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DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD  
Board Public Meeting and Hearing

August 26, 2015  
Three Rivers Convention Center  
7016 West Grandridge Boulevard  
Kennewick, Washington

**CERTIFIED COPY**

Reported by: Jori L. Moore, CCR, RPR

1 APPEARANCES:

2 DNFSB BOARD MEMBERS:

3 MS. JESSIE H. ROBERSON, Vice Chairman

4 MR. SEAN SULLIVAN, Board Member

5 MR. JOHN G. BATHERSON, Associate General Counsel

6 DR. DANIEL B. BULLEN, Group Lead Nuclear Programs and

7 Analysis for the DNFSB

8

9 ALSO PRESENT:

10 MR. GLENN PODONSKY, Director Office of Enterprise

11 Assessments DOE

12 MR. MARK WHITNEY, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary

13 for Environmental Management DOE

14 MR. KEVIN SMITH, Manager of Office of River Protection

15 DOE

16 MR. WILLIAM HAMEL, Federal Project Director for WTP

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1 P R O C E E D I N G S .

2 CHAIRMAN: Good evening. My name is Sean  
3 Sullivan and I am a member of the Defense Nuclear  
4 Facilities Safety Board. And I will preside as Chair  
5 over this public hearing. The open meeting portion of  
6 this proceeding has been postponed due to the  
7 unavailability of Board Member Mr. Daniel Santos, who  
8 for health reasons could not be present today. As a  
9 result, we have only two Board members present, and by  
10 law we must have three in order to have a meeting.

11 I would like to introduce my colleague on the  
12 Safety Board who is here, Ms. Jessie Roberson, the  
13 Board's Vice Chair. The Board also has two new  
14 members, Mr. Bruce Hamilton and Chairman Joyce  
15 Connery, both of whom will not be here this evening.  
16 We five constitute the Board.

17 The Board's acting general counsel, Mr. John  
18 Batherson, is seated to my left. Several members of  
19 the Board's staff closely associated with oversight of  
20 the Department of Energy's defense nuclear facilities  
21 at the Hanford Site are also here. Seated at the  
22 table to my far right is Dr. Dan Bullen, the senior  
23 member of the Boards's technical staff that is here  
24 this evening.

25 Let me now proceed to explain why the Board



1 chose to hold this public hearing concerning safety  
2 culture at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization  
3 Plant or WTP. The hearing will address safety culture  
4 at the Department of Energy's defense nuclear  
5 facilities and the Board's Recommendation 2011-1,  
6 which was titled Safety Culture at the Waste Treatment  
7 and Immobilization Plant. In this hearing, the Board  
8 will receive testimony from the director of DOE's  
9 independent oversight organization, who will discuss  
10 his perspective on the WTP independent safety culture  
11 assessments that have been conducted. The Board will  
12 also receive testimony from the line managers and the  
13 Department of Energy's Office of Environmental  
14 Management who are directly responsible for the safe  
15 construction and operation of the WTP project. They  
16 will discuss actions taken to strengthen and sustain a  
17 healthy safety culture at WTP and to assess the  
18 effectiveness of improvements and the expectations for  
19 further progress.

20 The focus of this hearing is on DOE's effort to  
21 improve safety culture at WTP. Some discussion of  
22 DOE's efforts to improve safety culture at other sites  
23 is expected here this evening, but actions at other  
24 sites is not intended to be a focus of this hearing,  
25 nor do we intend to focus on the safety culture in



1 other organizations working here at the Hanford Site  
2 outside of the WTP project.

3 The Board will then receive testimony from Dr.  
4 Bullen, the senior Board technical staff employee here  
5 tonight, concerning the Board staff's perspective on  
6 the status of DOE's execution of the Implementation  
7 Plan for Board Recommendation 2011-1, corrective  
8 actions taken in response to the Board Recommendation  
9 2011-1, and the results of the extent of condition  
10 reviews conducted by the DOE.

11 Today's hearing was publically noticed in the  
12 Federal Register on July 27th, 2015. In order to  
13 provide timely and accurate information concerning the  
14 Board's public and worker health and safety mission  
15 throughout DOE's defense nuclear complex, the Board is  
16 recording this proceeding and hearing through a  
17 verbatim transcript, video recording, and live video  
18 streaming.

19 The transcript, associated documents, public  
20 notice, and video recording will be available for  
21 viewing in our public reading room in Washington D.C.  
22 In addition, an archived copy of the video recording  
23 will be available through our website for at least 60  
24 days.

25 Per the Board's practice and as stated in the



1 Federal Register notice, we will welcome comments from  
2 interested members of the public at approximately 7  
3 p.m. A list of those speakers who have contacted the  
4 Board is posted at the entrance to the room. We have  
5 generally listed the speakers in the order in which  
6 they contacted us, or, if possible, when they wish to  
7 speak. I will call the speakers in this order and ask  
8 the speakers state their name and title at the  
9 beginning of their presentation.

10 There's also a table at the entrance to this  
11 room with a sign-up sheet for members of the public  
12 who wish to make a presentation but did not have an  
13 opportunity to notify us ahead of time. They will  
14 follow those who have already registered with us in  
15 the order in which they sign up.

16 To give everyone wishing to make a presentation  
17 an equal opportunity, we'll ask speakers to limit  
18 their original presentations to five minutes. As  
19 presiding Chair, I will then give consideration for  
20 additional comments should time permit.

21 Presentations should be limited to comments,  
22 technical information, or data concerning the subject  
23 of this public hearing. The Board members may  
24 question anyone making a presentation to the extent  
25 deemed appropriate.



1           The record of this hearing will remain open  
2 until September 28, 2015. Until this date, members of  
3 the public, including those observing today's hearing  
4 live via video streaming may submit a written  
5 statement to the Board to be included in the record.  
6 Contact information for submitting a statement is  
7 available on the Board's website at DNFSB.gov.

8           I would like to reiterate that the Board  
9 reserves its right to further schedule and regulate  
10 the course of any hearing, to recess, reconvene,  
11 postpone, or adjourn any proceeding, and to otherwise  
12 exercise its authority under the Atomic Energy Act of  
13 1954, as amended.

14           This concludes my opening remarks. And I will  
15 now turn to Ms. Roberson to see if she has any opening  
16 remarks.

17           VICE CHAIRMAN: I don't have any opening  
18 remarks, Mr. Sullivan.

19           CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. At this time  
20 we'd like to begin the hearing by inviting the panel  
21 of witnesses to the witness table. First panel member  
22 is Mr. Glenn Podonsky, the Director of DOE's Office of  
23 Enterprise Assessments; second panel member is Mr.  
24 Mark Whitney, the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary  
25 for Environmental Management; third panel member is



1 Mr. Kevin Smith, the manager of DOE's Office of River  
2 Protection; and the fourth panel member is Mr. William  
3 Hamel, the Federal Project Director for the WTP  
4 project.

5 We have set aside a total of 10 minutes for  
6 opening statements by the panel members. If any panel  
7 members choose to provide copies, the Board will  
8 accept written statements for the public record. So,  
9 gentleman, as you take your seats before we hear the  
10 opening oral statements, does anyone on the panel wish  
11 to submit a written statement? No. Seeing none.

12 After the oral statements the Board will then  
13 question the panel members. After the panelist to  
14 whom a question is directed, other panelists may seek  
15 recognition by the chair to supplement the answers as  
16 necessary. If the panelist would like to take a  
17 question for the record, the answer to that question  
18 will be entered into the record of the hearing at a  
19 later time.

20 At this time I would like to ask -- we said 10  
21 minutes and I think we left it to you gentlemen to  
22 figure out how that would be divided. So whoever is  
23 going to go first. Mr. Podonsky, Mr. Whitney.

24 MR. PODONSKY: I will go ahead and go first  
25 since the subject happens to be the report that our



1 office did. If that's all right with you, Mr.  
2 Chairman.

3 Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Roberson, we appreciate the  
4 opportunity to participate in this hearing. We  
5 believe it's very important for all of us to remain  
6 focused on the culture of all organizations. The  
7 Office of Enterprise Assessments and our predecessor  
8 organizations have had a very long history of interest  
9 in safety protection at the Hanford Reservation and  
10 throughout the construction of the Waste Treatment  
11 Plant. Over the past decade our safety experts have  
12 conducted numerous safety engineering, safety  
13 analysis, construction quality and safety culture at  
14 WTP. Further, our enforcement office has investigated  
15 and taken necessary enforcement actions to address a  
16 range of violations of the Department safety  
17 regulations. In fact, a comprehensive consent order  
18 was reached with Bechtel National in June of this  
19 year, which brought four separate pending and ongoing  
20 enforcement cases in through the WTP closure. The  
21 consent order provided an unprecedented level of  
22 financial accountability for the cited violations and  
23 established legally enforceable corrective action and  
24 milestones to resolve longstanding nuclear safety and  
25 quality and quality assurance weaknesses that will



1 promote and enhance safety improvements for the  
2 substantial remaining work to design, construct and  
3 operate WTP. We mention this long history of  
4 engagement here to emphasize the point that EA has for  
5 many years been concerned about appropriate safety  
6 protection at WTP. And while we recently have seen  
7 signs of positive progress and aspects of their safety  
8 culture, there remains a tremendous lot to be done.

9 Last year Secretary Moniz directed EA to perform  
10 our third comprehensive review of the safety culture  
11 at WTP, which we have done and have recently briefed  
12 the Secretary on the results. As we reported to the  
13 Secretary, we see positive progress being made for the  
14 first time. Both the Office of River Protection and  
15 BNI have developed and started to implement strategies  
16 and practices that if pursued conscientiously over the  
17 next several years, offer the promise of a healthy  
18 safety culture. However, as indicated in our written  
19 report, these improvements are in their early stages  
20 and progress could stall if attention lapses,  
21 resources are diverted or management priorities shift.  
22 Each assessment used the same methodology in the order  
23 determined change over time. Five methods including  
24 functional analysis, interviews and focus groups,  
25 observations of work activities and meetings, behavior



1 anchored rating scales and a survey were utilized to  
2 collect information on the organizational behaviors  
3 associated with safety culture traits. The  
4 information collected across the methods was evaluated  
5 for themes and trends within the safety culture  
6 traits. Unlike the results of 2014, that indicated  
7 that culture was essentially unchanged, the data for  
8 this year's assessment showed some positive movement.

9 Today our organization has substantially built  
10 up competencies in safety culture and related  
11 assessment methods and we have added behavioral  
12 science expertise to our staff. With our increased  
13 capabilities we were able to independently manage this  
14 most recent assessment with the exception of the very  
15 specialized skills needed to administer and analyze  
16 the results of the electronic survey. Our increased  
17 capabilities also allowed us to more completely  
18 analyze the various data sources and provide  
19 additional insights into areas for improvement and  
20 areas needing additional attention. We want to  
21 emphasize again that while we see signs of progress,  
22 there's still a lot of work to be done to sustain the  
23 momentum and bring about improvements. Both ORP and  
24 BNI must instill in all their managers an awareness  
25 that developing and sustaining a positive



1 organizational culture is a central tenant of  
2 management responsibility and accountability. As we  
3 state in our report, safety and quality are outcomes  
4 of culture. We know from experience that success or  
5 failure is determined by a leader's ability to  
6 understand, influence and manage culture. We are  
7 hopeful that under the leadership of the new Assistant  
8 Secretary for Environmental Management, Monica  
9 Regalbuto, we will see a strong, sustained and active  
10 commitment to the development to a healthy  
11 organizational culture not only at WTP but throughout  
12 the EM program. She believes passionately in getting  
13 the job done safely and securely. In addition, during  
14 his tenure, Secretary Moniz has been a consistent  
15 champion which employees may feel free to raise safety  
16 concerns. And we believe this will have a positive  
17 impact on WTP and elsewhere throughout the complex.  
18 Thank you. That was four minutes.

19 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Podonsky, very  
20 well done. Mr. Whitney.

21 MR. WHITNEY: Yes. Thank you. And good  
22 evening. Mr. Sullivan and Ms. Roberson, I appreciate  
23 the opportunity to discuss the current status of the  
24 Department of Energy efforts to improve safety  
25 culture, not only at the Waste Treatment and



1 Immobilization Plant but also within the Office of  
2 Environmental Management.

3           DOE has completed a number of actions identified  
4 in our implementation plan to address the Defense  
5 Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendation 2011-1.  
6 DOE's Office of Enterprise Assessments as you just  
7 heard most recent independent oversight assessment of  
8 the safety culture at WTP included that ORP and BNI  
9 have made improvements that both organizations have  
10 developed and started to implement strategies in the  
11 practices that if pursued conscientiously over the  
12 next several years offer the promise of a safety  
13 culture commensurate with nuclear expectations and the  
14 unique charter of WTP.

15           You will hear more of that I'm sure from Mr.  
16 Podonsky tonight. The safety of our employees, the  
17 public and the environment is the Office of  
18 Environmental Management's overriding priority.  
19 Establishing and maintaining a positive safety culture  
20 and safety conscious work environment is the key  
21 aspect of course in mission accomplishment. This  
22 includes the need to continuously improve and build  
23 upon the progress that we have already made.

24           The Department's implementation plan for  
25 Recommendation 2011-1 discusses a range of short term



1 and longer term corrective actions to guide us in the  
2 right direction. Over the last few years the  
3 Department, the Office of Environmental Management and  
4 our contractors have initiated significant, broadly  
5 focused improvement actions in the areas of  
6 organizational culture, safety culture, and safety  
7 work conscious work environment. Consistent with the  
8 Board recommendations, the Secretary of Energy has  
9 championed these cultural improvement efforts.

10 A few of the high level actions initiated by the  
11 Department are an issuance by the Secretary and the  
12 former Deputy Secretary of a memorandum in September  
13 2011, or, excuse me, 2013 entitled Personal Commitment  
14 to Health and Safety through Leadership, Employee  
15 Engagement and Organizational Learning. The  
16 Secretary, the Deputy Secretary and Departmental  
17 leaders, including myself, have continued to emphasize  
18 the importance of fostering a positive safety culture,  
19 a robust safety conscious work environment and an open  
20 collaborative work environment and policy statements  
21 and other Departmental communications. Revisions in  
22 the Integrated Safety Management Guide, and those were  
23 issued in September 2011, identifying the safety  
24 culture focused areas of leadership, organizational  
25 learning and employee engagement, and the context of



1 the Department's Integrated Safety Management System  
2 and focusing on continued improvement and long term  
3 performance. Independent safety culture -- safety  
4 culture assessments conducted in 2012 and 2013 by the  
5 Office of Enterprise Assessments, a defense nuclear  
6 facilities and projects and a paralleled the  
7 completion of safety conscious work environment  
8 self-assessments throughout the DOE complex for  
9 federal and contract organizations. Training on  
10 safety conscious work environment, which began in 2012  
11 and continues to today emphasizing the importance of  
12 and methods for establishing and maintaining an open  
13 and collaborative work environment within the  
14 department and providing knowledge to assist senior  
15 leaders in creating an environment where employees  
16 feel free to raise concerns without the fear of  
17 retaliation. And additional course for safety  
18 conscious work environment for front line leaders has  
19 been developed and was piloted in November of this  
20 past year. It is under final revision right now and  
21 the course has targeted over 10,000 federal and  
22 contractor, first line managers and supervisors and  
23 will further enhancement consistency in the  
24 Department's safety culture.

