



12-CAB-013

## INL Site Environmental Management

C I T I Z E N S   A D V I S O R Y   B O A R D

April 9, 2012

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Mr. David Huizenga  
Senior Advisor for Environmental Management  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Mr. Huizenga:

The Idaho National Laboratory (INL) Site Environmental Management (EM) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) is very pleased with the progress of the Idaho Cleanup Project. We recognize and commend the significant accomplishments made in building the Sodium Bearing Waste processing facility, nuclear facilities deactivation and decommissioning, buried transuranic waste exhumations, contact and remote-handled transuranic waste disposition, spent fuel transfer from wet to dry storage, and Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act cleanup activities. This work is critical to protecting the Snake River Plain Aquifer, and the cleanup contractor and workforce have performed this work with one of the best safety records in the Department of Energy (DOE) complex.

The CAB hopes that the DOE and Congress will consider the potential impact of inadequate funding and staff reductions on the performance of these highly trained cleanup crews – impacts that could negatively affect safety as well as a loss in momentum in protecting Idaho's precious natural resources, such as the Snake River Aquifer. The CAB requests that the DOE consider this excellent performance and the acceleration Idaho has achieved through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding during these budget deliberations on the Idaho cleanup acquisition strategy, post-Fiscal Year (FY) 2012.

In the past 5 years, the CAB has seen significant improvement in safety, cleanup progress, and open and frequent communications and relationships with regulators – all contributing to a spirit of cooperation. We understand that the DOE will no longer be able to achieve its vision of a completed cleanup-mission by 2015. Our hope is that additional funding can be provided to Idaho so as not to push this vision past 2016. We believe the DOE can:

- Complete the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act closure of the sodium bearing waste tanks.
- Exhume all buried waste and process sodium-contaminated remote-handled transuranic waste.

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- Ship all contact- and remote-handled transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.
- Deactivate and decommission the Tank Farm facilities at the Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center (INTEC) and install a protective cap over the Tank Farm.
- Ship all Experimental Breeder Reactor II fuel from INTEC to the INL's Materials and Fuels Complex, resulting in significant cost savings to the taxpayer.
- Prepare EM facilities at INTEC for transfer of ownership to the Office of Nuclear Energy for INL future missions. This would result in substantial cost savings for both programs through reutilization of existing facilities.

With the completion of the ARRA work and the low uncosted EM balances at DOE's Idaho Site, to maintain the past momentum on clean-up activities Idaho would need an annual funding target of approximately \$440 million per year for the years FY 2014 through FY 2016. We believe this type of investment would enable Idaho to be the first of the three remaining large sites in the complex to complete cleanup of the last significant, contaminated areas and facilities.

We hope that the DOE and Congress can see the wisdom of resisting cuts of a few million dollars now and increase funding modestly from FY 2014 to FY 2016 for Idaho to achieve environmental risk reductions and acquire life-cycle cost savings that can be reinvested in other EM priority work.

The CAB recommends that the DOE provide, and Congress support, an increase in funding from the FY 2013 request of \$405 million to a FY 2014 EM budget request of \$440 million – a total increase of \$35 million per year. Maintaining this \$440 million funding level through FY 2016 will allow the Idaho Cleanup Project to complete the cleanup mission 7 to 8 years earlier, resulting in life-cycle savings of over \$2 billion. Most importantly, we believe this will provide stability over the next 4 to 5 years for the project workers and the citizens of Idaho.

The significant life-cycle cost savings combined with accelerated cleanup results and potential job preservation would be a tremendous achievement for the DOE, the State of Idaho, and all stakeholders. The CAB members eagerly await your decisions and actions on this important venture and stand ready to support you.

Best Regards,



Willie Preacher, Chair

cc:

Senator Mike Crapo  
Senator James Risch  
Representative Mike Simpson  
Rick Provencher, DOE-ID  
Merle Sykes, DOE-HQ  
Jim Cooper, DOE-ID  
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