Board advises the TPA agencies to publish all comments and feedback received along with a response—even when such a publication is not required.

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References:

1. 2023 Tri-Party Agreement Public Involvement Survey:
<https://forms.office.com/Pages/AnalysisPage.aspx?AnalyzerToken=DTQMzkw46e0L4vAr20PgWP2vRU6VerAK&id=F-LQEU4mCkCLOFfcwSfXLSXB1OjiPz9GoYvZKi1ghmFURU1LU0JVWFBUMFpROTRDWIk4SVpKMzVSNiQIQCN0PWcu>
2. Hanford Advisory Board Advice #92, Tri-Parties Response to Public Comments, March 26, 1999:
https://www.hanford.gov/files.cfm/HAB_Advice92.pdf
3. Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order Hanford Public Involvement Plan, 2017:
https://www.hanford.gov/files.cfm/facagreementand-consent-order_final.pdf

Attachments:

1. [List applicable attachments]
2. [List applicable attachments]

[Additional Sections]

Add additional sections as needed.

[Text]

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CC/BCC:

Mark all applicable names/organizations to be included as advice recipients.

TPA Agency Representatives

- Ike White, DOE-EM
- Todd Shrader, DOE-EM
- Brian Vance, DOE
- Stephanie Schleif, ECY
- David Einan, EPA
- Lindsay Somers, DOE
- Roberto Armijo, EPA
- Ryan Miller, ECY

Site-Specific Advisory Boards

- Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board
- Nevada Site Specific Advisory Board
- Northern New Mexico Citizens Advisory Board
- Paducah Citizens Advisory Board
- Oak Ridge Site Specific Advisory Board
- Idaho Cleanup Board
- Portsmouth Site Specific Advisory Board
- Kelly Snyder, DFO

OR/WA Congressional Delegations (to Chief of Staff)

- Sen. Patty Murray, WA
- Senator Maria Cantwell, WA
- Rep. Suzan DelBene , WA-01
- Rep. Rick Larsen, WA-02
- Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, WA-03
- Rep. Dan Newhouse, WA-04
- Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, WA-05
- Rep. Derek Kilmer, WA-06
- Rep. Pramila Jayapal, WA-07
- Rep. Kim Schrier, WA-08

- Rep. Adam Smith, WA-09
- Rep. Marilyn Strickland, WA-10
- Sen. Ron Wyden, OR
- Sen. Jeff Merkley, OR
- Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, OR-01
- Rep. Cliff Bentz, OR-02
- Rep. Earl Blumenauer, OR-03
- Rep. Peter DeFazio, OR-04
- Rep. Kurt Schrader, OR-05

Write-in/Additional

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Requests to Receive Advice

- Jessica Keys, Staff to Sen. Merkley