25 Also, the issuance in May 2014 of a consolidated



1 report on the safety conscious work environment extent  
2 of condition, which reviewed assessment results from  
3 -- of the independent safety culture assessments as  
4 well as safety conscious work environment  
5 self-assessments. Continuing EM active oversight of  
6 and engagement on the ORP and BNI, WTP culture  
7 improvements efforts, both ORP and BNI, WTP have taken  
8 action to improve safety culture and safety conscious  
9 work environments.

10 In addition to oversight, EM headquarters has  
11 provided safety culture subject matter experts to  
12 provide tools and resources to assist in the safety  
13 culture journey. We're also implementing activities  
14 to sustain long term implementation of safety culture  
15 improvements such as safety culture assist visit at  
16 the Waste Isolation Power Plant in January of 2015,  
17 the development of site specific safety culture  
18 sustainment plans across the DOE complex, the issuance  
19 of -- by EM of a safety culture sustainment plan  
20 review report, an establishment by the Department of a  
21 safety culture improvement panel just in May of this  
22 year. And additionally, consistent with 2011 --  
23 2011-1 implementation plan, we're evaluating  
24 contractual language to establish clearer expectations  
25 for maintaining a positive safety culture and safety



1 conscious work environment.

2 In conclusion, the Department and EM have  
3 responded to the DNFSB 2011-1 recommendation to  
4 address the identified underlying safety culture and  
5 safety conscious work environment conditions. And  
6 have taken broad actions to improve the organizational  
7 culture within the Department, within EM, ORP, WTP and  
8 other federal and contractor organizations. And we  
9 are institutionalizing improvements and remain  
10 committed to continuously improving at all levels  
11 within the Federal organizations, the inside  
12 organizations and our contractor organizations.

13 Thank you again for the opportunity to discuss  
14 the Department safety culture improvement efforts.  
15 And I believe we'll be happy to answer any questions  
16 that you may have at this point unless Kevin or Bill  
17 would like to make any comments. Although we probably  
18 used our 10 minutes.

19 CHAIRMAN: You used exactly 10. So maybe a  
20 few seconds. Mr. Smith.

21 MR. SMITH: Good afternoon, Mr. Sullivan,  
22 Ms. Roberson. I appreciate the opportunity to be here  
23 as well to share with you our commitment for a strong  
24 safety culture for the Office of River Protection and  
25 the Waste Treatment Plant. For the sake of time, I'll



1 defer and submit my comments for the record.

2 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Hamel, did you  
3 have anything you wanted to say at the outset?

4 MR. HAMEL: Good afternoon and thank you,  
5 Ms. Roberson and Mr. Sullivan, of the Defense Nuclear  
6 Safety Board. I welcome the opportunity to address  
7 you and all the participants at this public hearing  
8 and to provide my perspective on the importance of  
9 building and maintaining a robust safety culture at  
10 the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant. And for  
11 the interest of time, I also will be submitting my  
12 record -- my comments for the record, my remarks.

13 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Hamel. And thank  
14 you to all of you gentlemen for your opening remarks.  
15 And so we'll now turn to Board member questions. And  
16 I will start. And I'm going to start, Mr. Whitney,  
17 with you. The Board made this recommendation in 2011.  
18 And as the Board's practice, it had specific things  
19 that was recommended to the Secretary. And while much  
20 safety culture discussion since then centers on  
21 assessments or safety conscious work environment  
22 training, the first recommendation the Board made back  
23 then was to the Secretary to assert Federal control  
24 here of this project. The clear implication in the  
25 Board's recommendation was that at the time the



1 Federal government did not appear to be in control of  
2 setting the right culture here at Hanford. Can you  
3 address what's happened since? And do you now think  
4 you have federal control over the culture here at  
5 Hanford?

6 MR. WHITNEY: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.  
7 Yes. The -- a lot of -- you've heard many of the kind  
8 of complex-wide, EM complex-wide activities that have  
9 been undertaken. And you will hear from Kevin and  
10 Bill about the details of the actions that have been  
11 taken here. But yes, the team here as well as our EM  
12 headquarter staff has worked very closely together on  
13 this, also working with BNI, Federal oversight has  
14 definitely been established, reinvigorated in this  
15 area. In addition to the work of the Office of River  
16 Protection working with BNI, as they implement their  
17 safety culture improvement plan or management  
18 improvement plan and the Office of River Protection  
19 safety culture improvement plan, we are in -- we  
20 provide I would say continuous Federal oversight, we  
21 have frequent updates with ORP, with Kevin Smith and  
22 his staff and they work very closely of course in  
23 monitoring the contractor and ensuring that not only  
24 -- that they are putting in place improvement efforts  
25 that they have outlined in their work that needs to be



1 done in their reviews but also that they're effective  
2 and that they're following through on the ORP as well.  
3 If you're talking about headquarters, oversight of our  
4 sites has also implemented a tremendous number of  
5 actions. Now, the quantity of actions does not  
6 necessarily mean the quality, you know, and that  
7 there's going to be improvement. But I think what  
8 you've heard from Mr. Podonsky, what I have seen that  
9 there has been improvement. There is still work to be  
10 done, that's for sure, and that's across the complex.  
11 But there has been a lot of improvement and a  
12 sustained commitment to that improvement, including in  
13 the area of federal oversight.

14 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. So I'd like to hear  
15 some more about exactly how federal control has been  
16 asserted. And maybe, Mr. Smith, if you want to take  
17 that. But, I mean, clearly we don't gain Federal  
18 control by holding classroom training on safety  
19 culture. So what -- and I hear you say that yes,  
20 we've got it. So I'd like to hear how we got it.  
21 What's different today than say four years ago?

22 MR. SMITH: Thank you. Probably across the  
23 board there has been efforts and actions taken to  
24 insert safety culture right down through performance  
25 plans that flow all the way down to individuals. I am



1 directly accountable to Mr. Whitney on the improvement  
2 and the actions taken here and as part of my  
3 performance plan there is a mandatory performance  
4 element. We have cascaded that through the  
5 organization. We have established those standards.  
6 We've done training. We have -- do work sessions. We  
7 have developed our processes. We also hold our  
8 contractors accountable and their performance  
9 evaluation plans and their fees and their fee  
10 determining is part of the fee determining process and  
11 considerations. I would say that the -- that we have  
12 had to have our safety culture improvement plans  
13 approved by headquarters by an independent group  
14 outside of the line management and recommended to Mark  
15 Whitney for his approval and concurrence. I think  
16 across the board that we have put in the formal  
17 mechanisms to do that. There's a bunch of additional  
18 physical features, whether they be contract actions I  
19 can go into if you like, or contract inserts or items  
20 that we have done to be able to ensure the contractors  
21 are also following these processes and have a strong  
22 safety culture, those are also working. We do  
23 periodic reviews. We do -- we have Federal personnel  
24 from my office inserted into the reviews and  
25 activities. We review the matrix and the processes



1 with that. So to answer your question, I think that  
2 it is high visibility. I think it is closely  
3 monitored. We have gone -- we've all undergone formal  
4 training in our office for safety culture and we're  
5 held accountable for the results.

6 CHAIRMAN: And so for the sake of the  
7 public, you weren't here in 2011, correct?

8 MR. SMITH: That is correct. I arrived in  
9 2013.

10 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. So, Mr.  
11 Hamel, you're directly in charge of the WTP project.  
12 So basically I'm going to ask you the same question,  
13 you know, how long have you been here? What's your  
14 history? What -- and then how do you see the federal  
15 control over the project today in terms of do you have  
16 the tools you need, et cetera? Please go ahead.

17 MR. HAMEL: Yes. I arrived at the Waste  
18 Treatment Plant in January of 2013. How I see the  
19 oversight is I see that through a series of actions.  
20 The first one being the traditional oversight, which  
21 is a surveillance of the contractor, watching what  
22 they're doing with respect to the implementation plan,  
23 how they're implementing it, is it effective, is it  
24 yielding results, are those results visible to us, not  
25 only in what they provide us in terms of paper but



1 more importantly, in the behaviors that the contractor  
2 exhibits. Does it look like it's taking? In addition  
3 to those oversights, we have regular interfaces,  
4 interface meetings with BNI where we discuss the  
5 health of their organization and we talk about a  
6 number of topics, including safety conscious work  
7 environment, we talk about quality assurance, we talk  
8 about safety in the field, all of those key aspects.  
9 We look at those discussions and we basically take  
10 those and we evaluate those against what's been  
11 written over to us in a corrective action and in  
12 addition to what we're seeing in the field. So it  
13 would be a three point validation, if you will.  
14 Based on that, we provide feedback to the contractor  
15 on how they're doing and we monitor, you know, what  
16 they think and how they react to that.

17 CHAIRMAN: Well, so no world is perfect, I  
18 imagine yours isn't either. What's your biggest  
19 challenge then in trying to maintain -- maintain  
20 control? And when I -- we're talking about control,  
21 asserting Federal control, I'm talking about over the  
22 culture here, about the way -- and specifically, the  
23 culture with respect to the ability of people to bring  
24 forward safety issues if they find them.

25 MR. HAMEL: I think one of the biggest



1 challenges for the culture is -- is maintaining it.  
2 You know, it's a journey, it's not a destination.  
3 It's something you always have to be doing. You have  
4 to be leading by example. You have to make sure that  
5 the culture is fostered and that is a challenge. It's  
6 a very dynamic project. And you've got to make sure  
7 that people don't become caught up in the day-to-day  
8 grind without losing focus. Again, very, very  
9 important that we keep it visible and forefront. And  
10 that is a challenge.

11 CHAIRMAN: Mr. Smith, you look like you're  
12 ready to jump in.

13 MR. SMITH: I'd like to add something. I  
14 think the biggest challenge is to maintain the trust  
15 of the employees. Trust when it's lost is very hard  
16 to regain. It takes a long time to restore. And the  
17 trust in a degree had degraded and we're in the  
18 process of restoring it. And so individuals that  
19 struggled before with the -- with the inability to get  
20 their issues out through normal systems, it just takes  
21 time for them to trust. And so I think Bill hit it on  
22 the head, good leadership, good management,  
23 consistency and unrelenting focus on getting the  
24 technical issues identified and allowing everybody's  
25 voice to be heard. And so the biggest issue is person



1 by person by person you have to win over that we are  
2 in a different place with a different culture and  
3 we're going to sustain it.

4 CHAIRMAN: I didn't want to ask you  
5 specifically. One of the findings in the assessment  
6 done earlier this year on safety culture by Mr.  
7 Podonsky and his organization had to do with roles and  
8 responsibilities within your office. There still  
9 seems to be some lack of clarity, if you will, on  
10 roles and responsibilities. What are you doing to  
11 address that finding?

12 MR. SMITH: Roles and responsibilities  
13 are -- first of all, stems partly from not having  
14 enough staff to do the job. We have been granted a  
15 substantial increase in the staff that now we have  
16 enough people to do all the jobs. And we're in the  
17 process of re-establishing roles and responsibilities.  
18 We have an ongoing activity to clearly define that  
19 through my -- we have an assistant manager that is  
20 working that activity. But the clarity that employees  
21 just want to know what's expected of them and where is  
22 the organization going. And part of it had to do with  
23 it was just with technical issues and with working  
24 through that, some of the employees didn't have a  
25 clear vision of where the Office of River Protection



1 was going and the projects were going and how we're  
2 going to get there. And creating a very strong vision  
3 and a very clean roadmap allows us then for each  
4 employee to feel -- to now better understand where  
5 they fit in. We're now in the process of refining  
6 that and inculcating it correctly so that everybody  
7 will have a view of how they fit in and what their job  
8 is, what their roles and responsibilities are.

9 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Roberson.

10 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

11 So it's my understanding that there is reviews and  
12 assessments have identified similar safety cultural  
13 problems. And Mr. Podonsky cited some in the  
14 enforcement area. And some of those are notable as  
15 well. For instance, concerns were identified by the  
16 Office of Enforcement September 15, 2008. Price  
17 Anderson Enforcement Office took action against BNI  
18 for retaliating against a whistleblower in  
19 relationship to nuclear safety requirements. More  
20 recently on June 1, 2015, Price Anderson Enforcement  
21 Office issued a consent order in other areas related  
22 to safety culture in the failure to resolve identified  
23 technical issues in a timely manner. So I want to ask  
24 you, Mr. Whitney, I mean, we talk about safety culture  
25 as this all encompassing thing, but what specifically



1 do you -- have you concluded contribute to these  
2 recurring problems?

3 MR. WHITNEY: Thank you. Thank you, Ms.  
4 Roberson. Yeah, and this is, you know, I mentioned in  
5 my initial response that, you know, this is something  
6 that we're going to continue to have to work on.  
7 That, you know, this is -- this is not an excuse but  
8 it is a very challenging and hazardous work  
9 environment in which we work. A very challenging,  
10 complex project. And not without risk. Not without  
11 risk. And so we need to take the opportunity while  
12 we're improving, implementing these actions, many of  
13 which I outlined, that we're taking the opportunity to  
14 learn from each of these, not just for what it means  
15 to that specific site, to that specific contract or  
16 that specific project so it doesn't happen again  
17 there, but to spread those lessons across the EM  
18 complex. So we have instituted a process among our  
19 senior leadership team where we devote essentially a  
20 large portion of our time in our senior leadership  
21 meetings where we bring in the field managers as well  
22 as our senior leadership team from headquarters to  
23 look at these types of things precisely. Safety  
24 culture, oversight. At our last senior leadership  
25 meeting we devoted essentially the entire day to the



1 WIPP AIP report and got a briefing from the author,  
2 the lead, the chair of that board and then talked  
3 about lessons learned, how we can apply that across  
4 the complex. And we will have a follow-up workshop on  
5 safety culture in general and how we're doing it  
6 across the complex as well as the Federal oversight.  
7 This is an example, this is a continuing process.  
8 We've had discussions about this. And I agree  
9 completely with you, we can't -- you know, we have to  
10 learn from these things applying across the complex.  
11 And we're focused on that and we are committed to  
12 doing that.

