

Sounding Board Responses

“What criteria or assumptions would you like to see considered in the next System Plan?”

September 19, 2018

Earl Fordham, Washington State Department of Health

“No Comment”

Pam Larsen, City of Richland

“In listening to the National Academy of Sciences meetings discussing the system plan, they presume it is a real system plan which it is not. I think it is really important to change the title of the document. It should be called alternative analysis of the system to retrieve tank waste. I agree with everything on the “what do you think page.”

Angela Day, Citizens for a Clean Eastern Washington

“I am looking at the column that says assumptions to consider. The very first one says that the assumption is that the DFLAW will proceed on schedule. I was wondering if we wouldn't want to consider adding an assumption about what happens if that doesn't proceed on schedule.”

Shelley Cimon, Columbia RiverKeeper

“I guess for me I think about chaos theory. The idea that we got a system and things are happening and we end up with something completely different. That really speaks to the idea and the acceptance that we are going to have more failures in these tanks. We have got to understand. I know that we called it an inflection point here. When DSTs fail. When that failure starts to impact mission delays. I think there has to be some very serious consideration of when is that going to be. Do we not need to address the fact that it is going to happen and address it now? That means building more tanks as preparation to anticipate that it is going to happen. For me, that has always been one of the biggest concerns.”

Steve Wiegman, Public At Large

“I agree with Pam’s comment that this is no longer what the system plan was originally prepared to do. It was designed to connect tanks, delivery, treatment, disposal in a flow of logic so you could see how all the parts interconnected. It no longer does that. Not even close to that. It’s no longer a system plan and shouldn’t be called that. It is a good thought provoking set of analysis to show what kind of trouble we are really in. The 14 points that Jeff developed in the pink sheets, I agree with all but one of those. I do not think we should defer physical closure of SSTs to take that money to take that money and spend it on other stuff. Other than that, I think those assumptions are spot on.”

Bob Suyama, Benton County

“I wanted to thank Jeff for an excellent job. When he sent me those graphs I said that is going to be two hours but he got through it. What I would like to see in System Plan 9 is at least the two scenarios that I thought were the most useful. The first was the baseline. I thought having the unconstrained baseline and what it is going to take to get there was very valuable. Having flat funding; I really don’t think we are going to have \$3 billion dollars per year come to this site. It is kind of like what we have been getting for the last 10 years. We really need to really look at what we are going to be able to accomplish with that flat funding. Just like we talked about before, we have to factor in DST failures for every five years to see how that is going to affect it. We are going to have DST failures. The other issue I would like to see is innovative approaches like the test bed initiative. It is going to allow us to move low-level waste offsite to Texas and it is going to help us empty some of those tanks in the near term. How is that going to affect the process? Maybe it is not a test bed initiative, but something like that. The commercial process if we turn it over to them, we pay them and the waste is offsite.”

David Bolingbroke, Public At Large

“I would like to also thank Jeff for the presentation. I would like to second Bob’s comments on the importance of being able to measure what we will be able to do in the future based off more of a flat funding schedule. It has been relatively flat in the past and it looks like it is going to be relatively flat going forward. I think we need to prioritize realistically on the amount of funding we are going to have. My other comment would be that I really like the different scenarios. For me it comes down to balancing different priorities. What is most important? Is it about finishing the job the most quickly? Is it about dealing with high-level or low-level waste first? Is it about efficiency? It is trying to find a balance between those priorities that I am still trying to figure out. I think it’s about deciding what the most important thing is and then doing the most important thing as quickly as we can.”

Helen Wheatley, Heart of America Northwest

“I echo the previous the previous comments except for assumption number four which of course I would argue that it is important to include physical closure of SSTs. I wanted to thank Jeff for these graphs and especially for the one that jumps out at me. I know it would jump out at people I would talk to in the general public. In particular, SST retrieval rates. It is really striking to look at and look at the year 2045 and it really shoots it up. To think about how old those SSTs are. When we talk about assuming that there will be a DST failure every five years, I think it’s also important to consider the possibility of more a catastrophic failure all at once. I don’t know how you would factor that in. It just doesn’t seem likely that those failures are going to be gradual and predictable. On a graph line, it is more likely that it is going to be catastrophic, all at once and probably fairly early in this 100 year picture we are looking at. That would be my concern. Is there some way we can add that thought?”

