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SUMMARY OF NUCLEAR WASTE BOARD WORK SESSION

Friday, March 8, 1985

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1:30 p.m.

EFSEC Hearings Room  
Rowesix, Building 1  
4224-6th Avenue S.E.  
Lacey, Washington

WM Record File

101.3

WM Project

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Docket No.

PDR

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Board Members Present:

Warren A. Bishop, Chair  
Senator Sam Guess  
Representative Shirley Hankins  
Representative Louise Miller  
Representative Dick Nelson  
Richard H. Watson  
Dr. Royston H. Filby, Water Research Center Designee  
Donald Provost, Ecology Designee  
Dr. John Beare, DSHS Designee  
Nancy Kirner, DSHS Alternate Designee

Distribution:

REB	JDB	DRM	WKerr	JKennedy
MJB	CFR	HSM	RDM	RWright
(Return to WM, 623-SS)			DKunihiro, RB II	C <sup>2</sup>

Also Present:

Mayor Fred Jarrett, Advisory Council Member  
Lora Murphy, Department of Emergency Services

The meeting was called to order by Warren Bishop, Chair.

Mr. Bishop announced there were copies of material pertaining to the EnviroSphere presentation on the Environmental Assessment Review, plus copies of the Testimony presented by Representative Dick Nelson and the Chair on behalf of the Board at the USDOE Hearing in Olympia yesterday.

Louise Dressen of EnviroSphere distributed copies of the EA Review Report prepared by EnviroSphere, Shannon & Wilson, and Cooper Consultants. In her opening remarks, she said the senior members from the EnviroSphere Review Team were present. They were the people who led the review in their respective discipline areas. In all a team of about 25 had been working on the EA Review. Also present at the meeting was Steve Simmons, Northwest Regional Office Manager of EnviroSphere.

Ms. Dressen referred to the draft report prepared by EnviroSphere, presenting the results of their preliminary review of the EA which was distributed to the Board earlier this week. It includes an Executive Summary, outlining some of the major areas of concern and

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the key issues within each of those areas. That Executive Summary, she said, would be the focus of their presentation today. Ms. Dressen said the remarks in the report focused on a technical evaluation, without bias either for or against the BWIP Project. Not addressed, she said, were policy and procedural matters. Those will be handled separately in materials being prepared for the Board.

Ms. Dressen said in their evaluation of the comparative site rankings appearing in Chapter 7 of the EA, their review was limited to what was presented in the Hanford EA. They did not look at the EAs for the other sites, so have drawn no conclusions on those sites and are unable to evaluate the relative standing of Hanford in comparison with the other sites. Some comments were developed, however, on the methods and assumptions that were used in developing the rankings. The bulk of the EnviroSphere review, she continued, has been focused on USDOE's assessment of the suitability of the Hanford site in terms of USDOE Siting Guidelines, since they are what the Nuclear Waste Policy Act requires as a basis for nomination, recommendation, and, ultimately, selection of a site. She said they concentrated on Chapter 6, a Guideline by Guideline assessment by USDOE of the presence or absence of favorable, potentially adverse, and disqualifying conditions, as well as USDOE's comments on the likelihood of meeting qualifying conditions at the Hanford site. In doing this evaluation, she said, they also used data and analyses that were presented in the preceding chapters in order to evaluate the conclusions in Chapter 6. These results are presented in Chapter 3 of the EnviroSphere report.

Ms. Dressen said in developing their comments they had five possible bases for the comments. They may reflect EnviroSphere's feeling there is a lack of data to support USDOE's findings. In some cases the assumptions, the methodology, or the conclusions were questioned for a particular Guidelines. In other cases there was concern about the lack of appropriate conservatism used in reaching the finding.

Ms. Dressen said they were concerned about the degree of conservatism that underlies USDOE's conclusions. In expressing that concern they referred to one of the Siting Guidelines in 10 CFR 60, which states that at this particular stage in the site selection process, namely site nomination and recommendation, it is satisfactory to use assumptions and approximations.