13 As Kevin mentioned, you know, changing the  
14 culture takes time. And I'm not going to sit here  
15 today and tell you we have everything solved, that we  
16 fixed everything. And actually, I hope I never get  
17 into that position. We should always be working and  
18 improving. And that's what we're going to do. And  
19 that's part of it is sharing those lessons learned  
20 across the complex and making sure that we understand  
21 that, as well as best practices, industry for --  
22 across complex as well as industry best practices. In  
23 the safety conscious or, excuse me, the safety culture  
24 sustainment plans, the review that was conducted that  
25 was part of that process to look at the safety culture



1 sustainment plans developed by the sites, first to  
2 work with them as they were developed and then when we  
3 conducted our review not to just look at them or  
4 neither approve or conditionally approve them, but  
5 also to identify those best practices. We identified  
6 over 50 best practices across the complex, feed that  
7 back to our sites, our site managers with a direction  
8 to share that with their leadership team and their  
9 employees as well as the contractors. So those are  
10 some of the examples of what we're trying to do to  
11 make sure those are lessons that are not positive  
12 lessons when things happen, negative things happen,  
13 but that we're actually trying to take those and try  
14 to ensure that they don't happen again somewhere else  
15 not just at that particular site.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN: So you correct me if I'm  
17 wrong. I think what I just heard you say, I mean,  
18 there's lot of activity, there's no doubt about a lot  
19 of things. But the things you tended to focus on were  
20 Federal engagement and improving oversight, did I read  
21 that wrong? Those seem to be the two areas you  
22 gravitated to.

23 MR. WHITNEY: I would say Federal oversight  
24 and in that particular area I was talking about was  
25 safety culture and safety conscious work environment.



1 But as far as, you know, operational upsets, things  
2 that Price Anderson Act, where that comes into play,  
3 you know, we really try to focus on one, you know,  
4 taking advantage of that opportunity that we have with  
5 our colleagues in EA. And I mentioned before how we  
6 really look forward to not just their support in that  
7 area but also in their assessments because it is an  
8 opportunity for us to learn and we do look at that as  
9 a positive opportunity, but using our contracts to  
10 make sure as we move forward in their equality. The  
11 area of safety culture as well as Bill mentioned, that  
12 we're holding our contractors accountable and not only  
13 to make improvements but to sustain them moving  
14 forward.

15 MR. PODONSKY: Ms. Roberson, may I --

16 VICE CHAIRMAN: I'm coming -- actually, I'm  
17 coming to you. You have an interesting view.

18 MR. PODONSKY: May I add to that first?

19 VICE CHAIRMAN: Yes.

20 MR. PODONSKY: For the edification for the  
21 Board and for the public, the Office of Enforcement  
22 actively follows any whistleblower cases. We're  
23 working very closely with the Department of Labor as  
24 well as our hearings and appeals. And right now this  
25 week, we actually have an enforcement team on site



1 looking at another part of the reservation where there  
2 is some concern about whistleblower activity and make  
3 sure that they're protected.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I was actually  
5 going to ask you the same thing because I didn't mean  
6 to focus on just the enforcement action but the  
7 combination of indicators. So I'd ask you, Mr.  
8 Podonsky, if I ask you what were the top two things  
9 that based on every -- all the information your  
10 organization has gathered, what do you see as the  
11 primary underlying causes?

12 MR. PODONSKY: Well, culture cannot be  
13 regulated, it's got to be about leadership. And we  
14 have gone through quite a few leaders in Washington as  
15 well as in the field. And what my observation is for  
16 just a short 32 years in the Department is that we're  
17 not consistent. There was one secretary that came out  
18 to the Hanford Reservation many many years ago and  
19 promised there would be no tolerance for whistleblower  
20 retaliation and there wasn't anything done after that.  
21 So in my opinion through all the assessments that  
22 we've done where people are put in harms way, we make  
23 a lot of assertions and promises and we don't always  
24 follow through, for any number of reasons. I think  
25 the intentions are well intended but the follow



1 through is what has to happen. And that's why I said  
2 in my opening statement, the positive things that  
3 we've seen here on this survey are encouraging but  
4 they're fleeting if my colleagues to the left don't  
5 maintain the attention, the sincerity and the trust  
6 that they're building up with the people and the  
7 contractor as well.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN: I see Mr. Smith itching  
9 there. Do you want to add something?

10 MR. SMITH: Yes, I am itching. Thank you.  
11 I think it would be beneficial to know that we attack  
12 the root causes. You know, you don't want -- we see  
13 the results but you need to fix the root causes. And  
14 the root causes were not that -- that people didn't  
15 see things wrong, they just didn't see the fixes  
16 occurring at the rate they wanted them to occur.  
17 Things weren't getting aligned right, the PDSA was  
18 misaligned, so we attacked the root causes. First of  
19 all, we changed the performance evaluation plan. We  
20 gave 50 percent of the fee to the contractor for  
21 changing the way they did business to self-discovery  
22 and self-reporting. To change the paradigm and reward  
23 that as a metric and as a process where you harness  
24 the entire workforce to find things and be rewarded  
25 for finding them. And the second thing we did is to



1 change the professional relationship. We stopped with  
2 no surprises and no bashing each other  
3 unprofessionally or blaming the others. We also  
4 wouldn't let anybody talk amorphously like BNI or  
5 Bechtel or DOE or ORP, they had to be specific of  
6 where the issue was. And that forced people to work  
7 together. We restored communication, collaboration,  
8 common focus, early understanding. And we had -- we  
9 maintained that for several performance periods. And  
10 that we essentially created a different relationship  
11 with a focus on identifying problems and rewarding  
12 problems. Then we had to find a way to get the  
13 creativity out. That people had good ideas. We  
14 created a grand challenge process, a workshop, where  
15 we brought in national labs, national lab directors to  
16 help us support that, and allow people to give their  
17 great ideas on how to improve things. Then we found a  
18 way that we wanted to have a zero tolerance issues  
19 management system where anybody could put something  
20 into the issues management system and have it  
21 dispositioned. And then I can talk about a number of  
22 other things, but I'll stop with a full unfettered  
23 open-door policy and an e-mail from me to every person  
24 that works in the ORP, contractor and Federal, that no  
25 matter what the issue is if they can't get it solved



1 any other way, they can come to me either anonymously  
2 or in person and I will help them so that we have a  
3 full capture of it so that all issues are rewarded.  
4 Nobody shoots the messenger. We want to know all the  
5 issues out, we want to get them on the table and  
6 fundamentally change and harness the entire workforce  
7 to get WTP done and operational.

8 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Smith. Just  
9 one last question on this topic for you, Mr. Podonsky.  
10 In the most recent assessment there were a couple of  
11 new terms, and it's not the term, it's what I'd like  
12 for you just to do is just explain what they were.  
13 And they were notable in that they represented some of  
14 the weakest results, as I recall, from the assessment.  
15 Avoidance behavior and affiliative behavior. Can you  
16 just tell us were those new behaviors that were seen  
17 or just new -- are we calling them something  
18 different?

19 MR. PODONSKY: Would you repeat? I didn't  
20 hear what you said.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN: Avoidance behavior and  
22 affiliative behavior.

23 MR. PODONSKY: I can't tell you the answer  
24 to that. But what I will give you information on is  
25 that as I said in my opening statement, we used the



1 same methodologies. And the data that we came up with  
2 in this report we feel is very valid. However, there  
3 are some nuances that I want to expand upon. For  
4 example, the crafts at the site were not as positive  
5 as some of the other groups were. But yet, the same  
6 group, the crafts, said that WTP was the safest place  
7 that they've ever worked. So there was -- there were  
8 things -- there's qualify -- qualitative data that's  
9 not also always quantifiable. And through the  
10 interviews, not just the surveys, but through the  
11 interviews, the observation of work, we got a lot of  
12 information. And that's why I said it goes beyond  
13 just surveys or regulations, it's all about the  
14 leadership. And what we found in our -- in the  
15 overall analysis, as I said, I'm reiterating the  
16 point, there's a lot of arrows pointing up but in  
17 order to sustain those, regardless of what the  
18 terminology was used, it has come down to the  
19 leadership commitment.

20 VICE CHAIRMAN: And I agree. But let me --  
21 so let me just tell you what I got out of the  
22 assessment and you tell me if I read it wrong. And  
23 it's particularly concerning. And the reason I'm  
24 raising it was because they were two of the weakest  
25 areas. Regardless to what label you put on it was a



1 concern about this is -- as it specifically relates to  
2 the Federal staff and the assessment of the Federal  
3 staff. That they felt threatened and vulnerable and  
4 so they weren't quite there, this was a weak area.  
5 And then another weak area was an open communication  
6 cooperation. Those seem to be -- to come out very  
7 poorly. I just want to make sure we're talking to  
8 each other.

9 MR. PODONSKY: We're talking the same. On  
10 the Federal staff, there's also -- I think we also  
11 used the term about risk averse. And what we saw is  
12 that if there was an emergency, an immediate safety  
13 event, there's no question that both the Federal staff  
14 and contractor would deal with it right away. During  
15 the interviews and the meetings some of the Federal  
16 staff expressed a risk aversion, our terms, for long  
17 term items down the road. The only interpretation  
18 that I would have for that, I haven't talked to the  
19 team about that, would be whether or not they have a  
20 comfort that they can bring those things forward to  
21 their management and that the management would listen.  
22 Not in fear of a reprisal, we've never seen that  
23 wholesale, the fear is not -- is a perceived fear, not  
24 necessarily a real one but a perceived fear of whether  
25 their management would listen to them. And that was



1 -- and that was a few of the employees.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN: Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN: So my next question, I think  
4 I'd like to go and either -- well, any of the  
5 gentlemen who are directly in the front line who are  
6 responsible for this project. So just today there was  
7 a press report, several major newspapers reporting  
8 about a draft report that was leaked. So the, you  
9 know, my Google alert comes up because the press  
10 reports even note that probably no coincidence we're  
11 having this hearing tonight. But the press reports  
12 give -- paint the picture of sort of the sky is once  
13 again falling at this troubled project. The less I  
14 hear from you gentlemen, a lot of things that I  
15 attribute I would characterize as confidence. So  
16 anybody want to address that -- that report? What's  
17 inaccurate or what was left unstated in those press  
18 reports? How do you square your confidence as you sit  
19 here with what came out in the press today? Mr.  
20 Smith, you want to talk?

21 MR. SMITH: Well, let me start and then  
22 I'll pass to Mr. Hamel, whose the owner of that  
23 report. It was a draft report that we commissioned  
24 ourselves and that it was a preliminary version and  
25 that the activities in that are still in work and that



1 we haven't issued the final report in that effect.  
2 There are very, very few things in there that do. 100  
3 percent of those issues have been captured in our  
4 issues management system and are being worked. And  
5 that Bill has -- is -- Mr. Hamel is working on a  
6 process by which the report will be completed because  
7 these issues are very complex. And I'll pass the mic  
8 to Mr. Hamel if that's all right.

9 CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

10 MR. HAMEL: Yes. Excuse me. To reiterate  
11 some of what Kevin said and further elaborate on that,  
12 that was a DOE self-initiated report. It is very  
13 important to us. The issues that are contained in  
14 there fall into a number of categories. Not only have  
15 we captured the recommendations and the 500 plus, what  
16 I would call comments on design, there are a number of  
17 programmatic issues that are in there. We have looked  
18 at those preliminarily. And those are captured by the  
19 BNI, the Bechtel management improvement plan and other  
20 mechanisms. We do take them very, very seriously.  
21 And we are working them off.

22 As Kevin indicated, less than five percent of  
23 what is in that report is what we call new material,  
24 i.e., those issues are known to both ORP and to  
25 Bechtel. We are aggressively working them off. And



1 there are no new major issues contained therein.

2 MR. SMITH: May I finish?

3 CHAIRMAN: Sure.

4 MR. SMITH: I think you should take this as  
5 this was initiated by Bill when he arrived in trying  
6 to drive and identify all of the physical possible  
7 issues left to go and turn up all the rocks and  
8 question everything more than once. And so some of  
9 these questions just didn't have an answer at the  
10 time. But it's very important that this was the  
11 initiative by Mr. Hamel to make sure that we could  
12 find what are the potential issues that could derail  
13 us to getting the law facility up and going. And so  
14 that was the intent of the report, it was  
15 self-initiated and we're methodically working through  
16 those issues.

17 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. And what's  
18 the timeline for turning this draft report into  
19 something that's final?

20 MR. SMITH: Go ahead. You've got an  
21 answer.

22 MR. HAMEL: We're hoping to accomplish that  
23 within the next two months and have that finalized.

24 CHAIRMAN: Okay. I'll look forward to it.  
25 So, Mr. Whitney, I want to go back to you now. And I



1 want to specifically address your confidence. And I  
2 want to refer back to a discussion that we had at a  
3 prior public hearing that we held at Washington, D.C.  
4 last October. So at the time we pointed out about the  
5 accidents at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant down in  
6 New Mexico, so WIPP, you even referred to these  
7 before, although you used an acronym which would cost  
8 you at least a quarter here for -- at a public  
9 hearing. You referred to the AIB, the Accident  
10 Investigation Board. But in our prior discussion we  
11 discussed the fact that it -- that in January of '13,  
12 if memory serves me correctly, there were safety  
13 culture surveys done at WIPP that were an outgrowth of  
14 this 2011 recommendation of WTP. So the 2011-1  
15 recommendation WTP, the Department decided to take the  
16 recommendation to assess conditions elsewhere in the  
17 complex, conditions were assessed elsewhere including  
18 at WIPP, and that was done in January of 2013 and that  
19 assessment said in a nutshell things are fine. And  
20 then a year later they have two accidents and an  
21 accident investigation board came in and one of their  
22 major findings was that safety culture at WIPP was not  
23 fine. In fact, it was not good at all. So it  
24 immediately raised the question of well, so how valid  
25 was that 2013 assessment at WIPP? So with all that as



1 background, I want to fast forward to where we are  
2 today, the assessments we're getting today, how do we  
3 -- how -- what makes you confident that we are --  
4 we're now getting there? And I say we, I mean the  
5 United States Government. We're getting there. We  
6 now kind of have -- we have assessments that you feel  
7 confident are really showing us where we are.

8 MR. WHITNEY: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan. And  
9 first, the self-assessments, the safety culture  
10 self-assessments are of course one tool. And I  
11 personally believe the process of going through the  
12 self-assessment has tremendous benefit and from a  
13 learning organization standpoint to talking the same  
14 language for the site learning that this is important  
15 not only to their management in the field but also at  
16 headquarters. But it is one tool of many. We  
17 discussed last time and I accepted and we actually  
18 pointed out in our extent of condition review report  
19 on the self-assessments that the guidance needed more  
20 rigger as far as how to conduct the self-assessments,  
21 needed more rigor, needed to be better essentially.  
22 And so we have started a process of working towards  
23 that starting last year actually after our hearing I  
24 told you we were going to start looking at that. We  
25 have. One thing that we did as well shortly after the



1 hearing that is related and we were able to use, the  
2 initial part of that process to improve guidance was  
3 on the assist visit that occurred earlier this year at  
4 WIPP at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant, which brought  
5 in INPO, brought in other commercial nuclear  
6 experience and some other Federal agencies. And now I  
7 mentioned the stand up of the Safety Culture  
8 Improvement Panel by the Department of Energy, in just  
9 May of this year it was stood up and charted by the  
10 Deputy Secretary. One of the things that they're  
11 looking at right now is to kind of continue that  
12 process, working with the energy facility contractors  
13 group to look at developing a guide that has more  
14 rigger, that has better guidance on how to conduct  
15 self-assessments. But I still believe that, you know,  
16 the self-assessments to some degree just human nature  
17 they're going to be imperfect. I also believe but I  
18 think they also add tremendous value in helping our  
19 organization understand where they are but also in  
20 going through the process and using that with other  
21 tools that we have that we had mentioned, I think is a  
22 very positive thing and it will help us moving  
23 forward.

