



Hanford Advisory Board

A Site-Specific Advisory Board, Chartered under the
Federal Advisory Committee Act

Advising:

US Department of Energy
US Environmental Protection Agency
WA Department of Ecology

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Re: Fiscal Year 2026 Hanford Cleanup Priorities (HAB Consensus Advice #315)

Dear Mr. Vance, Mr. Bowen, and Mr. Einan:

The Hanford Advisory Board’s (HAB’s or Board’s) primary mission is to provide informed and actionable advice to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the Washington State Department of Ecology, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), collectively known as the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies.

The Board advises the TPA agencies to prioritize the following critical activities for fiscal year (FY) 2026. The activities are summarized below with more detail in the FY2026 Critical Priorities Table:

- Report annual environmental remediation and safety objectives for the forthcoming year and provide a year-end assessment of the past year’s targets.
- TPA agencies should respond to and publish all comments and regularly schedule opportunities to engage with the public.
- Allocate funding for HAB meetings with complete attendance from all Board members and alternates.
- Develop/implement/communicate a TPA long-term workforce plan.
- Complete the hot commissioning of the Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste (DFLAW) facility.
- Evaluate alternate energy sources for the steam generators at the DFLAW facility.

- Address the extent of contamination under the 324 Building through an amended Record of Decision or other Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) product.
- Proceed with the full deactivation, demolition, and removal of the 105-KW Fuel Storage Basin.
- Accelerate groundwater remediation efforts in the River Corridor.
- Develop methods to remediate contamination in the Central Plateau deep vadose zone.
- Implement the approved Record of Decision remedies for the 100-K and 100-N areas.
- Accelerate the certification and shipment of certified transuranic (TRU) waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.
- Complete an investigation to support a preliminary design for remediation of the 618-11 Burial Ground
- Use contaminated soil to minimize the demand for clean fill in the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF).
- Establish disposition pathways for orphan waste streams.
- Accelerate transfer of Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility (WESF) cesium and strontium capsules to dry storage.
- Assess technologies to remove or stabilize interstitial liquids in the waste storage tanks.

Background:

This advice largely mirrors the goals outlined in DOE's current Hanford Site 5-Year Plan (Reference 1) as well as DOE's presentation of the 5-Year Plan to the public on October 24, 2023 (Reference 2). A key assumption of the advice is that DOE will request a compliant budget for FY2026, and that this advice will be provided to Headquarters with the budget request as required by EM-1 (Reference 3).

In addition to the activities identified in the 5-Year Plan placemat, the Board stresses that key projects addressed in the following table require funding in FY2026 to ensure they are completed on time or expedited to shorten project duration. The Board has consistently emphasized the importance of advocating for and requesting funding sufficient to meet all regulatory milestones and significantly shorten the duration for completion of cleanup activities.

Advice:

The Board reliably supports the agencies' request that its membership represents the project's best interests to its constituent organizations, elected officials, and the general public. However, the Board notes the response has not historically met Board expectations. The Board advises DOE to provide a response that complies with DOE Office of Environmental Management (Reference 4) guidance. The Board also requests a consolidated point-by-point response to this advice from the TPA agencies. The Board would be open and willing to workshop the content of the response with the TPA agencies to ensure expectations are met.

The Board recognizes the importance of assuring the safe, secure, and compliant management of Hanford's critical resources and the maintenance of infrastructure, safeguards, and security. It is imperative that DOE continue to prioritize and implement Hanford worker and public safety practices. And, to ensure that a stable, highly qualified workforce is available to safely execute the project to completion, the Board advises the agencies to develop/implement/communicate a long-term workforce strategy as noted in advice point C-d.

The table below summarizes the Board’s recommended cleanup priorities for FY2026. Note that activities in the 5-Year Plan identified to be completed prior to FY2026 are not listed in this table.