Ms. Dressen said the comments in the draft report were directed toward providing recommendations for improvement in the final EA. They suggested modifications in the analysis of existing data; areas where additional factors need to be considered; and in some cases the methods and assumptions should be reconsidered. In some instances recommendations were made that USDOE reconsider their findings with respect to Hanford and Hanford's ranking relative to the other sites. Finally, she said, some of their comments address the need for introduction of appropriate conservatism.

Ms. Dressen continued by saying in doing this review EnviroSphere appreciated the difficulty faced by the U.S. Department of Energy in trying to make best judgment based on very limited data. They recognized that USDOE's aim should be to achieve consensus within the technical community as to the suitability of the Hanford site for site characterization and repository development. They recognized that the data base is very limited at this point and there are significant uncertainties about the site and, furthermore, significant advances in the state of the art will be required for a number of technical aspects of the project. She then emphasized that in developing their report they have tried not to overstate the disagreements with the findings in the draft EA in a genuine attempt to try to encourage technical consensus without technical confrontation.

The presentation, topic by topic, was led by Dr. Harvey Parker of Shannon & Wilson and Mr. Robert Mohn of EnviroSphere. They walked the Board through the areas of Geohydrology, Tectonics, Geochemistry, Rock Characteristics, Human Interference, Transportation, Defense Wastes and Ranking with the aid of visuals in a thorough discussion of the 34-page document.

Ms. Dressen states that in the draft report distributed last week, EnviroSphere had indicated in each of their comments one of several possible positions. In a number of cases, she said, they found current disagreement with USDOE, and in those cases no comment was offered. In other conditions they felt USDOE's findings needed additional support and data, and analyses were suggested they believed would tend to confirm USDOE finding. Some conditions they expressed tentative disagreement, pending a reevaluation by USDOE. She said consideration of the comments should result in a change in the finding. There were a few instances where disagreement was noted, based on information provided in the EA. For those they recommended USDOE reconsider its findings. Finally, she said, there were some areas they felt they could not make an independent assessment of the finding at this point given either the limited information provided in the EA itself, or available through the background documents they reviewed. In those cases they suggested USDOE needed to augment their data and analyses, and perhaps reconsider the finding.

The team from EnviroSphere was joined by Dr. Richard Gates, Senior Associate with Shannon & Wilson, a geotechnical engineer who has been serving on the project as licensing advisor and the project coordinator for Shannon & Wilson; and Mr. Don Balmer, Senior Hydrogeologist with Shannon & Wilson. Joining later in their particular areas were:

Dr. Bob Anigstein, EnviroSphere, physicist specializing in radiological assessment

Frank Shuri, Shannon & Wilson, specialist in rock mechanics

Dr. Warren Westgarth, Cooper Consultants

Dr. Dan Clayton, Shannon & Wilson, Geology Group Leader  
specialist in structural geology and tectonics

Dr. Richard Emery, Envirosphere, Biologist, Environmental Task  
Leader specializing in environmental transport of toxicology of  
hazardous material

Discussion by the Board followed the presentation with suggested clarifications and comments made in each of the areas covered in the review. All comments by the Board were recorded by Envirosphere and will be incorporated into the final document.

Discussion then centered on the issues covering procedural comments to be contained in a separate document. This document would include the concerns expressed about the Emergency Response plans, although further discussion led to more specifics in this regard to be included in the technical comments. It was understood the Office of the Attorney General would work on other aspects of the EA and staff would work on some supplementary material to cover the issues that transcended the technical issues.

Mr. Bishop suggested the materials developed by the Joint Science & Technology Committee be submitted as a part of the Board's comments on the EA. It was agreed permission would be sought for use of these analyses as a support document. Other input from the universities and others will accompany the Board's comments, probably as an Appendix.

In conclusion Mr. Bishop announced a similar review of the presentation would be held on Monday night, March 4, for the benefit of Legislators from the Board and others that might be interested.

The meeting was adjourned.