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DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

May 29, 1997

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Dear Bob:

I appreciated being part of the Columbia River Comprehensive Impact Assessment public involvement effort. Although the public turnout was less than we hoped, I think the CRCIA Team and contractor staff did a good job.

I thought it might be helpful to the Team to highlight both what went well from my perspective and some ideas you might consider to improve future public involvement efforts.

Kudos:

- Portland and Seattle participants were supportive of the design, layout and language describing the meeting in the advertisements.
- Good use of inexpensive meeting space in Portland and Seattle.
- Room set up was more "user-friendly" than past meetings.
- Good signs directing people to the meetings.
- Excellent sound support.
- Easily understood fact sheet framed the issue.
- Generally well thought out, well planned, and well executed public involvement process.
- With only one exception, the overheads used by the Team were clear, easy to understand and visually interesting.
- Presentations were clear and presenters were responsive to questions.

Improvements:

- Be more clear about what you expect from the public before planning public involvement:
 - are meetings to inform?
 - do you want feedback on particular questions or a particular approach?
 - do you want specific comments on a document?

The answers to these questions will guide the design of the public involvement

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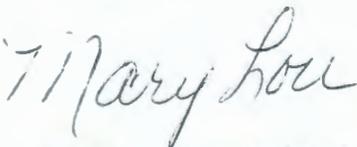
effort and aid in planning the amount of material the participants need to prepare for the meeting.

- Investigate less expensive meeting space in Hood River and Tri-Cities.
- Strive to use the focus group format when dialogue with the public on specific issues is the goal. Follow the focus group with a broadly invited public meeting to inform and provide the opportunity for public comment.
- The presentations to the focus group were too long. Keep total presentation time for focus group or public meetings under 30 minutes. Also be cautious about defending your point of view. Give the facts and allow people to give their perspective.
- The name tags in Portland were helpful and made the focus group more friendly. It would have been useful to have name tags for the other three meetings.
- One slide used by the Team was nearly all acronyms. Acronyms should be used only when you know that everyone understands it. That was not the case. Hanford jargon was also used on several occasions during the meetings causing confusion for the public. Remember who your audience is.
- This effort could have been accomplished with fewer staff.

This series of meetings was the best Tri-Party public involvement effort yet. More was right and less was wrong with all aspects of the process than any other example. The Team is to be commended.

Thanks again for the opportunity to work with you.

Sincerely,



Mary Lou Blazek, Administrator
Nuclear Safety Division

cc Dave Holland, Washington State Department of Ecology
Larry Gadbois, Environmental Protection Agency