



## Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

October 23, 2014

Mr. Stephen Hudson  
Chair, Hanford Advisory Board  
713 Jadwin Avenue, Suite 4  
Richland, Washington 99352

Dear Mr. Hudson:

The Department of Energy appreciates the Environmental Management (EM) Site Specific Advisory Board's (SSAB) continued support for the EM program. We recognize the importance of our program to the communities surrounding the sites where cleanup is ongoing and focus on meeting the commitments embodied in the various agreements with the Environmental Protection Agency, the states, and Tribes in the most expeditious and efficient manner possible given the level of resources provided to us.

As the EM SSAB knows, the cleanup program is subject to a complex set of legal and administrative requirements, including over 40 cleanup agreements with federal and state regulators. Those agreements include enforceable milestones that establish a schedule for bringing each site into compliance with applicable environmental laws. In addition to meeting the milestones of our cleanup agreements, we are required to expend funds to meet other commitments, including maintaining site conditions adequate to ensure safe conditions for our workers and the public, safeguarding nuclear materials, and fully supporting worker pension requirements to name a few.

Every year, EM submits a budget estimate to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that reflects full compliance with all of our environmental commitments, as required by Executive Order 12088, entitled *Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards*. With this information, the deliberative process for formulation of the President's Budget Request considers these cleanup requirements and must balance them with other Departmental commitments and priorities, including maintaining the nuclear weapons stockpile, support for international nuclear non-proliferation efforts, and research for clean energy and basic science. While the Department's budget requests are among the few agencies seeing slight increases in overall funding in the past few years, the Department's budget request for all of its programs oversubscribes the funding targets provided by OMB annually. The final budget proposals submitted to Congress is reached only by making very hard tradeoffs among competing priorities.

The EM SSAB and other stakeholders play an important role in ensuring that Congress and others understand the importance of the Department's EM program and in communicating stakeholder priorities that the program should receive in decision-making on annual funding levels.



Given current fiscal trends, however, it is likely budgets will be constrained for the foreseeable future. In that environment, it would be counterproductive to establish additional milestone commitments that the Department cannot meet at constrained levels. We are committed to working with our regulators to prioritize the remaining cleanup work informed by planning scenarios which consider relatively flat funding. We will continue to work with the EM SSAB and stakeholders to continue to develop future land-use plans and cleanup end states that reflect local input and objectives.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Ms. Kristen Ellis, Director, Office of Intergovernmental and Community Activities, at (202) 586-5810.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Whitney". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mark Whitney  
Acting Assistant Secretary  
for Environmental Management