

Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board Recommendation 98-15

to the U.S. Department of Energy

Regarding Public Involvement in the Development of Rocky Flats' Budget

Approved July 2, 1998

July 7, 1998

Jessie Roberson
Manager
Department of Energy
Rocky Flats Field Office
P.O. Box 928
Golden, CO 80402-0928

Dear Ms. Roberson:

We are writing to share our concerns regarding the opportunities for public involvement in the development of the Fiscal Year 2000 RFETS budget. The purpose of this recommendation is to share with you what our concerns are, to suggest improvements for next year and to request that DOE provide us with a schedule of budget activities for next year that highlights where public input will be most appropriate and useful.

The fundamental problem this year was most simply a difficulty in identifying what our Site Wide Issues / Budget focus group should review. The budget development and submittal process seemed to us to be quite haphazard and ill-defined, which made it practically impossible for our focus group to understand, let alone provide useful input. John Schneider has done a commendable job of accommodating our informational needs. However, our members and staff encountered a sentiment within DOE this year that our review and input should focus on the closure plan and that the budget submittal was somehow irrelevant in terms of stakeholder involvement. We disagree. While Paths to Closure is a long-term planning document for RFETS closure, the budget represents the short-term, specific implementation of that plan.

We understand that some of the problems are likely related to changes from Headquarters based on the new closure plan. However, we do not want to see this lack of stakeholder input repeated. Therefore, we would like to request that DOE improve this process before beginning to develop

the FY01 budget this fall. RFCAB asks that DOE provide our Site Wide Issues / Budget focus group with a schedule of budget development milestones that includes a description of opportunities for public involvement at times when the input would have the most opportunity to influence budget development decisions. This new process should ensure that RFCAB receives appropriate information to allow the members to understand the scope of activities planned, the associated costs and also the implications of both lower and higher funding scenarios. We would like to be able to offer advice on prioritization and making the hard choices if budgets are lower than requested, or alternatively, to suggest areas that offer opportunities to make real progress with some extra funding.

To be most useful to the Board, we would appreciate receiving a timeline and plan from you in time for incorporation into our 1999 Work Plan. Therefore, we request that this information be provided to our Site Wide Issues / Budget focus group by August 1, 1998. We believe that common goals, such as adequate funding for cleanup, can most effectively be reached by working together. We would like to take a greater role in helping to ensure that Rocky Flats has the necessary funding to accomplish cleanup as safely and as efficiently as possible. If you have any questions about this request, please contact one of the co-chairs of our Site Wide Issues / Budget focus group, either myself or Jim Kinsinger .

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Tom Marshall
Chair

The Rocky Flats Citizens Advisory Board is a community advisory group that reviews and provides recommendations on cleanup plans for Rocky Flats, a former nuclear weapons plant outside of Denver, Colorado.

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