

Hanford Advisory Board Draft Letter

Topic: Response to Dave Huizenga's Letter and DOE concerns regarding diversity

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Originating Committee: Executive Issues Committee

The Hanford Advisory Board (Board or HAB) was structured by the Keystone group to ensure a wide diversity of stakeholder opinion through its creation as a "Board of Interests," rather than as a board of individuals, and to focus on consensus across that broad cross section of views. This structure was chosen to ensure that the largest range of perspectives was included, and that the advice given represents the entire spectrum of views and segments of society. To further increase diversity of opinion, four seats on the HAB are designated specifically for the Public at Large.

The HAB advises not only the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), but also the regulating agencies: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). The make-up of the HAB, combined with its ability and charge to advise three governmental agencies provides an exceptional arena for diverse opinions, and opportunities for input from the broadest spectrum of stakeholders.

The HAB has strived since its inception to include members from all aspects of society. We recognize that despite these efforts that some voices are not participating, but that their involvement could enrich the HAB's discussion and the advice it provides to the agencies. The Board consistently seeks, discusses and implements ways to increase the diversity of its membership, and to become more efficient and effective. In the last couple of years restricted budgets have negatively impacted the Board's ability to broaden the accessibility of Board meetings to a more diverse audience by limiting meetings to locations in the Tri-Cities.

Board members come from all walks of life and represent their interest groups perspectives, but are open minded, curious, available and willing to actively participate and communicate their board work with their constituents and their communities. The Board's effectiveness depends on shared participation in discussions, managing issues, writing advice, and working within the consensus process to include diverse perspectives. In large measure, the effectiveness of the HAB is due to the broad range of interests and backgrounds of its members working to reach consensus on policy-level advice about Hanford cleanup.

Diversity is not a simple measure. It is measured by the broad array of views and backgrounds of the Boards members, by the groups and parts of society they represent, by their individual ethnicity, gender, and economic conditions, by the type of work they do, and by where they live and how they may be affected by Hanford. The Board is ever mindful that this also means doing our best to represent the interests of people far into the future.

To that end, we propose the following potential ways to increase the Hanford Advisory Board's effectiveness and diversity, while remaining within budget constraints:

1. The HAB was conceived and created as a diverse, regional Board of interests. The affected area for Hanford, and therefore the Board, includes the states of Washington, Oregon and Idaho. This definition includes the interests and locations of the tribal nations involved, the potential risks to the environment, and protection of all of the people of the region. The Board will consider demographic data and will work with the Tri-Party Agencies to identify

ways we are going to work toward a more effective balance based on that data, encouraging each of the represented interests to expand their outreach in this regard.

2. Each interest group individually and the HAB collectively will work toward a succession plan and mentoring program to help ensure a more diverse demographic of potential appointees to the Board is sought as members leave the HAB. Additionally, a mentoring program will be implemented to help new appointees understand HAB processes so they can become knowledgeably engaged. We understand that cleanup will go on for decades and each interest group will examine its pool of potential appointees to strategically seek and engage younger people to ensure balance and diversity as we strive to increase the HAB's effectiveness.
3. The HAB will work with the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies (DOE, EPA, and Ecology) to propose a schedule that includes some evening sessions to facilitate the participation of working Board members. In addition the Board will explore opportunities to engage the general public. Each interest on the HAB will make efforts to notify as many members of the public as they can that the HAB meetings are open to the public and there is opportunity for public comment at each meeting.
4. The HAB will continue to work with the TPA agencies to ensure that the Board is responding to agency requests and is seeking ways to increase HAB effectiveness.