Jeff Burrigh, Oregon Department of Energy

“So John, I don’t know if you are hearing this but there aren’t a whole lot of preferred scenarios coming out. I think the reason why is because there is not an answer in here. There is not a silver bullet. If there is not a clear way to make this mission better, I think it switches to a paradigm of how we manage failure better. How do we be ready for failures in a longer road ahead? We had talked as a committee. Scenario 7, things take longer than you thought. Scenario 8 and 9 are some little ways to gain efficiency. Scenario 10 which envisions some additional storage. I would challenge you to be creative when you think about storage. It’s not just DSTs. I think about this TWX facility that is not yet designed. It is something we know we need already. It is something that if we switch to a direct-feed high-level waste paradigm, it’s suddenly the long pole in the tent overnight. Is there a way to negotiate the design of that to kill two birds with one stone? I also think about the waste-receiving facilities that are planned to be built around the site. I think about things like above ground tanks after waste has gone through the TSCR. Maybe it doesn’t have a dose restriction that makes it have to go underground. Maybe there is some cost savings there. You will be able to see those as potential alternatives to the pink paper. Of the assumptions that we included in here, the only one that Oregon really cannot stand behind is #16 which envisions not even trying to retrieve waste from the tanks. We think you have to try. If high-level waste is going to drive the mission then don’t stop building the high-level waste facility. My last point would be that technetium and iodine are really bad actors. If we can find ways to manage that, your options improve.”

Rebecca Holland, Hanford Atomic Metal Trade Council

“I agree with what Pam said. Assuming that this is a real plan and it’s not. It’s not a real plan. I love it when a plan comes together. I think assumption #4, deferring closure of SSTs after retrieval I can totally stand behind that. I think retrieving the tanks is most important. I think as we have seen over the years, new technology comes around. Eventually, I think there will be some new technology that will help to physically close these tanks. In the meantime I think we

should continue to retrieve waste out of those tanks. Get those tanks to a place where they can be closed.”

Tom Galioto, Public At Large

“I am still wrestling with this concept but I will give you my thoughts. I think it would take a lot more thought, rationale and understanding to go through these 16 or 17 items to pick and choose which one I thought was best. I like what Bob has just addressed. That is to include flat funding impact and also separately include a baseline of the current planning. Based on the way that this is structured, I would think you would want to discuss those two items in the text as opposed to putting those in the table. That is where we are currently. These alternatives that we are presenting here are things to consider to improve that. In addition to those 17 items, I think we should have an additional item in the table is what we as a Board heard and discussed back in March and June. We were looking at a DOE sponsored report on the same subject. We said we don’t like the assumptions that were chosen. We liked pieces of number 2 and 3. We discussed this in a previous meeting this year at the HAB. To that would be more of what John is asking for. It would go more towards what you would recommend. That was the recommendation that was written up for our Board to consider.”

Melanie Myers-Magnuson, “Non-Union, Non-Management”

“I believe that the decision should be made off the risk. I believe there are a lot of SSTs that are of a higher risk to harm the environment or have the potential to leak. I don’t like dropping those off of the list. I am sure there are some that can be held back for a while. I do not believe that they all can be. The only scenario that I really like as it is written is the U farm retrievals because it seemed realistic. The scenario #9 I have a problem with. It is the offsite effluent treatment. The effluents are a secondary waste which means it is a low-level waste which does not require a WIR. We already have capabilities onsite to treat effluents. The cost of offsite treatment includes road closures, expensive transportation, and proper containers. The actual cost of treatment is enormous. When it’s treated, you have a form of waste that is no longer a hazard to the environment or people. In this scenario, it is suggesting treating the condensates offsite. To me that doesn’t make sense because we have the capability onsite to manage that. Those costs could be placed somewhere else. We could invest that money in other technologies or disposal. I also think that as a whole it would be nice to have a system plan to have a hard look at cost savings associated with waste disposal. There are a lot of nuisances in the regulations that require additional treatment. There are other nuisances where you don’t have to treat. I don’t think we do a good job at trying to save money. Because it is such a significant cost, millions of dollars can be saved in just a few days.”

