

Hanford Advisory Board Draft Letter

Topic: Worker safety and communication restrictions

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Since the inception of the Hanford Advisory Board (Board), one of the Board's primary values is the protection of worker health and safety at the Hanford Site. The Board continues to be concerned about the consequences of worker exposures to chemical vapors in Hanford's tank farms.

While the Board fully recognizes the legal aspects and effects of the tank vapors lawsuit(s) on this and related issues, and supports the recusal of Board members who might have conflict of interest because of the lawsuit(s), the scope of the restricted issues now imposed on Board public discussions seems unnecessarily broad.

We greatly appreciated Kevin Smith, U.S. Department of Energy – Office of River Protection (DOE-ORP) manager, updating the Board at the September Board meeting on tank farm mitigation efforts. The Board encourages DOE to revisit the communication restrictions, in hopes of minimizing tank farm information restricted areas to only those which directly bear on the on-going litigation. The Board hopes that DOE-ORP can continue to provide, as completely as possible, clear communications with the Board, the workers and the public regarding all safety issues including vapor exposures and the progress being made to resolve them. This openness will only help to increase Board and public trust. The Board reaffirms that the health and safety of the Hanford Site work force will remain one of our primary concerns and that the Board will continue to actively monitor this and other important worker safety issues.

The Board wants and expects DOE to be successful in its efforts to safely remediate the Hanford Site. The Board reminds DOE that as concerned stakeholders we are willing and eager to work as openly and collaboratively, as possible, to help ensure that worker and public safety go hand in hand with environmental remediation.