24 Now since we -- I believe all the  
25 self-assessments were completed, the first round prior



1 to our hearing in October of last year, since then we  
2 have completed a review of the safety culture  
3 sustainment plans, which it was also a process that  
4 incorporated what was learned in the self-assessments.  
5 And so we have not yet conducted the next round of the  
6 self-assessments.

7 CHAIRMAN: So turning to you, Mr. Podonsky,  
8 you work in an office in Washington, D.C., your job is  
9 to run up and tell the Secretary based on whatever  
10 you're doing about where there's problems, not only  
11 here but anywhere in the complex about not only safety  
12 culture, about a myriad of other issues. So how do  
13 you really know? I mean, what -- how do you really  
14 know how the conditions are here out in Hanford?

15  
16 MR. PODONSKY: Well, a good example, Mr.  
17 Sullivan, was our safety culture review in 2010. We  
18 did it with our nuclear engineers, we did it with our  
19 protocols that we normally use and the results were  
20 not as reliable as we feel they are today because what  
21 did we do different? We got a hold of behavioral  
22 scientists that actually were experts in the field, we  
23 used validated methodology that the NRC uses that are  
24 standard approaches. We used a large sampling size.  
25 For example, this time we had over a thousand people,



1 individuals participate in the survey. We had over  
2 400 people in the groups. The sample size was rather  
3 rigorous. But as Mr. Whitney says, anything that is  
4 involving human are going to be imperfect. So we're  
5 very cautious when we go forward on any of these to  
6 make sure that we know exactly what is happening  
7 through our interviews and we have a degree of  
8 assurance to go to a cabinet official to tell that  
9 cabinet official how things are going or not going  
10 well. So the discipline that we use, the expertise  
11 that we use give us a comfort that we have an  
12 understanding.

13 So let's go back to the report that is the  
14 subject of this public meeting. Some people think  
15 that it is sugarcoated with the results. But if you  
16 read it, it's not being sugarcoated. We're simply  
17 saying in this case, Mr. Secretary, Mr. Assistant  
18 Secretary, we see the arrow in the right direction.  
19 When Secretary Moniz directed us to go do this, he  
20 said, I want to know if there's improvement. He  
21 wasn't looking to see if things were solved. And we  
22 didn't say things were solved in our report. We said  
23 there's a lot more work to be done. And I think we've  
24 already heard the line say that as well. So to your  
25 question directly, we never know 100 percent but we're



1 pretty confident in the methodologies we have used  
2 here for the two of the last three as well as the nine  
3 others that we did around the complex. And we've been  
4 consistent with the expertise that we've been using  
5 and the understanding.

6 Now let me -- you didn't ask but I will answer  
7 this. The expertise that we used, we consistently  
8 used the same contractor organization for conducting  
9 the survey. This time we had enough experience on our  
10 own and the contractor's schedule was not necessarily  
11 exact going to match ours, we weren't going to gamble.  
12 The Secretary wanted this done, so we made sure that  
13 we went to this particular contractor expertise. We  
14 went to her partner and she recommended to us somebody  
15 independent from NIOSH. So we had the independence,  
16 we had the efficacy of the process, so we had as much  
17 assurance that we could go forward that I felt  
18 comfortable going forward to Secretary Moniz to say  
19 this is the results of this -- of this assessment.

20 CHAIRMAN: Okay. So having said all that,  
21 you said earlier that this was mostly about  
22 leadership, which I imagine then is a positive  
23 reflection on the three gentlemen sitting to your  
24 left. But going forward, you know, how do we -- how  
25 do we make sure that there's good leadership? What do



1 you -- what are you recommending to the Secretary?  
2 The Secretary himself is only there as long perhaps as  
3 the current administration, which means there will be  
4 a new secretary perhaps in not too long in the future.  
5 How do you -- what gets put in place to make sure that  
6 good leadership or well performing leadership can  
7 carry forward?

8 MR. PODONSKY: Well, you're asking my  
9 opinion on something that's really something that's an  
10 institutional challenge, especially in an organization  
11 like DOE and any other executive branch where you have  
12 a changeover in the political team. So you have a  
13 constant change. So the consistency of leadership, be  
14 it at ORP at the Federal level, be it at EM, at the  
15 Deputy Assistant Secretary level, if those are career,  
16 then you have sustainability. And so the secret in my  
17 opinion, and that's what you're asking for, is the  
18 sustainability of good leadership is going to rest  
19 with consistency and sustainability. And  
20 unfortunately, you don't always get that with the  
21 political turnover that you have in most of the  
22 agencies, including Department of Energy. Because  
23 Secretary Moniz, I believe, as Assistant Secretary  
24 Regalbuto, are sincere and committed to the worker  
25 health and safety of this department. But how long do



1 they have to actually implement that? So the  
2 sustainability of the career people is what's going to  
3 have to be in place. How do you measure that? You  
4 measure that by coming back, by having public hearings  
5 like this, by having oversight like we do to see how  
6 it's going and talking to the people, and talking to  
7 the people and finding out what's really happening.  
8 That's the only value I put into these surveys and to  
9 the work group sessions that we held with our experts  
10 is that listen to the people. Because the people if  
11 they have a sense that you're there to really hear  
12 what they have to say they'll open up and they'll tell  
13 you.

14 Now we had one deputy secretary, this is not  
15 part of your question but it is part of what I want to  
16 give to you if you don't mind, is that we had one  
17 deputy secretary who came out here and addressed 4,000  
18 people, and that individual, that deputy secretary  
19 came back to me and said, Podonsky, not one person  
20 raised a question to me. And I said, Mr. Deputy  
21 Secretary, the venue that you were in was not  
22 conducive to anybody raising their hand. So my point  
23 on that is that it is consistency and sustainability  
24 of the leadership to carry forward and prove to the  
25 people that they are trusted and so that the



1 responsibilities are carried out by the site, by the  
2 workers and sustained by the leadership.

3 CHAIRMAN: Okay. So just a comment but not  
4 a question. Perhaps given the fact that we all know  
5 that leadership will turn over because of the nature  
6 of our nation's system, maybe some of these folks,  
7 behavioral scientists can help you find a few traits  
8 to look for right after a change in leadership that  
9 might give you an indication of whether or not there's  
10 change and if so which direction. Did you want to add  
11 something, Mr. Whitney?

12 MR. WHITNEY: Yes, Mr. Sullivan. I just  
13 wanted to add that this is precisely the reason that  
14 the Secretary and Deputy Secretary, one of the reasons  
15 established the safety cultural improvement panel that  
16 is led by senior leaders, career leaders in the  
17 department, co-chaired by the Associate Under  
18 Secretary for safety and security in DOE. And it also  
19 has representation -- senior representation from all  
20 the programs secretarial offices as well as field  
21 representation. In fact, the co-chair of the group is  
22 Kevin Smith's Deputy a J.D. Dowell. And to look at  
23 ensuring that one, we have these issues that we need  
24 to look at that we know, some of the things that came  
25 out of the DNFSB recommendation that we're working on



1 now. There were other things that we've discovered  
2 through our self-assessments and the review processes  
3 that we're looking at. But more than anything, to  
4 institutionalize this as a priority for the Department  
5 at the very senior levels moving forward. And I think  
6 that, and along with the safety culture, the things  
7 that we've talked about, the safety culture  
8 sustainment plans, which really do look at the  
9 institutionalization of those things that are working  
10 that we've put in place the last few years as well as  
11 trying to identify things that could help as well in  
12 addition to those. So those are the types of things  
13 that we're doing. And I think the Secretary and  
14 Deputy are focused on that. That is something before  
15 this administration is over they want to see to make  
16 sure we have that institutionalized and that's one of  
17 the reasons for it.

18 CHAIRMAN: All right. Ms. Roberson.

19 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan. So  
20 since we have the executive career service here, one  
21 of the -- and my first question is to you, Mr.  
22 Podonsky, and you'll tell me if I'm reading this  
23 wrong. I kind of read this most recent assessment.  
24 One, the team was looking at trends, but things that  
25 were significant upper or questionably down. So one



1 of the things that we noticed in the assessment was  
2 the emphasis on the conflict between headquarters, the  
3 program, and the field office. And I just want to get  
4 you to elaborate if you'd like to before I ask those  
5 gentlemen how they fix it -- how they're fixing it.

6 MR. PODONSKY: And if I say I don't want  
7 to? No. The interviews and the discussions that the  
8 assessment folks got was that they were not -- there's  
9 not a lot of encouraging words about guidance from  
10 headquarters. And I -- and in a discussion with Mr.  
11 Whitney not too long ago we talked about that because  
12 you can be at a site working very hard but -- and you  
13 can have all the perceptions you want but if the  
14 people in place, be they executive service members or  
15 not, don't feel that they're getting complete support  
16 and guidance out of headquarters that's their reality.  
17 And having been in headquarters somebody once asked me  
18 the question, what's my biggest problem doing my  
19 oversight? And I said being in headquarters. And the  
20 reason for that is because people in headquarters  
21 don't always have the sense of what it's like to be on  
22 the front line doing the work out in the field. The  
23 people, once upon a time when I was Chief of HSS not  
24 too very long ago, our policy promulgators were  
25 generating policy that didn't make a lot of sense for



1 the implementators (sic) that had to live with it. So  
2 the same thing is true. And in our report that you  
3 make reference to, there was conflict expressed not  
4 always getting consistency or the type of support that  
5 perhaps the folks in the line wanted to have from the  
6 headquarters.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Podonsky.  
8 So, Mr. Whitney, can you see that issue or you think  
9 that's a false perception?

10 MR. WHITNEY: No. I think that -- well,  
11 first of all, you know, I did talk to Mr. Podonsky  
12 about this first when we were briefed on the results  
13 of the Board and talked to the chair of the report  
14 understanding that, you know, some of those comments  
15 came from interviews, not surveys. And so that's an  
16 important -- very important fact that I wanted to  
17 really understand what they meant because my  
18 understanding was that they weren't necessarily  
19 specific to safety culture but they were general  
20 statements. Either one is concerning. But the  
21 general statements I wanted to understand kind of what  
22 that might mean. And so Kevin and I and the other  
23 folks at the staff talked about that. There is -- and  
24 continue to talk about that. There is a dynamic, as  
25 you know, between headquarters and field that has



1 existed for many, many years and will probably always  
2 exist. And it's something that in the past year we've  
3 really tried to focus on. We have -- we actually  
4 dedicated a large position over the last summer and  
5 fall to the headquarter field alignment issue. And I  
6 think a lot of this has to do with that headquarter  
7 field alignment issue. I think it's not unnatural,  
8 doesn't mean it's right, it's not unnatural when you  
9 have geographic distance between organizations and one  
10 is at headquarter and you have a lot of field sites  
11 that you are going to have some of these issues. And  
12 so we wanted to drill down into what those issues were  
13 and so we spent time on that. We developed protocols  
14 to try to advance things on roles and  
15 responsibilities, who does what, when, how, and the  
16 correct way to communicate with folks at different  
17 levels. I mean, some very basic stuff that we were  
18 having issues with, to be quite frank. Clearly, we  
19 need to be more. Since this assessment happened more  
20 recently it's something that we're going to continue  
21 on focus on. I feel very encouraged by the leadership  
22 that we have in the field. We have very strong  
23 leadership. And, you know, my job is to empower them  
24 to do their job and to provide oversight and allow and  
25 enable them to provide oversight that work that's done



1 here. So it's something we'll continue to focus on.  
2 I don't know if Kevin or Bill has something they  
3 wanted to add to that.

4 VICE CHAIRMAN: I'm coming to Mr. Smith  
5 next to see how it's working for him.

6 MR. SMITH: Thank you, Ms. Roberson. I  
7 think there will always be a degree of tension between  
8 headquarters and the field just if nothing else the  
9 distances as part of that. I think the -- what is --  
10 just EM in general, Environmental Management in  
11 general has very little buffer, if you will, between  
12 Congress and the media and others. So it is kind of a  
13 tough environment anyway just in general. But the --  
14 I think the answer is detailed communication and  
15 knowledge of the work in the field, because the better  
16 the headquarters point of contact understands the work  
17 in the field the better they can represent and help  
18 with the field back and forth. And I think that for  
19 us a little bit of it -- it's not abnormal for me to  
20 be on the phone a dozen or more times a day to some  
21 point of contact at headquarters depending on what the  
22 topic is or a particular person that represents  
23 headquarters it may six or seven times a day. We're  
24 working things that are important or working through  
25 issues. So I think communication, understanding the



1 mission of the field are two probably the most  
2 important to align the field and headquarters. And  
3 Mr. Whitney has really made this a priority in the  
4 last year. And the number of field manager meetings  
5 with the headquarter staff has dramatically increased  
6 to try to forge an alignment and forge that team.

7 I will say that this last year has been  
8 difficult because of the -- we are currently in  
9 Federal court with the State of Washington and that  
10 has caused the communication to slow a little bit.  
11 And we also had a notice of intent to sue on the  
12 vapors, which has also caused a degree of more careful  
13 communications with legal undertone. And so I think  
14 that has colored probably the commentary and the  
15 rating this last period in that regard.

16 VICE CHAIRMAN: Okay. I appreciate that  
17 because my sense is -- I mean, you have other field  
18 offices, so kind of the reason we got into this  
19 recommendation was there's always some conflict but  
20 you can tell when it's outside the circle. It's not  
21 within that normal range. And that was my sense from  
22 this review. Okay.

23 MR. WHITNEY: Can I add? Because Kevin  
24 said something I wish I had. And it's a very  
25 important point. It has to do with being in another



1 person's shoes. And, you know, a lot of it is just  
2 being for folks at headquarters to get out to the  
3 field and spend some time in the field. And folks in  
4 the field to get to headquarters and spend some time  
5 at headquarters to really understand what happens.  
6 Because a lot of times we have folks, it is not a bad  
7 thing, it's, you know, just we have a large  
8 organization and we have many folks that have spent  
9 their entire career at headquarters and many folks  
10 have spent their entire career in the field and they  
11 don't really see what the other side does on a daily  
12 basis. So there are a lot of misperceptions that also  
13 contribute to this tension. So we try to institute at  
14 the senior level, at the midlevel and the working  
15 level, the career level, it has not been -- it's not  
16 been as difficult a task in the past to have details  
17 and -- but at the senior level it has not been that  
18 common of late. And so we have tried to do more of  
19 that in the past year. Of course that costs money to  
20 do details. But we have done a lot, including folks  
21 from Kevin's staff, one of his assistant managers and  
22 his chief of staff as well has spent time with us.  
23 And I think that was beneficial not only for us, to  
24 them, but also to the organization as they bring those  
25 experience back and vice versa, as we send folks,



1 senior folks out to the field to do details. It's  
2 very important and something we want to continue.

