

TESTIMONY BY
STEVE C. YOUNG, MAYOR, CITY OF KENNEWICK
TO THE
DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD (DNFSB)
SAFETY CULTURE AT THE WASTE TREATMENT PLANT (WTP)
August 26, 2015

As the Vice Chairman of the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), Vice Chairman of the Hanford Communities and more importantly the Mayor of the City of Kennewick located just 17 miles from the Hanford Site I want to thank the members of the DNFSB for the opportunity to testify this evening regarding the safety culture at the Waste Treatment Plant. The issue of safety at the WTP is of the utmost importance to the citizens of the city of Kennewick as well as the three other cities and two counties that make up the primary population affected by the work performed at the Hanford Site. As an elected official I think it is important to understand that we see ourselves, the citizens, as the customer of the cleanup mission at Hanford. We stand to have the greatest loss if safety is ever compromised. Unsafe conditions effect our constituents, our agricultural crops, tourism, and our workers. Therefore, the four cities and two counties are dramatically affected by all of DOE's cleanup operations at Hanford.

These affects can be and are clearly mitigated by stability and we need and expect stability in the WTP work planning, stability in the WTP workforce, stability in contracting at all levels and stability in both DOE and prime contractor leadership. As a community leader, I have had the unique opportunity to closely observe both the Office of River Protection (ORP) and Bechtel National, Inc. (BNI) and can say that they have made major improvements in many areas, including professionalism, work relationships, work planning, communication with the workforce, and most importantly, communication with the communities. All of which has led and continues to lead to a more stable and confident community where workers, their families and companies want to remain long after this site has been cleaned up and new industry has emerged.

From my observations, things have really changed over the past 2 years. Concerned employees and/or whistle blowers have pretty much disappeared. What we see now are legacy cases from the past now making the news as they are brought to closure. ORP and BNI appear to see a common purpose, holding events like the Grand Challenge competitions to encourage creative ideas for improving safety and efficiency throughout the project. Both ORP and BNI leadership have embraced and rewarded employees for identifying safety issues and in fact go so far as to encourage the identification of such issues. This is

the kind of safety culture behavior and attitude we need to get the WTP completed, operating and the waste tanks emptied, closed and put to bed once and for all.

We as a community have waited a long time for this positive safety culture at the WTP. As a Mayor, I have waited a long time not to receive those late evening or weekend calls by frustrated and frightened workers who believe that nobody was watching out for their best interest. From the employees, workers, and family members within the community that I come in contact with, they universally tell me that ORP, BNI and WRPS have the right leadership and the culture is dramatically better and headed in a very good direction. I implore you as a customer and representing the more than 75,000 customers that live within the city of Kennewick to keep this culture moving forward, to ensure the protection of the workforce and to encourage efficiencies in the planning, construction and operation of the WTP.

Thank you for your time.