FY2026 Critical Priorities Table

Item	FY2026 Critical Priority Aligned with 5-Year Plan Goals
Core Operations	
C-a	Reporting: In a comprehensive public-facing product, develop and communicate at the outset of each year measurable annual cleanup and safety targets/goals for the work to be performed that year. At year’s end assess and communicate in a transparent manner the degree to which those annual cleanup and safety targets/goals were met.
C-b	Public Involvement: Respond to and publish any comment received during a public comment period. Regularly schedule opportunities for the TPA agencies to provide education and meaningfully engage in dialogue with the public.
C-c	HAB: Work with the HAB’s Executive Steering Committee (ESC) to establish funding for the HAB to ensure the execution of four full Board meetings annually, one regional meeting, and committee meetings with the full participation of Board members and alternates, as well as issue manager meetings as required.
C-d	Workforce Issues: Develop/implement/communicate a TPA long-term strategy to assure a stable, highly qualified workforce. This strategy should cover all facets of recruitment, training, development, succession planning, and retention efforts to safeguard institutional knowledge, expertise, and efforts to protect worker health and safety. ¹
Waste Treatment	
WT-a	DFLAW: Complete the hot commissioning of the DFLAW facility and transition to 24/7 tank waste vitrification operations, with a goal of optimizing throughput to exceed the nominal production capacity of 21 metric tons per day of vitrified glass.
WT-b	Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Evaluate alternate energy sources for the steam generators at the DFLAW.
Risk Reduction	
R-a	324 Building: Amend the 324 Building Record of Decision to address the extent of soil and groundwater contamination beneath the 324 Building, meet the obligations of TPA Milestone M-016-85, and ensure downgradient cesium and strontium levels in groundwater are closely monitored.
R-b	105-KW Fuel Storage Basin: Proceed with the full deactivation, demolition, and removal of the 105-KW Fuel Storage Basin as per TPA milestone M-016-181 (09/30/2026). Concurrently, begin the soil remediation process beneath the 105-KW Fuel Storage Basin, in accordance with TPA milestone M-016-186 (09/30/2026).
R-c	Groundwater Protection: Accelerate groundwater remediation efforts in the River Corridor through source reduction and by enhancing the efficiency of extraction well networks and pump and treat facilities in accordance with the M-024 series of milestones.

¹ HAB Consensus Advice #305; February 6, 2020:
https://www.hanford.gov/files.cfm/2020224_Workforce_Advice_Signed_v3_000074.pdf

Item	FY2026 Critical Priority Aligned with 5-Year Plan Goals
R-d	Deep Vadose Zone Contamination: Submit the 200-DV-1 lab treatability test report in accordance with Milestone M-015-110E and develop a toolkit of treatment methodologies tailored to the specific characteristics of contamination in each deep vadose zone on the Central Plateau.
R-e	100-K & 100-N Records of Decision: Implement the remedies specified by the Records of Decision for the 100-K and 100-N areas.
Waste Management	
WM-a	TRU Waste: Accelerate the certification and shipment of certified TRU waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.
WM-b	618-11 Burial Ground: Continue the planning process for the remediation of the 618-11 Burial Ground (TPA milestone M-016-088). Complete an investigation to support a preliminary design for remediation of the 618-11 Burial Ground.
WM-c	ERDF: Utilize contaminated soil from waste sites within the Central Plateau and River Corridor (e.g., OU 200-IA-1, the 207-A South Retention Basin) to reduce the need for clean fill for void-fill and compaction in the ERDF. Expedite characterization and remediation of waste sites to ensure an adequate supply of contaminated soil.
WM-d	Orphan Waste: Establish disposition pathways for Hanford waste streams currently without a designated disposal site (a.k.a. orphan wastes), including TSCR ion exchange columns, WESF capsules (TPA milestone M-092-20A), and German logs. The list of all orphan Hanford waste streams should be compiled and prepared for public comment in 2026 to ensure transparency and community involvement in the decision-making process.
WM-e	WESF: Accelerate transfer of cesium and strontium capsules to dry storage. (DOE 5-Year Plan delayed TPA milestone M-092-21 from 08/31/2025 to 2026)
WM-f	Tank Liquids: Complete an analysis of alternatives for technologies that will remove and/or stabilize free and interstitial liquids in the waste storage tanks, including (at a minimum) physical and chemical sequestration, freezing, and evaporation using superheated steam injection and/or coils.

Note: The organization of the table largely tracks DOE's 5-Year Plan goals and does not reflect a priority ranking.

Sincerely,



Susan Coleman, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board

References

1. Hanford Site 5-Year Plan (2023-2028); August 15, 2023
Link: <https://www.hanford.gov/flipbook/Hanford%20Site%205-Year-Plan%202023/#>
2. Hanford Site 5-Year Plan Presentation; October 24, 2023
Link: https://www.hanford.gov/files.cfm/Hanford_5-Year_Plan_2023_presentation_FINAL_10-24-23.pdf

3. Guidance on the Dissemination of Budget Information to External Stakeholders for the Office of Environmental Management's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request; William I. White, February 8, 2023
4. Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board Policies Desk Reference; US Department of Energy, April 2023; Page 16
Link: <https://www.hanford.gov/files.cfm/EM-SSAB-Policies-Desk-Reference-April-2023-FINAL.pdf>
5. HAB Consensus Advice #305; February 6, 2020
Link: https://www.hanford.gov/files.cfm/2020224_Workforce_Advice_Signed_v3_000074.pdf

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