3 MR. PODONSKY: Ms. Roberson, may I add to  
4 this -- it is a very interesting line of questioning  
5 because while not directly related to the Federal  
6 side, but this whole thought process that Mr. Smith  
7 and Mr. Whitney are talking about is walking in  
8 somebody else's shoes. We also have to apply that to  
9 the workers and the people that we are asking to do  
10 this difficult task because when you also understand  
11 not just what headquarters and the field does but you  
12 understand what the workers are doing on a regular  
13 basis, then we have a better understanding of some of  
14 their challenges and some of the reason why you're  
15 even having this public hearing today. Because -- I  
16 realize that sounds almost Pollyanish, but as the  
17 former head of HSS, that was a big part of our job is  
18 to understand the worker health and safety part of the  
19 equation. And that's something that the agency known  
20 as DOE often strives to achieve but doesn't always get  
21 to that point.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, sir. So, Mr.  
23 Hamel, I guess my last question on this one is to you.  
24 You're kind of -- you're on the -- you're in receipt  
25 of a lot of views in this area. How is it affecting



1 your ability to really implement oversight of the  
2 project?

3 MR. HAMEL: You know, I agree with Kevin  
4 and Mark, you know, distance does make it difficult.  
5 But Kevin said something I like that's really, really  
6 important. He talked about detailed communication and  
7 knowledge. And what I can tell you is that for  
8 certain topics we've actually utilized a tactic or  
9 basically a summit where we, on key topics such as  
10 contract management, project management, we've  
11 actually taken, you know, myself and key members of my  
12 staff back and met with our headquarter counterparts.  
13 That actually has worked very, very well. We did that  
14 knowing, you know, that distance is a problem and  
15 these topics would be difficult topics and that there  
16 is no substitute for face-to-face communication. So,  
17 you know, I think Mark said that we're working on this  
18 and we've placed a lot emphasis on it this year. And  
19 this is one of the ways that we're doing this knowing  
20 that this does help.

21 VICE CHAIRMAN: So let me ask you, Mr.  
22 Smith: What is it that you see that makes you believe  
23 progress is being made in this area? Because we saw  
24 this raised in previous reviews as well too. What is  
25 it you see now that makes you say you think things are



1 improving?

2 MR. SMITH: Well, things are better than  
3 they were when the survey was taken for sure. And I  
4 will tell you that having a good, clean course that  
5 the Secretary has laid for us on direct feed law makes  
6 all the difference in the world because now people  
7 have predictability in their lives, they see things  
8 more clearly, both the headquarters and the field can  
9 be on the same team with the same focus. And I'll  
10 tell you that from our contractors and all of our  
11 labor union folks and all of the -- even  
12 subcontractors now know where we're headed. And that  
13 makes a tremendous difference. So I think a clear  
14 path forward to getting WTP up and running that we  
15 have now with the Secretary is very important. And I  
16 think that has made all the difference.

17 VICE CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you, Mr.  
18 Sullivan.

19 CHAIRMAN: So folks, now to Mr. Smith and  
20 Mr. Hamel, again, a few questions trying to come out  
21 of the clouds and down to the worker level and the  
22 weeds. By the way, you said watch the workers. I'll  
23 just point out, we're talking about WTP, but I was  
24 here about two months ago and I was over in tank farms  
25 watching folks on a 90-degree day with full respirator



1 and the anti-contamination clothing and that looked  
2 like that was kind of tough work with nuclear control.  
3 So a shout out to them. I know everybody here is  
4 doing hard and tough work. So I want to talk about  
5 some of just the specifics that come out of this  
6 recent assessment that might be more germane to them.  
7 But some of the folks at WTP, for example, Mr. Hamel,  
8 we're talking about a lack of communication going on  
9 between WTP and tank farms. So there were specific  
10 comments about taking cover over on the tank farms and  
11 that they didn't know about it and oh, by the way,  
12 they're down wind of the tank farms at WTP, concerns  
13 with the vapor smells if it's over there, what's  
14 happening over here. Can you address that  
15 specifically the communications issue and what's  
16 happening to make the workers feel better at WTP?

17 MR. HAMEL: You know, one of the things  
18 that we're -- have implemented is more -- better  
19 communication between the tank farms and WTP through  
20 the route of the fac reps so that they are aware of  
21 what activities are happening over at the tank farms.  
22 And the fac reps even in the field communicate that to  
23 the site contractor management that helps flow that  
24 information around. So that's one of the specific  
25 things that we did in response to that.



1 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Mr. Smith.

2 MR. SMITH: We have done a number of things  
3 to fundamentally improve communication between the  
4 plants. The first and probably the most significant  
5 one is we have put in and rechartered the One System  
6 program to a much more comprehensive marrying of two  
7 different programs, two different contracts and  
8 providing a governance board at the senior level so  
9 that we're now driving to marry the two contracts up  
10 to feed it to operate the plant. And so they're  
11 working closer together than they ever had been  
12 before. So that means all the interface controlled  
13 documents and the standards are being put into place.  
14 And with that has come the communication processes  
15 that go with that communication as well.

16 And particularly on the vapors issue, the tank  
17 farm lead, Mr. Dave Olson, has gone a long ways into  
18 bringing not only just the Waste Treatment Plant along  
19 but also the rest of the interface contractors to  
20 ensure that that communication now is -- extends well  
21 beyond the tank farm, it is timely, those kinds of  
22 devices and communications are becoming realtime,  
23 wireless and electronic. And we're trying to take the  
24 step into the tank farm of the future. And that means  
25 that all of the communications that go with that.



1           And lastly, I think all of us would like to see  
2   at the end of the day every worker go home with both  
3   their eyes, all their fingers and all their toes. And  
4   that leadership needs to take that responsibility on  
5   and ensure that things are done properly and that they  
6   have the responsibility for caring and ensuring their.  
7   Employees are safe. And that is being inculcated at  
8   multiple levels. And we are in the process of very  
9   heavily restoring that responsibility to make sure  
10   that it's absolutely clear. And with that, I have had  
11   to take and make DOE be the owner of the plant and be  
12   responsible for the oversight and not be -- not be  
13   blending in in any aspect but to stand there, to be  
14   the oversight to be the person that people can  
15   approach and be able to raise issues and concerns  
16   immediately. So many things have happened to ensure  
17   that this is a better place and it functions better  
18   and it has the communication needed to keep people  
19   safe. It's working better.

20                   CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. I want to  
21   ask you now about another specific comment out of that  
22   assessment. And it had to do with something that was  
23   characterized as a strong avoidance behavioral norm  
24   within your organization. So that was explained as an  
25   organization that tended to not reward success but



1 rather punish mistakes and therefore people tried to  
2 avoid making decisions or doing other things that  
3 would actually bring risk upon themselves. Are you  
4 addressing that?

5 MR. SMITH: Yes. So, first of all, the way  
6 that particular BARS works is that we had about 12  
7 percent not take the survey. And the way they  
8 interpret that is typically that characteristic means  
9 that people are afraid to take the survey. There's  
10 also another explanation for it, is that people are  
11 tired of surveys. And since we have had multiple  
12 surveys in a very short duration period of time  
13 there's probably a degree. But we have taken it  
14 seriously. And I have made it so that again my  
15 standards of how to lead an organization is how we're  
16 grooming and developing the organization. And I have  
17 offered the opportunity for anybody in my organization  
18 at any level can challenge a decision any time one  
19 time for free. And that just opens up the door for  
20 that individual to feel confident to come in and say,  
21 hey, this wasn't really the right decision because you  
22 didn't consider this or this. And it has made it a  
23 different place for us to be able to have people come  
24 in. As for behavioral norms, we make every effort to  
25 reward anybody that brings issues up that -- of



1 concern. We have opened multiple avenues for that.  
2 We have created different professional technical  
3 review panels and processes. We've established  
4 opportunities for individuals to be able to raise  
5 technical issues differently, and I've already  
6 mentioned the zero tolerance or the zero threshold  
7 level for the issues Management System. So I think  
8 there's multiple reasons for that. But as we talked  
9 about before, every single person has to see one  
10 person at a time to trust.

11 Now one last aspect, decision-making. Today's  
12 environments with electronics, just about anybody's  
13 willing to put a decision to the highest level. If  
14 you don't ever make a decision you can't be wrong.  
15 And we don't groom people to make decisions. So we  
16 have found a way, continued to try to make and reward  
17 people for decisions at their level that's within  
18 their scope and responsibility, to groom them, as you  
19 were talking about the next generation of managers and  
20 leaders. And so when I'm away I refuse to make  
21 decisions, I leave it to the deputy manager, the  
22 deputy manager's running the organization. He knows  
23 our culture and where we're headed and he can make  
24 these decisions in my absence. And we try to do that  
25 at various levels. If we don't have to make a



1 decision and it's in the power of that particular  
2 manager or employee's level, we let them make that  
3 decision. So we're grooming and developing the next  
4 generation of leaders. We're grooming people to be  
5 able to make decisions. We're grooming people to have  
6 the confidence to make decisions and feel that they  
7 can make the decisions. It is just all a function of  
8 leadership and development.

9 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. So my last  
10 question on this topic, I'm going to jump back to you,  
11 Mr. Hamel. Differing professional opinion, employee  
12 concerns programs, just with respect to the WTP  
13 project, are those programs working in their two  
14 separate programs?

15 MR. HAMEL: You know, from my perspective,  
16 yes. One of the ways I think you can tell is, you  
17 know, the programs in and of themselves are there to  
18 be used kind of as a last resort, so what you'd expect  
19 to hear if those programs are working in my opinion is  
20 that you hear open, candid conversation in the staff  
21 meetings, on the floor, in discussion, discussion with  
22 myself and discussion between staff, those are good  
23 indications of how the culture is generally going. If  
24 people can talk openly about the tough stuff, the  
25 tough decisions, the things that they're not



1 comfortable with and things they don't understand, and  
2 ask, you know, why is management making this decision?  
3 Those discussions can -- can happen in an open and  
4 candid conversation. I think you have a culture that  
5 basically allows those programs to work quite well.  
6 When they're not allowed to happen I think then, you  
7 know, they may act as an outlet but I don't think  
8 they're nearly as effective. So I think that's -- a  
9 lot of that has to do with the culture that you are  
10 leading.

11 MR. SMITH: May I?

12 CHAIRMAN: Sure.

13 MR. SMITH: The -- so to Bill's point is  
14 that if you really have a good organization that there  
15 are a lot of opportunities that those programs aren't  
16 as needed as much, but they're there if people need  
17 them and we emphasize them. And we don't -- we  
18 encourage them where appropriate. I will tell you  
19 that the DPO process, particularly the biweekly  
20 meeting we have on technical issues is a unconstrained  
21 environment where we talk and bring technical issues  
22 up and bring them out on the table and we really make  
23 every effort to know what our risks are and how we're  
24 going forward. So the fundamental culture below that  
25 is bringing these issues to us. The DPO process is



1 available, we encourage it, but we want to have  
2 managers considering employees concerns and issues  
3 well before it gets to an acute phase that you have to  
4 have somebody on site. So what Bill's describing is a  
5 process by which he encourages these technical issues  
6 to be brought to him and we will have a team or our  
7 chief engineer, we will have our senior technical  
8 adviser sit down, go through, evaluate and try to have  
9 and bring these issues into fruition and resolve them  
10 where everybody is valued in the process. And so Bill  
11 -- that process is working quite well. We also have  
12 it at the ORP level, so we also have a level above  
13 Bill where the deputy manager has worked a technical  
14 review process where again, technical issues can be  
15 vetted across the managers.

16 Then lastly, is that we have reinvigorated the  
17 failsafe programs the Department of Energy has, the  
18 IG, the imported concerns, the opportunity, all those  
19 programs we make sure are available to all employees.  
20 And we advertise that on a regular basis. And I've  
21 already mentioned that I'm the failsafe, that they can  
22 always come to me.

23 CHAIRMAN: Okay. But are we -- are these  
24 programs being used? And I say that knowing full well  
25 that sometimes you put the suggestion box out, you



1 could have a great organization, it's happy land,  
2 nobody has any suggestions. You can have a terrible  
3 organization where they're so paranoid they think  
4 you're videotaping who might be stuffing something in  
5 the suggestion box. Either way the result's the same,  
6 there's nothing in the suggestion box. So if we're --  
7 are we getting much on these programs? And if not how  
8 do we know which of those two we're in?

9 MR. SMITH: So the answer on the employee  
10 concerns program is periodic. Okay. Not very often  
11 in the employee concerns piece. It has actually kind  
12 of gone from when I first arrived about two years ago  
13 to be quite high in numbers to reasonably low and  
14 periodic now. But they are there and available. The  
15 differing professional businesses is thriving. We  
16 have all kinds of people bringing up technical issues  
17 or different ways to do things or even different ways  
18 to build a plant. It is a robust process. There are  
19 still issues to work through. And we still have  
20 employees that want their idea to be the winner but it  
21 is working.

22 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Roberson.

23 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan.

24 So actually, I'm going to come to you first, Mr.  
25 Whitney. I know Mr. Smith will want to add some



1 clarifying feedback. The backlog of unresolved  
2 technical issues at the WTP project was a product of  
3 questionable management decisions. That was one of  
4 the Board's conclusions in this recommendation, which  
5 was one of the precipitating reasons for the  
6 recommendation overall. What have you done to remedy  
7 the backlog of unresolved technical issues on the  
8 project?

9 MR. WHITNEY: And I will, you know, defer  
10 to Kevin on the specifics of this. But I have  
11 recently received a briefing on the technical issues  
12 and where the team is. I think Kevin and his staff,  
13 both ORP and BNI, have done a tremendous amount to  
14 reduce the backlog. One, I mean, there are two pieces  
15 of this, one, you want to -- it could be a good sign  
16 that you have a lot of technical issues that haven't  
17 been identified whether by self, by staff, by self  
18 identification or not. But you also want to make sure  
19 you have the resources dedicated to then resolving  
20 them. And in my, you know, briefings and work with  
21 Kevin and his team, I'm confident that they're  
22 applying the resources to do that. Some of these  
23 issues are very difficult and complex and are going to  
24 take some time and they're still working through that.  
25 And I'm talking years in time in some cases. And I'll



1 turn to Kevin to provide more details on the specific  
2 numbers of how many cases before and where they were  
3 now.

4 MR. SMITH: Well, there's two parts to your  
5 question. Let's talk about the T1 teams, the high  
6 level ones, the nine areas that really are the more  
7 difficult ones that are out there first. Those teams  
8 in those particular areas have been projectized, they  
9 are tracked meticulously, we have dedicated team leads  
10 and we're trying to drive a conclusion that we're in  
11 --- knock on wood, we're on track to knock two of  
12 these out for good, the criticality and HPAV, may very  
13 well be the first two that we can get done. So  
14 hopefully we can get them off the plate this year and  
15 we're working methodically.