Dana Miller, Yakama Nation

“Thank you for the presentation. At this time, I will have to pass. This has to go through the proper process within my Government Agency. I will be sending comments at a later time.”

Kristie Baptiste-Eke, Nez Perce Tribe

“I am also in the same position for the Nez Perce Tribe.”

Dan Solitz, Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board

“There are lots of choices here. The situation here is dire. We are operating on a failure mode. We have to make the best of what we can get from the government to mitigate or reduce the amount of damage we do to human health, environment, and the safety of the workers. I think the thing we need to do is to go after even the most threatening waste first. Assume a flat funding and try to least harmful failure that we can manage based on the technical ability we have now. I guess we go after the most liquid portions of the waste and get that. Then we go after the next most harmful portion of the waste. If we have a catastrophe, we can get more funding. We should assumed flat funding.”

Emmett Moore, Washington State University

“I am here to inform myself more than anything else. I do have a question I would like to ask. The discussion today is based on the near-term tank problem. What is the final date for ending treatment and how many new melters is it going to take to reach that?”

Emmitt Jackson, “Non-Union, Non-Management”

“No Comment”

Liz Mattson, Hanford Challenge

“I have a few thoughts. I agree with changing the title to make it more clear about how it is used. I do have an idea about potentially restructuring or making it more clear about dealing with some of the worst case scenarios. Having them be ad- ons. You would have some improvement scenarios, some setback scenarios and some funding scenarios. They all kind of do different things to what happens. As we move forward, restructure the document so you could put things together. If we have this improvement, this setback and this funding, see what happens. You could move them around more like building block versus thinking about one of the other. That might help with how the title is changed. In the negotiations, I hear talks about let’s be realistic about funding. I also know that if you don’t push for what you want, you don’t get it. Not accepting budgetary defeat and balancing realistic ideas of milestones that are achievable with pushing more than you think you are going to get. If you are not asking for it, you are not going

to get it. I think it is helpful to include some kind of scenario that shows flat funding and accelerated funding in different ways. You could really use this as a tool for congress to potentially relate to the life-cycle scope cost report to show what happens when we actually fund things.”

Susan Leckband, Washington League of Women Voters

“We all know how important infrastructure is. I don’t see anywhere in here and I assume that the evaporator component of some of these actions. I don’t see the assumption that the evaporator could fail. We all know that has happened and it is a single point of failure. It doesn’t have a backup. I would suspect that in some of these that the assumption should consider the fact that the evaporator, as a critical part of achieving whatever scenario you would pick could fail.”

Richard Bloom, City of West Richland

“I have been listening to all the gloom and doom and am trying to figure out how you insert the gloom and doom into the title of the system plan. I kept thinking in terms of a risk mitigation plan. After my experience with AY-102, we can look at that but we don’t seem to be learning any lessons from moving C-106 to AY-102. Every time we move more waste, we make more waste and it gets bigger. A lot of these items are focused around the aspect of DST failures in the future. As we retrieve these other tanks, we are just making our DST problem worse. Yes, SSTs are leaking. The liquid factor is gone. I would like to see a scenario where we delay the SST retrieval against migration to the environment. When we put it in a DST with a million gallons of liquid on top of it, now we have made it a lot more mobile. Also we are putting greater stress on these DSTs. The scenarios where we are looking at additional capacity and possibly not adding to the problem is what I would like to see.”