



Department of Energy

Idaho Operations Office
1955 Fremont Avenue
Idaho Falls, ID 83415

March 31, 2020

Ms. Trilby McAfee, Chair
Idaho Cleanup Project
Citizens Advisory Board
1425 Higham Street
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83402

Dear Ms. McAfee,

I want to thank you and the Idaho Cleanup Project Citizens Advisory Board for its March 5, 2020 Recommendation #158, "Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Priorities." The Department makes it a point to seek public input on its Environmental Management budget proposals every year, and in Idaho we have traditionally looked to the CAB to give us that public perspective. We appreciate the board taking the time to consider our FY 2022 proposals and give us their collective input on where we believe our priorities should be.

I am pleased that the board, as expressed in its recommendation, generally agrees with the Department's stated priorities for FY 2022. Protecting the Snake River Plain Aquifer is always our top priority, followed by the specific actions needed to ensure that protection. It is gratifying to know that the board is in general alignment with DOE's proposed actions in FY 2022 to continue progress to solidify the remaining liquid waste stored above the aquifer through operations of IWTU, continue to remove transuranic waste stored above the aquifer, continue movement of spent nuclear fuel from wet storage to dry storage, continue to manage and pursue potential options for stored spent fuel and high-level waste to prepare it for eventual offsite disposal, and continue decontaminating and decommissioning the excess facilities at the Radioactive Waste Management Complex in preparation for capping of the Subsurface Disposal Area by 2028.

The Department also agrees with the board's emphasis on the importance of meeting the milestones in the Idaho Settlement Agreement and funding maintenance and infrastructure, both of which are key factors in determining our budget request. While a portion of our mission will be accomplished over the next several years through the completion of buried waste and waste processing at AMWTP, we know that many Idaho Nuclear Technology and Engineering Center (INTEC) facilities will be needed to complete our mission for decades to come, and their ongoing maintenance is imperative.

As discussed at the last meeting, the budget process is complex and is driven by the need to address overarching Departmental priorities. Within those priorities, EM's largest environmental risk across the program is tank waste. Idaho's Integrated Waste Treatment Unit aligns directly with that priority. Our budget request will reflect the resources necessary to continue tangible and sustained progress in tackling Idaho's cleanup mission activities.

Finally, I understand the necessity for finding final disposal paths for spent fuel and high-level waste, and as the board has heard repeatedly, this will require a nationwide effort including cooperation among the administration, Congress, and the general public. While it may be many years before such an effort is successful, the Idaho Cleanup Project will continue to manage our high-level waste and spent fuel safely. In conjunction with the Office of Nuclear Energy here in Idaho, we will continue exploring paths for the most efficient and effective ways to manage our spent fuel and high-level waste to prepare it for off-site disposal once that path has been determined.

Thanks again to the board for its involvement and input on our FY 2022 budget request. I will keep the board apprised as the budget process moves forward.

Connie M. Flohr

Connie M. Flohr
Manager
Idaho Cleanup Project