16 As for general issues, one of the byproducts of  
17 trying to go to a self-discovery, self-reporting,  
18 where you all of the sudden reward employees for  
19 bringing out issues is you get issues. And now there  
20 are those issues that were brought on to the plate  
21 plus the backlog issues. Mr. Hamel here has  
22 incentivized or proposed and incentivized the team for  
23 Bechtel to try to make a fiscal reduction in this  
24 fiscal year. He set a goal of trying to reduce it by  
25 50 percent. I just happened to be in a meeting



1 yesterday with Ms. McCullough, the head of WTP, where  
2 she set the team's goal and focus again as to  
3 eliminating the backlog of these issues because it's  
4 the defense to get the project done on time and to  
5 make sure that we can resolve them effectively. So  
6 they have a very good dedicated team to that. But  
7 these are technical issues, some of them aren't ripe  
8 until you reach that point of the design build, so  
9 some of them will hold a little bit.

10 In terms of the Office of River Protection, we  
11 also have issues that have been around for a period of  
12 time that we are bringing focus in and trying to bring  
13 to resolution as well. So I would say at both levels  
14 for both projects, the WTP level and also for ORP, we  
15 are focusing on eliminating these issues because  
16 that's important to our success and it is also needed  
17 to get the project done.

18 VICE CHAIRMAN: So are you confident you  
19 have a functioning issues management system because  
20 you have emerging issues as well too, right?

21 MR. SMITH: It's sometimes a lot. It's  
22 significant to address. And the resources to do that  
23 are, you know, you only have so many great technical  
24 experts in certain fields, so the answer is we're  
25 working on them. And we've got a ways to go. But it



1 is a focus of ours right at the present time.

2 VICE CHAIRMAN: Did you want to comment,  
3 Mr. Hamel?

4 MR. HAMEL: To further support that, one of  
5 the key things that's important on the T1 through T8  
6 issues is the fact that we not only have technical  
7 teams that are working on them, we've enlisted the aid  
8 of the national laboratories, academia and industry,  
9 the best that we can get to support closing those  
10 items. So there is a lot of emphasis on there and  
11 we're trying to get the best that we can get to close  
12 those technical issues.

13 VICE CHAIRMAN: Okay. So, Mr. Whitney,  
14 simply put, what are -- what have you communicated is  
15 your expectations, your leadership expectations for  
16 oversight of WTP nuclear safety processes?

17 MR. WHITNEY: Well, first of all, you know,  
18 the very highest level of communication is something  
19 we try to reinforce is what's captured in our  
20 integrated safety management system, our order. And  
21 that is what safety culture is and what our  
22 responsibilities are as leaders. And that's got to be  
23 a consistent part of every message that we provide.  
24 And then it's being involved as a leader, being  
25 involved. We talked a lot about what that means. How



1 do you drive safety culture, whether it is in the  
2 Federal organization or an oversight of a contract  
3 organization, but it is a lot of things like being  
4 visible, being in the field. Both for folks like  
5 Kevin and for BNI, you got to get out there and see  
6 the people and work with the people that are actually  
7 doing the work. So my expectations are one, in the  
8 area of safety culture the -- kind of the  
9 recommendations and the implementation plan that we  
10 have is that we focus on those, that we continue to  
11 improve safety culture but that we also  
12 institutionalize that. And that has to be at the core  
13 of everything we do. And that goes back to the open  
14 statement about what safety culture is to DOE. And  
15 there's a lot of different definitions for safety  
16 culture. I think the one that we have identified in  
17 ISM is the right one for DOE. And that kind of --  
18 that kind of sets everything out. And then the ISM  
19 attachment 10, that captures our safety culture, the  
20 way we approach safety culture and how we integrate  
21 that into our integrated safety management system.  
22 And that also is a clear expectation. And I don't  
23 think there should be a lot of questions on, you know  
24 --

25 VICE CHAIRMAN: I understand what you're



1 saying. I guess simply put, my question is: One of  
2 the concerns the Board raised was more than expected  
3 tension when it came to integrating engineering and  
4 nuclear safety. So how do you detect, how do you  
5 determine that there's been improvement in that area?

6 MR. WHITNEY: Well, for me at headquarters  
7 providing the field oversight it is working with my  
8 site manager, working with Kevin, having confidence in  
9 my site management, not just here, everywhere. And  
10 here I have a tremendous amount of confidence in Kevin  
11 and his team. And we talk about this on a regular  
12 basis. And he tells me what he's doing to ensure that  
13 that's being done. So for me that is my role when I'm  
14 able to visit here. I have -- I get briefings on  
15 this, I had a briefing today, I had a briefing the  
16 last time I visited on technical issues, but we always  
17 have some portion of safety culture and the oversight  
18 function that the Federal organization is to provide.  
19 So for me that is my role and ensuring that I have the  
20 right leaders in place that have the right training,  
21 the right mindset, understand my expectations in this  
22 area. And then allow them to do their job and hold  
23 them accountable, reward them when they do a good job  
24 and hold them accountable when something else happens.

25 VICE CHAIRMAN: I just come to you



1 since you are who gives Mr. Whitney confidence, how do  
2 you determine that there's been improvement?

3 MR. SMITH: Well, Ms. Roberson, you  
4 know that anybody responsible in nuclear operations  
5 take it absolute seriously. And since we also have an  
6 active tank farm that's a nuclear facility as well and  
7 you know I've had responsibilities in past assignments  
8 also. So I think that, first of all, I keep Mr.  
9 Whitney informed on a day-to-day basis of just picking  
10 up the phone if anything turbulent or anything unusual  
11 happens. I also communicate very clearly the needs,  
12 the infrastructure, the requirements, how it's  
13 performing and where we're going and so we have some  
14 very clean communication on a day-to-day basis between  
15 the two of us.

16 As for ensuring the question about the  
17 turbulence that used to exist in WTP relative to  
18 nuclear safety, I think has smoothed out considerably.  
19 I think it works a lot more efficiently and I think  
20 that the -- they still have some challenges to bring  
21 the safety basis into alignment. But Mr. Hamel here  
22 is keeping the fence up that he has -- he is driving  
23 the series of decisions necessary, particularly in the  
24 high level waste facility, that it has to have the  
25 PDSA combination maybe DSA aligned before we're going



1 to give them any authorization to resume full  
2 construction. And I'm upholding that fence for him.  
3 He has to prove it to me, and I take that obligation  
4 and that safety basis delegation authorities  
5 seriously. And I'm -- I don't think anybody would  
6 have a doubt of that.

7 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, sir.

8 CHAIRMAN: Mr. Hamel, are the  
9 subcontractors here from a safety standpoint, safety  
10 culture standpoint, are they held to the same standard  
11 as the prime, BNI?

12 MR. HAMEL: Yes. What I have seen is I  
13 have seen Bechtel hold their subcontractors especially  
14 accountable. You know, we see that through field  
15 performance, you know, we see that through the general  
16 overall safety briefings, which the subcontractors are  
17 at. We see that in how Bechtel treats their entire  
18 site workers with the same expectation and standard.  
19 So I can definitely say yes, the expectations are  
20 consistent, they're applied consistently and they're  
21 communicated consistently.

22 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Mr. Podonsky, this point  
23 was raised in your most recent assessment that there  
24 was at least a perception that the subcontractors were  
25 not held to the same standard as the prime. So I'm



1 asking you first if you can address any specifics from  
2 that and second, since you're also responsible for  
3 enforcement, can you speak to enforcement by the  
4 Department on the subcontractors?

5 MR. PODONSKY: The question is actually a  
6 very good question because it actually is pervasive to  
7 the Department. I have just completed going around to  
8 and talking to almost all the National Laboratory  
9 directors and site managers for those labs. And the  
10 biggest issue that the lab directors have is having  
11 the subcontractors following the same safety standards  
12 that the primes do. I can't give you the specific on  
13 WTP, but I would say my assumption is that there is  
14 difficulty there as expressed by the other parts of  
15 the Department. Our enforcement folks are starting to  
16 look at that across the board because this is one of  
17 the issues that came out of the 17 labs that I  
18 visited, 16 out of the 17, and it is something that  
19 has been evasive in the Department and it is something  
20 that we're going to go start working with the national  
21 labor unions, AFSL, metal trades, steel workers,  
22 building and construction because they're following --  
23 most of them are following OSHA standards, they're  
24 following other standards, EPA, but they're not always  
25 following the standards of DOE. And that's been a



1 difficult challenge, as I said, across the complex.  
2 Specifically here, I don't recall how dramatic of a  
3 problem that was, but if it is happening at at least  
4 16 of 17 labs I'd say it is probably the same issue.  
5 And so I'm starting an initiative out at VA that we  
6 actually started about three weeks ago. The Secretary  
7 has asked us to look at what are the best practices in  
8 the Department above and beyond operational experience  
9 that is part of the AU organization's  
10 responsibilities. And one of the things that we're  
11 starting to do, Mary Jo Campanoni, as you may recall,  
12 is leading this project, is starting with the labor  
13 unions to find out how we can bridge the gap between  
14 what we're hearing at some of the sites about the  
15 standards that the subs are using versus what the  
16 primes are using.

17 CHAIRMAN: So it is kind of a contract  
18 question. So I'm speaking generically. I'm talking  
19 about contracts and legal stuff, but can you reach  
20 directly to a subcontractor or do you have to rely on  
21 your enforcement upon the contractor, who in turn is  
22 supposed to be enforcing upon the sub?

23 MR. PODONSKY: The legislation that  
24 congress gave to the Department on the three areas,  
25 for everybody's edification, is nuclear safety, worker



1 health and safety 51, and then also control of  
2 classified matter. And we go to the prime  
3 contractors.

4 CHAIRMAN: Okay. So you go to the prime  
5 and the prime has to keep the subcontractor in line,  
6 if you will, if the subcontractor is not meeting  
7 requirements. Is that my understanding?

8 MR. PODONSKY: That's our understanding.

9 CHAIRMAN: Okay. And is that problematic  
10 for you? I mean, so anything that can become a daisy  
11 chain sometimes loses something in translation.

12 MR. PODONSKY: The whole enforcement  
13 activity is a challenge because it's a long process.  
14 It is very much a legal process as well as a technical  
15 process. We haven't had difficulties with conducting  
16 enforcement all the way down but it's been taking in  
17 some cases up to three years. So reaching the  
18 perpetrators of any potential violations has not been  
19 a problem for us thus far with -- just for your, the  
20 Board's edification, NNSA, we go to the administrator,  
21 we do all the investigations, investigatory work, but  
22 ultimately it's the administrator that signs off on  
23 that documentation. Only one time did we have one of  
24 the previous administrators for NNSA go to a lesser  
25 recommendation. But to answer your point directly, we



1 have always been able to reach the intended target.

2 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you. I think we've  
3 reached the scheduled time where we were going to end  
4 this session. Do you have any more questions you'd  
5 like to ask?

6 VICE CHAIRMAN: I do. I have at least one  
7 more question I'd like to ask. In one of the Board's  
8 previous public meetings one of the experts on safety  
9 culture expressed concerns that safety conscious work  
10 environment approaches tend to focus more on personal  
11 safety rather than organizational culture of safety.  
12 The expert noted that this was a concern raised by  
13 unions and DOE personnel at a 2014 workshop for DOE  
14 facility reps -- representatives. In addition, most  
15 of the assessments at WTP conclude that people are  
16 willing raise issues but did not believe that  
17 management would accept and address their concerns.  
18 This suggests a problem with a belief in leadership  
19 commitment, visibility and dependability, rather than  
20 general workforce fear of retribution.

21 So, Mr. Smith, I'm asking you because we're  
22 talking about WTP, could you tell us why the primary  
23 response to the Board's recommendation has been a  
24 focus on safety conscious work environment and are  
25 there specific components of safety conscious work



1 environment that you think have been fruitful in your  
2 pursuit to change the culture on the project?

3 MR. SMITH: I don't -- as you well know,  
4 Ms. Roberson, I didn't live through the first part of  
5 this period of time so I'm only used to running  
6 organizations with these kinds of cultures and  
7 sensitivities and so it is actually a foreign concept  
8 to me because it is internal to what I do. I mean, it  
9 is just the way a good manager should manage. I do  
10 think that the Board's focus on safety culture has  
11 highlighted a need to remind ourselves both on nuclear  
12 culture but also in individual culture and has  
13 actually has expanded the discussion into things like  
14 infrastructure, aging infrastructure and do we have  
15 the right trained workforce in the future. So I it  
16 has been very helpful in expanding the dialogue into a  
17 lot of areas.

18 For me personally, I think it has helped me look  
19 for the difference between an M & O contract and an  
20 FAR contract where the -- I have to be much more  
21 vigilant I find in a FAR contract that I don't have  
22 seams or complacency. So to answer your question, and  
23 I'm not known for giving the Board a lot of kudos on  
24 public, but I think this one has been well served.

25 CHAIRMAN: So we end with a kudo to the



1 Board. That was -- how wonderful. All right. Well,  
2 thank you very much to each of you for your testimony.  
3 At this point we've concluded our questions to you as  
4 a panel. So thank you very much. And if you like,  
5 you can return to your seats.

6 At this time we'll continue with the testimony  
7 from the Board's Senior Technical Staff. The Board  
8 recognizes Dr. Daniel Bullen, who is the group lead  
9 for nuclear programs and analysis for our staff. He's  
10 going to briefly discuss our staff's perspective on  
11 the status of DOE's execution of the implementation  
12 plan for Board Recommendation 2011-1, the corrective  
13 actions taken in response to the Recommendation at WTP  
14 and the results of the extent of condition reviews  
15 conducted by the Department of Energy.

16 Dr. Bullen, please proceed.

17 DR. BULLEN: Good evening, Mr. Sullivan and  
18 Ms. Roberson. Thank you for the opportunity to  
19 testify today. My name is Daniel Bullen. I'm the  
20 group lead for Nuclear Programs and Analysis at the  
21 Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board. My group is  
22 responsible for overseeing the Department of Energy's  
23 implementation of Board recommendation 2011-1, safety  
24 culture at the Waste Treatment and Immobilization  
25 Plant. All actions in DOE's implementation plan have



1 essentially been completed except for one. In Action  
2 16 DOE committed to reviewing the contract for the WTP  
3 project and to and I quote, implement appropriate  
4 mechanisms to achieve balanced priorities and include  
5 safety culture elements, end quote.

6 The completion of Action 16 is necessary to  
7 ensure that the contract properly awards the safety  
8 performance that DOE expects of the contractor. The  
9 delay in the completion of Action 16 is due to the  
10 fact that the baseline for the project is currently  
11 being re-evaluated and the contract will not be  
12 renegotiated until the new baseline has been  
13 determined. There have been areas where  
14 implementation of the plan has resulted in improvement  
15 within Department of Energy. However, there have been  
16 other areas where implementation was less effective  
17 due to inadequacies of the plan. DOE's efforts have  
18 led to increased awareness and understanding of  
19 organizational culture and its impact on the safety of  
20 operations at defense nuclear facilities. The concept  
21 of safety culture -- concepts of safety culture are  
22 being discussed at all levels within DOE and its  
23 contractor organizations and DOE's senior leaders have  
24 been engaged in establishing their expectations and  
25 communicating their support for improving safety



1 culture within the complex.

