

Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC)

Public input to the Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board

August 26, 2015

TRIDEC last testified before the DNFSB in 2012. At that meeting we stated that TRIDEC and our community does have confidence in DOE's Office of River Protection and in Bechtel's leadership on construction of the Waste Treatment Plant.

We continue to have confidence in these organizations, and the ensuing three years (from 2012 to 2015) have further solidified our belief that progress is being made; safety is of prime importance throughout the site; and employees who may have safety or other concerns are being heard.

The mantra of whistle blowers has in essence disappeared over the last 3 years because ORP and BNI leadership have created an atmosphere where issues are brought forward openly, discussed openly, and brought to resolution that is satisfactory to the employees.

If I may, I would like to get much more personal in my remarks.

For understanding of why I feel the need to 'get personal' – I must let you know that I have lived in the Tri-Cities (Richland) since 1965. My wife and her family have lived here since 1944. I drink the water that comes from the Columbia River immediately downstream of the Hanford Site.

(The City of Richland is the only major municipality located downstream of Hanford that uses Columbia River water as its primary potable water source!)

While you will, and have, heard from watchdog organizations, and individuals who do not live in the Tri-Cities; I can assure you that after 50 years of living next to Hanford, and working all across the Hanford site; the CONSTANT relative to Hanford, Hanford cleanup, and safety issues at Hanford – The Constant – are the people who live in our community, who live in Richland.

Who has the most to gain, or lose, from actions taken by DOE and the prime contractors, or even by the DNFSB? I assure you, it is individuals like myself, the people who live in our community. It is NOT people who have never lived here, nor will they ever.

While I retired from the National Laboratory in 2002; I have continued to work - for TRIDEC. And now, I have worked for TRIDEC for 13 full years. My job with TRIDEC IS singularly focused on Hanford, and PNNL. I have previously, however, worked in a variety of jobs, and companies, across the Hanford Site for 50 years.

I can almost guarantee you, the members of the Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board that there isn't any another individual, one who doesn't actually work at Hanford, who goes out to the Hanford Site, on a more regular basis, than do I!

Just last week I helped escort 13 Congressional staff members on a full day tour of Hanford – this was the 18th year that TRIDEC has invited Congressional staff on an Annual Congressional Fact-Finding tour of Hanford and PNNL.

I know personally Kevin Smith and Stacy Charboneau – the DOE Managers of ORP and RL. I also know, and work with, each of the Prime contractors, and their CEOs – and also a number of managers, supervisors and workers who work FOR the Prime Contractors.

Why do I say this? Because I am convinced that our contractors and DOE leads want to clean up Hanford! They want WTP to be completed and to operate as designed! They want the tanks emptied of all nuclear waste, and the sludge removed from K-Basin. And, they want to do this as safely as possible.

There is not a single manager that I know of that doesn't want their entire workforce to return home at night in the same health as when they came to work. These are not individuals who are trying to cut corners, increase risks, or build facilities that don't work.

Yes -- to me, and to my wife, two daughters, and six grandchildren – I – and my neighbors – want Hanford cleaned up. I ask for your help – that of the DNFSB – to do this. Not with impediments along the way, but with recommendations and oversight that gets the job done – safely, and efficiently, and without burdening the work being done with requirements that are simply outside the realm of possibility.

Gary R. Petersen

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