

# ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SITE-SPECIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

## CHAIRS MEETING RECOMMENDATION

May 9, 2019 - Augusta, Georgia

### **Recommendation #1 – EM’s Review of Cleanup Milestones**

#### **Background:**

On February 14, 2019, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published “DOE Should Take Actions to Improve Oversight of Cleanup Milestones” (GAO-19-207). The report found that DOE did not accurately track or report whether milestones were met, missed, or postponed. It also found that sites continually renegotiate milestones they are at risk of missing.

GAO recommended the Office of Environmental Management (EM) should update its policies and procedures to establish a standard definition of milestones, track original milestone dates as well as changes to its cleanup milestones, report annually to Congress on the status of its cleanup milestones, and conduct root cause analyses of missed or postponed milestones.

One of the ways that the local boards that make up the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB) become informed about cleanup actions at their sites is tracking cleanup milestones. Milestone achievement, delays and change information should be shared with the local boards on a regular basis.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. The EM SSAB Chairs recommend EM create a complex-wide, consistently applied data dictionary for milestones terminology. The inconsistency in not applying the same criteria in DOE tracking of milestones results in confusion for the local boards and the EM SSAB Chairs as they meet to discuss cleanup issues and contemplate recommendations.
2. Local boards and the public should be able to access site-specific milestone information in a timely manner. Milestone information should contain the

rationale for identifying the type based on the data dictionary of milestones and detailed information about why a milestone will be advanced/delayed/postponed.

## **Who We Are**

*The EM SSAB is the DOE-EM's most effective vehicle for fostering two-way communication between DOE-EM and the communities it serves. The EM program is the world's largest environmental cleanup program, and the EM SSAB its only citizen advisory board. For more than 20 years, the volunteer citizens of the EM SSAB have partnered with EM officials at both the local and national levels to ensure that the public has a meaningful voice in cleanup decisions.*

*Public participation is required/recommended as part of a number of environmental regulations. It is also good business practice, resulting in better decisions that often result in improved cleanup. Over the past two decades, EM SSAB members have volunteered over 48,000 hours of their time and submitted to EM officials over 1500 recommendations, 88% of which have been fully or partially implemented, resulting in improved cleanup decisions.*

*The EM SSAB comprises approximately 200 people from communities in Georgia, Idaho, Kentucky, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee and Washington. The Board is cumulatively representative of a stakeholder population totaling millions of people who are affected by generator sites, transportation routes and disposal sites. As we move forward, the EM SSAB welcomes the opportunity to highlight the value of this unique volunteer board and discuss its priorities during the months and years ahead.*