2 An important outcome of DOE's efforts was the  
3 procurement of outside expertise in organizational  
4 psychology and the development and application of  
5 in-house expertise and tools in the Office of  
6 Enterprise Assessments. In early 2012 that capability  
7 provided the first full picture of the organizational  
8 weaknesses within the WTP project and the cultural  
9 dysfunctions that led to those weaknesses. Since that  
10 time the Office of Enterprise Assessment's independent  
11 safety culture assessment team has provided valuable  
12 insight into the organizational cultures at other  
13 major defense nuclear facility construction projects,  
14 key DOE organizations and the Pantex Plant.

15 However, there were some weaknesses that only  
16 became apparent during the plan's implementation. The  
17 plan was developed and approved by DOE prior to the  
18 completion of the 2012 independent safety culture  
19 assessment at the WTP project. As a result, the plan  
20 was based on preliminary analysis and assumptions  
21 about the underlying causes of the organizational  
22 weaknesses that led to the Board's decision to issue  
23 the recommendation. DOE did issue an addendum to the  
24 implementation plan to clarify their approach to  
25 resolving the findings of the independent assessment



1 at WTP. However, the implementation plan was not  
2 modified to ensure that these findings and their  
3 underlying causes were incorporated in its actions at  
4 other defense nuclear facilities. The Board issued  
5 the recommendation because it was concerned that, and  
6 I quote, both DOE and contractor project management  
7 behaviors reinforced a subculture at WTP that deters  
8 the timely reporting, acknowledgment and ultimate  
9 resolution of technical safety concerns, end quote.  
10 However, DOE's implementation plan identified only  
11 four underlying causes of the issues that led to the  
12 recommendation. One, DOE's failure to establish  
13 expectations for safety culture; two, the inadequate  
14 migration of the unintended impacts on culture during  
15 shifts in project execution phases; three, the need  
16 for DOE and contractor managers to require more  
17 knowledge and awareness of safety culture, and four;  
18 ineffective technical issues, resolution and  
19 communication at WTP. None of these underlying causes  
20 directly addressed the Board's concern about  
21 management behaviors reinforcing subcultures that act  
22 counter to good nuclear safety practices.

23 Both ORP and BNI have reorganized or have  
24 recognized the importance of the findings from the  
25 various assessments of their safety culture. They



1 developed improvement plans with a number of actions  
2 to address these safety culture concerns and have  
3 nearly completed implementing those actions. ORP and  
4 BNI had expended considerable effort and resources to  
5 improve their safety culture by adapting concepts and  
6 principles from other organizations. However, these  
7 actions have not been in place long enough to judge  
8 their effectiveness in addressing the respective  
9 issues.

10 DOE conducted an extent of condition issue  
11 reviews to determine if similar cultural weaknesses  
12 existed at other defense nuclear facilities and  
13 projects. Those assessments were conducted using one  
14 of two approaches. The same independent expert team  
15 that was used for the WTP reviews was used for the  
16 review of major defense nuclear facility construction  
17 projects. In contrast, self-assessments were  
18 conducted by sites with defense nuclear facilities and  
19 associated federal offices. The independent  
20 assessment team identified issues with the safety --  
21 with the safety culture of the projects.

22 Additionally, the team conducted assessments of the  
23 Pantex Plant and selected DOE headquarter elements  
24 where they also identified significant issues. DOE's  
25 senior leadership has recognized the importance of



1 these issues. The primary focus of the  
2 self-assessments was on whether a safety conscious  
3 work environment existed at each site and not on the  
4 broader safety culture concerns raised by the Board.  
5 The recommendation did not tie the extent of the  
6 condition reviews to the state of the safety conscious  
7 work environment at each site. By limiting the scope  
8 of these reviews, the question of whether the Board's  
9 broader safety culture concerns were occurring at  
10 other sites was not addressed. The self-assessments  
11 lacked meaningful guidance and expectation and the  
12 assessment teams did not have adequate training. This  
13 had a significant detrimental impact on most of the  
14 self-assessments. In contrast, the independent  
15 assessments demonstrated that the application of  
16 consistent and appropriate tools and techniques along  
17 with qualified and experienced team members yielded  
18 meaningful and workable results. Some of the  
19 self-assessment reports clearly demonstrated the  
20 thoughtful, self-critical and introspective mindset  
21 required to make this type of assessment successful.  
22 However, a high frequency of confirmation bias was  
23 observed in most of the reports . Confirmation bias  
24 in such assessments creates situations where valid  
25 safety culture and safety conscious work environment



1 concerns may be overlooked or ignored because such  
2 observations do not fit within the perception of that  
3 organization. DOE directed that sites with defense  
4 nuclear facilities develop plans to assure sustainment  
5 of a robust safety culture but gave them the  
6 flexibility to select tools suitable to the specific  
7 condition at their site. As with the  
8 self-assessments, the lack of meaningful guidance,  
9 expectation and training had significant detrimental  
10 impact on the overall quality and usefulness of the  
11 sustainment plans. Again, some of the individual  
12 plans displayed very good understanding of the issues  
13 that needed to be addressed at the site and they  
14 presented well thought out approaches to addressing  
15 those issues.

16 Consistent with our analysis, DOE's independent  
17 safety culture assessment team identified similar  
18 concerns regarding the effectiveness of  
19 self-assessments and the weaknesses associated with  
20 the sustainment plans during their oversight of those  
21 activities.

22 In summary, the implementation plan has  
23 essentially been completed. DOE has characterized  
24 safety culture issues at WTP and continues to  
25 implement corrective actions. DOE has completed



1 extent of conditions reviews that identified issues at  
2 other DOE defense nuclear facilities. The Board staff  
3 will continue to monitor the status of these issues as  
4 part of our routine oversight. I'd like to thank you  
5 for the opportunity to testify today and that  
6 concludes my testimony.

7 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Dr. Bullen. So you  
8 indicated that one of the key reasons why the Board  
9 issued this recommendation was because of management's  
10 behavior reinforcing a subculture at WTP that deterred  
11 the timely reporting, acknowledgement and ultimate  
12 resolution of issues. And I heard you -- if I  
13 understood you correctly, the implementation plan for  
14 the recommendation didn't squarely address that. And  
15 it's one of the weaknesses that you saw in the  
16 implementation plan. Nevertheless, my question to you  
17 is whether or not our staff has been able to assess  
18 whether or not management behavior today still  
19 encourages behavior -- still has the wrong behavior  
20 which encourages the wrong results, have we been able  
21 to assess that?

22 DR. BULLEN: Thank you for the question,  
23 Mr. Sullivan. Actually, it's very complex and  
24 somewhat difficult to answer. We routinely, as you  
25 know, have site representatives on the site that are



1 observing the WTP project. We have cognisant  
2 engineers at headquarters who are also doing the same  
3 types of observations. And I would venture to say  
4 that our staff has sort of a non unanimous or a mixed  
5 result on that. In some cases they've seen  
6 improvement and in some cases it is difficult to  
7 determine if we have enough information to see that  
8 types of behaviors no longer exist. And so we have a  
9 mixed answer or a mixed message and that is I don't  
10 know if we have enough information to definitively to  
11 give you a positive yes or a definitive no.

12 CHAIRMAN: So you can't say for like there  
13 are site reps who live here and work here every day  
14 and have for the last several years, that don't have  
15 an answer to this question.

16 DR. BULLEN: Again, as I talked to our site  
17 reps and I talked with our cognisant engineers I got  
18 somewhat of a mixed message. In some cases they see  
19 improvement and in some cases they see that the types  
20 of where it -- there's a potential for the behavior to  
21 still exist, so it's a mixed message.

22 CHAIRMAN: But in 2011 the Board clearly  
23 came up with the determination that there was  
24 definitely problems with management behavior. Now I'm  
25 hearing well, maybe not.



1 DR. BULLEN: There may not be enough  
2 information to say maybe not or maybe so. It is still  
3 up in the air in the eyes of the staff.

4 CHAIRMAN: I guess my question to you is  
5 why don't we have enough information? I mean, we live  
6 here every day, you people live here every day and you  
7 have a group of engineers who come out here to do  
8 reviews frequently. We don't have enough the  
9 information?

10 DR. BULLEN: That's correct no, we have  
11 information but we get mixed messages is the bottom  
12 line.

13 CHAIRMAN: I'm clearly getting a mixed  
14 messages right now.

15 DR. BULLEN: Yes, you are. Sorry.

16 CHAIRMAN: All right. I don't have any  
17 other questions for Dr. Bullen. Do you?

18 VICE CHAIRMAN: No, I do not, Mr. Sullivan.

19 CHAIRMAN: Okay. Thank you very much.

20 DR. BULLEN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN: At this time, per the Board's  
22 practice and as stated in the Federal Register notice,  
23 we will welcome comments from interested members of  
24 the public. A list of those speakers who have  
25 contacted the Board is posted at the entrance to this



1 room. We have generally enlisted the speakers in the  
2 order in which they wish to speak. I will call the  
3 speakers in this order and ask the speakers to state  
4 their name and if applicable, their title and  
5 organization that they are representing at the  
6 beginning of the presentation.

7           There's also a table at the entrance to the room  
8 with a sign-up sheet for members of the public who  
9 wish to make a presentation but did not have an  
10 opportunity to notify us ahead of time. They will  
11 follow those who have already registered with us in  
12 order in which they have today. And I understand we  
13 currently have 13 people on our list; is that correct?  
14 It's down to 12. Okay. We have 12 people on our  
15 list.

16           To give everyone wishing to speak to make a  
17 presentation equal opportunity we ask that speakers  
18 limit their presentation to five minutes. And I point  
19 out I just did the quick math and if it's 5 minutes  
20 everybody, we're here at least an hour. The Chair  
21 will then give consideration for additional comments  
22 should time permit.

23           Presentations should be limited to comments,  
24 technical information, or data concerning the subject  
25 of this public hearing. The Board members may



1 question anyone making a presentation to the extent  
2 they deem appropriate.

3 And with that, we're about to begin. We thank  
4 all members of the public who have come here and been  
5 part of this discussion today and those who are about  
6 to provide comments. And my first person on the list  
7 is Mayor Steven Young. Mayor Young, are you here?

8 MR. YOUNG: Well, thank you. In order to  
9 keep this brief I'll just read from my short testimony  
10 here. As the Vice-Chairman of the -- my name is Steve  
11 Young, Mayor of the City of Kennewick. As  
12 Vice-Chairman of the Energy Community Alliance,  
13 Vice-Chairman of the Hanford Communities, but more  
14 importantly, the mayor of the City of Kennewick, which  
15 is located just 17 miles from the Hanford Site, I want  
16 to thank the members of the DNFSB for the opportunity  
17 to testify this evening regarding the safety culture  
18 at the Waste Treatment Plant. The issue of safety at  
19 the Waste Treatment Plant for us is of the utmost  
20 importance, especially to the citizens of the City of  
21 Kennewick, as well as the three other cities and two  
22 counties that make up the primary population affected  
23 by the work performed at the Hanford Site.

24 Now, as an elected official I think it's  
25 important to understand that we see ourselves, the



1 citizens, as the primary customer of the cleanup  
2 mission at Hanford. We stand to have the greatest  
3 loss if safety is ever compromised. And unsafe  
4 conditions affect our constituents, our agriculture,  
5 our tourism, and just as important our workers.  
6 Therefore, the four cities and two counties are  
7 dramatically affected by all of DOE's cleanup  
8 operations at Hanford. These effects can be and are  
9 clearly mitigated by stability, and we need and expect  
10 stability in the Waste Treatment Plant work for  
11 planning, stability in the work -- Waste Treatment  
12 Plant workforce, stability in contracting at all  
13 levels and stability in both DOE and prime contractor  
14 leadership.

15 As a community leader I have had the unique  
16 opportunity to closely observe both the Office of  
17 River Protection and Bechtel National, Incorporated,  
18 and can say that they have made major improvements in  
19 many areas, including professionalism, work  
20 relationships, work planning, communication with the  
21 workforce and most importantly, communication with our  
22 communities. All of which has led and continues to  
23 lead to a more stable and confident community where  
24 workers, their families and companies want to remain  
25 long after the site has been cleaned up and new



1 industry has emerged.

2 From my observations things have really changed  
3 over the past two years. Concerned employees and  
4 whistleblower's seemed to have pretty much  
5 disappeared. What we see now are legacy cases from  
6 the past, which are now making the news as they're  
7 brought to closure. ORP and BNI appear to see a  
8 common purpose holding events like the Grand Challenge  
9 Competitions to encourage creative ideas for improving  
10 safety and efficiency throughout the project. Both  
11 ORP and BNI leadership have embraced and rewarded  
12 employees for identifying safety issues. And, in  
13 fact, go so far as to encourage the identification of  
14 these issues.

15 This is the kind of safety culture behavior and  
16 attitude we need to get the WTP completed, operating,  
17 and the waste tanks emptied, closed and put to bed  
18 once and for all. We as a community have waited a  
19 long time for this positive safety culture at the WTP.  
20 And as a Mayor, I have waited a long time not to  
21 receive those late evening or weekend calls by  
22 frustrated or even frightened workers who believe that  
23 nobody was watching out for their best interest.  
24 From the employees, workers and family members within  
25 the community that I come in contact with, they



1 universally tell me that ORP, BNI and WRPS have the  
2 right leadership and the culture is dramatically  
3 better and headed in a very good direction. So I  
4 implore you as a customer and representing the more  
5 than 75,000 customers that live within my city to keep  
6 this culture moving forward to ensure the protection  
7 of the workforce and to encourage efficiencies in the  
8 planning, construction and operation of the WTP.  
9 Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Mayor. Next  
11 person on the list is Dawn Wellman.

12 MS. WELLMAN: Good evening. I am Dr. Dawn  
13 Wellman, I manage the Environmental Health and  
14 Remediation market for Pacific Northwest National  
15 Laboratory. I'm pleased to be able to share insights  
16 on PNNL's experience supporting the mission to process  
17 Hanford tank waste and the ORP WTP safety culture.

18 PNNL has provided continuous support to the  
19 Hanford Site mission for over 50 years. Throughout  
20 this time PNNL has maintained the necessary core  
21 competencies to serve the enduring technical entity  
22 and provide the scientific and technical leadership  
23 necessary to address complex challenges that have  
24 limited progress in waste processing, environmental  
25 remediation and increased lifecycle costs for long



1 term stewardship.

2           However, throughout this history, we at the  
3 Hanford Site National Laboratory have experienced  
4 varying degrees of engagement in resolving the  
5 technical problems that challenge the progress of the  
6 Hanford mission.

7           During the early '90's PNNL was the primary  
8 partner in for the development of long term solutions  
9 to reduce the risks and costs of the EM mission. In  
10 the last '90 and early 2000's DOE transitioned from  
11 using the National Laboratory as strategic partners of  
12 long term research and development to a role of  
13 limiting engagement for the resolution of challenges  
14 to enable the baseline.

15           In the late 2000's a further change was realized  
16 wherein the National Laboratories were nearly  
17 completely removed from supporting the EM mission.  
18 Over the past several years we have experienced a  
19 re-engagement of the National Laboratories by DOE, EM,  
20 the Hanford Site offices and the site contractors.  
21 And we have been involved as strategic partners across  
22 all elements of technology, development and  
23 martyrization ranging from solving critical technical  
24 issues limiting baseline to conducting analyses of the  
25 maturation of technologies to provide alternatives to



1 the baseline and to conducting long term research and  
2 development for solutions that can reduce lifecycle  
3 costs and risk to cleanup.

4 As an example, on December 17th, 2010, the DNFSB  
5 issued recommendation 2010-2 Pulse Jet Mixing at the  
6 Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant. In  
7 response, ORP engaged a team made up the Waste  
8 Treatment Plant contractor, National Laboratories,  
9 industry experts and academic scholars to develop  
10 technical solutions through large scale testing with  
11 stimulants representative of the complete range of  
12 Hanford waste processes properties and establish risk  
13 management strategies for technical and safety related  
14 risks that remained unresolved in 2010.

15 Throughout this process ORP and BNI leadership  
16 had exhibit strong commitment by management and staff  
17 to resolve the technical issues and has been  
18 intimately engaged with the technical team. ORP and  
19 BNI leadership has not only been accepting but  
20 encouraging of differing technical opinions and have  
21 pursued engineering studies to evaluate possible  
22 alternatives that could be realized -- that could  
23 realize improvements by changes in the WTP design. An  
24 example is an alternative engineering study that is  
25 evaluating the performance improvements possible by



1 using standard design for all vessels that will be  
2 handling high solid content waste in the pretreatment  
3 facilities. The testing and design efforts evaluated  
4 pulse jet mixer design elements, including the number  
5 and radial positions of pulse jet mixers, the drive  
6 velocities and volume of liquid change at the pulse  
7 and many other factors.

8 In our role as the Hanford Site National  
9 Laboratory, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory has  
10 observed firsthand a strong commitment by the ORP and  
11 BNI management and staff to safely resolve technical  
12 issues and assure that design efforts on the WTP's  
13 facility can proceed in a manner that is safe and  
14 functional for the long term vitrification of Hanford  
15 waste.

16 We greatly appreciate the current approach by  
17 DOE and specifically leadership from the Hanford Site  
18 offices and contractors to utilize PNNL and the  
19 enduring historic knowledge and scientific and  
20 technical experts that continue to remain essential to  
21 the success of the Hanford mission. Thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Next on my list I  
23 have two names signed up on the same line. Carl and  
24 Gary Peterson. I don't know if they're going to both  
25 speak or just one or the other.



1 MR. PETERSON: Yes. Thank you. I'm  
2 speaking for Carl Adrian and myself. And first I want  
3 to say thank you, Gary Peterson, Vice President of  
4 TRIDEC. And thank you for having this meeting and for  
5 also having me up at the front. For my age 74 and  
6 three-quarters, 74 is almost my bedtime as some people  
7 in here know, so I appreciate it.

8 Jessie, I also welcome you back to the  
9 Tri-Cities. It's very nice to see you. I also sit on  
10 the Hanford HAMMER Steering Committee and the  
11 executive board, so Glenn Podonsky, I want to say  
12 thank you to you as well for your support for HAMMER.  
13 With that I'll enter the comments.

14 Let me just point out too there's another  
15 unusual feature about my job. And that is I'm only  
16 the second person to hold this job. And I've held it  
17 now for 13 years, the predecessor held it for almost  
18 50. And that was Sam Bobemtum (phonetic). And he had  
19 the nerve to die at 101 and he'd still be here if he  
20 hadn't passed on.

21 So TRIDEC last testified before the DNFSB in  
22 2012. At that meeting we stated that TRIDEC and our  
23 community does have confidence in DOE's Office of  
24 River Protection and in Bechtel's leadership on the  
25 construction of the Waste Treatment Plant. We



1 continue to have confidence in these organizations.  
2 And the ensuing three years from 2012 to 2015 have  
3 further solidified our beliefs that progress is being  
4 made, safety is a prime importance throughout the site  
5 and employees who may have safety or other concerns  
6 are being heard. The mantra of whistleblower's has in  
7 essence disappeared over the last three years because  
8 ORP and BNI leadership have created an atmosphere  
9 where issues are brought forward openly, discussed  
10 openly and brought to the resolution that is  
11 satisfactory to the employees.

12 If I may, though, for just a few minutes I want  
13 to get more personal in my remarks. For an  
14 understanding of why I feel the need to get personal,  
15 let me tell you that I have lived in the Tri-Cities  
16 since 1965. And that's a longer period than some  
17 people in the room, but not everybody. My wife has  
18 lived here since 1944. And so I drank the water that  
19 comes from the Columbia River immediately downstream  
20 from the Hanford Site. I think most people in the  
21 room know that the City of Richland is the only major  
22 municipality located downstream of Hanford that uses  
23 Columbia River water for its potable water source.  
24 While you have and will hear from what I call watchdog  
25 organizations and individuals who do not in the live



1 in the Tri-Cities, I can assure you that after 50  
2 years of living next to Hanford and working all across  
3 Hanford Site and the constant relative to Hanford,  
4 Hanford cleanup and the safety issues at Hanford, the  
5 constant is the people who live in our community and  
6 who live in Richland.

7 Who has the most to gain or lose from actions  
8 taken by Department of Energy and the prime  
9 contractors or even you on the DNFSB? I assure you  
10 it's the individuals like myself and my family who  
11 live in our community. It is not the people who don't  
12 live here and never will.

13 While I retired from the National Laboratory in  
14 2002, I have continued to work for TRIDEC and now I  
15 have worked for TRIDEC for 13 full years. My job at  
16 Hanford is singularly focused on Hanford and the  
17 National Laboratory. I have previously, however,  
18 worked in a variety of jobs across the Hanford Site  
19 for nearly 50 years. I can almost guarantee you, not  
20 quite, almost guarantee you, the members of the  
21 Defense Nuclear Safety Facility Board, that there is  
22 no other individual other than those who work  
23 regularly at Hanford who goes to Hanford more  
24 frequently than I do. I'm going to say that again. I  
25 don't think there's anybody other than the workers at



1 Hanford who goes to Hanford more often than I do.  
2 Just last week I helped escort 13 congressional staff  
3 members on a full day tour of Hanford, and this was  
4 the 18th year that TRIDEC has sponsored that  
5 particular trip. Congressional staff asked difficult  
6 questions. You don't try and hide anything from them  
7 and they keep coming back. I know personally that  
8 Kevin Smith, Stacy Charboneau, the DOE managers at ORP  
9 and RL. And I also know that the prime contractor  
10 managers like Peggy, sitting over here on my left, and  
11 managers that work for them and their workers are  
12 really concerned about safety. Why do I say this?  
13 I'm convinced that our contractors and DOE want to  
14 clean up Hanford. They want the Waste Treatment Plant  
15 to be completed and to operate as designed. They want  
16 the tanks emptied of all nuclear waste and the sludge  
17 from removed from K basin. And they want to do this  
18 as safely as possible. There is not a single manager  
19 that I know of that doesn't want their entire  
20 workforce to return at home at night in the same  
21 health as when they came to work in the morning.  
22 These are not individuals who are trying to cut  
23 corners, increase risks or build facilities that won't  
24 work. To me, my wife, two daughters, six  
25 grandchildren, I and my neighbors want Hanford cleaned



1 up. I ask for your help, that of the DNFSB to do  
2 this. Not with impediments along the way. But with  
3 recommendations and oversight that get the job done  
4 safely, efficiently and without burdening the work  
5 being done with requirements that are simply outside  
6 the realm of possibility. I thank you very much.

7 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Peterson. Next  
8 name on the list is Chris McNiel.

9 MS. MCNIEL: Good evening. I can  
10 appreciate that it's almost past my bedtime too. So  
11 thank you. My name is Chris McNiel, I'm the director  
12 of Environmental Safety and Health for Washington  
13 River Protection Solutions, my affiliations are with  
14 ACOM and that's an LLC company operated by ACOM and  
15 Energy Solutions. I'd like thank the Board the  
16 opportunity to talk tonight. And I want to say just a  
17 few words concerning some of the initiatives we have  
18 going on within ACOM that are also effecting what  
19 we're doing at WTP.

20 I spent most of my career, all 38 years in  
21 environmental safety and health. I have been on many  
22 of the nuclear sites here in the U.S. And I just  
23 returned about a year ago from Sellafield in the UK  
24 and I was really glad to come back to some place warm  
25 and sunny and so Hanford, here I am. Thank you very



1 much.

2           Some of the insights that I have gained over the  
3 last 38 years are that the safety culture, as we call  
4 it, is really a three-legged stool, if you will. It  
5 is leadership, organizational learning and  
6 communications. But within that, the leadership leg  
7 of the stool has many elements. And I found that  
8 absolute key to that is the senior managers walking  
9 the talk. At WCH and WRPS and now at WTP I see senior  
10 managers not only walking around but listening.  
11 They're listening to what the individuals are saying,  
12 they're listening to the employees. And when they  
13 observe and see things and they're being told things,  
14 they fix those things. It is very, very important.  
15 So they're walking the talk.

16           At WTP the management team participates in the  
17 observation, evaluation and improvement of safety and  
18 senior supervisor watch reports, management  
19 observation checklists. The project directors  
20 management teams are routinely in the work areas,  
21 they're talking to the individuals. They're walking  
22 the talk. The communication leg of the stool not only  
23 consistent, effective communication but most  
24 importantly effective listening, effective listening  
25 leads to employee engagement, which is the cornerstone



1 of any strong nuclear safety culture. At ACOM we  
2 recently conducted an employee engagement survey that  
3 included WTP and the employees stated our work areas  
4 are safe, we can raise concerns and corrective actions  
5 are taken and good safety performance is recognized.  
6 This is a positive indication of our culture and where  
7 we're going.

8 Finally, the organizational learning leg of the  
9 stool and ACOM sites including WTP consists of things  
10 like classroom, on-the-job training, we have this  
11 wonderful facility in HAMMER that I think is a one of  
12 a kind in the world. But beyond that, it is really  
13 operational experience sharing OPEC's understanding  
14 what we're doing as far as hazard identification,  
15 hazard recognition, work package review, including the  
16 employees working those down with you and performance  
17 monitoring and assurance conduct to make sure that  
18 we've got the oversight that we need and that it is in  
19 place.

20 The second major lesson I have learned about  
21 safety culture and development is that no nuclear  
22 project or site is an island. It is fundamental  
23 mistake in building a safety culture to go it alone.  
24 To try to tackle the task without outside help. At  
25 Sellafield, WCH, WRPS, Idaho, wherever we've been



1 we've sought the advice and counsel of the parent  
2 companies, other nuclear sites, regulators oversight  
3 groups and industry experts. At WTP we're doing the  
4 same, plus supporting their safety culture improvement  
5 efforts through the use of corporate subject matter  
6 experts, site expertise, outside experts and via our  
7 internal function coordination teams.

8           The third and final major lesson I have learned  
9 is safety culture development is that complacency is  
10 the enemy. Sustaining a safety culture require  
11 vigilance and it doesn't happen over night. And we  
12 have brought that up a couple of times. To combat  
13 complacency at the projects and sites we operate we  
14 perform the following, observation programs, such as  
15 crafted base safety observations, quality programs,  
16 ISM certifications, environmental management, ISO  
17 certifications, voluntary protection program, leading,  
18 liking metrics and dashboards such as the project  
19 health dashboard at WTP, improvement programs and  
20 infusion of new talent and, you know, we still with  
21 pride in this industry at WRPS we're taking the safety  
22 culture monitoring panel that was developed in WTP and  
23 we're now incorporating that into our site to try to  
24 grow that culture within us.

25           So the big question that we have all been



1 listening to tonight is is the safety culture efforts  
2 at WTP working? We have talked a lot about the  
3 surveys, we've talked about a lot of the interviews  
4 that have been conducted. I believe that the results  
5 from those are leading us down the right path. And we  
6 have got to stay the course. We've got to not get  
7 complacent along the way and that we will get there.

8           Just a couple of things we haven't talked about.  
9 I had the opportunity of being at the BPP national  
10 conference this week and on Sunday there was three  
11 sites from Hanford that received the star of  
12 excellence award. WCH, WRPS and WTP. And that's not  
13 just about safety stats, although it's really  
14 important to me that everybody goes home the way they  
15 came to work. It is also about what we're doing in  
16 the communities, our outreach programs and our  
17 mentoring. That is key. And I appreciate the  
18 comments from local community that's been given as  
19 well.

20           So thank you again for providing me the  
21 opportunity to speak about safety culture improvement  
22 at WTP. We're committed to continuously improving the  
23 safety culture at WTP and at all of our other nuclear  
24 project sites. And I have discussed, I think we're  
25 making progress and we'll continue to push forward.



1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Ms. McNeil. Next  
3 name is Pam Larson.

4 MS. LARSON: Hello. I'm Pam Larson and I'm  
5 the Executive Director of the Hanford Communities  
6 Organization, which is an interlocal organization  
7 comprised of the cities and counties that surround the  
8 Hanford Site. I have served in this job for 21 years.  
9 I have also been a member of the Hanford Advisory  
10 Board for 21 years. We are not term limited here.  
11 I'm not speaking to you on this evening as a HAB  
12 member.

13 First of all, I want to express our appreciate  
14 for the enormous progress that has been made with the  
15 cleanup of the Hanford Site and the Department of  
16 Energy's commitment to be sure that work is done  
17 safely. For those of us who live in this region,  
18 maintaining the pristine quality of water in the  
19 Columbia River is essential. We draw our drinking  
20 water from the river, we swim and fish in the river.  
21 As we diversify our economy away from Hanford, growing  
22 our food processing industry, agriculture, healthcare  
23 and the wine industry we must be assured that our  
24 environment is safe and the water quality remains  
25 high. For those reasons it is imperative that the



1 Department of Energy continue to empty tanks and build  
2 the extraordinarily complex Waste Treatment Plant.  
3 We're very encouraged with the DOE framework plan for  
4 an early start of the WA facility. We need tank waste  
5 treatment as soon as possible.

6 The direct feed LAW approach will insure that  
7 waste fed to the WA melters meets specifications. And  
8 starting up WA early that will also provide initial  
9 tank capacity so that waste can continue to be pumped  
10 from tanks that are leaking or may leak in the future.  
11 This added flexibility is crucial. We are encourage  
12 that ORP as resumed full production engineering of the  
13 HLW facility. And I hear they may soon authorize full  
14 construction or they may do so within the next year or  
15 so. The Hanford Communities endorse the construction  
16 of the blending and conditioning facilities to provide  
17 waste feed to WTP that meet waste acceptance criteria.

18 As you're aware, the Department of Energy and  
19 the state of Washington are engaged in a dispute about  
20 cleanup progress under the Federal consent decree.  
21 The Federal judge has held two hearings about the  
22 dispute in our community. I have attended both and I  
23 have listened to the attorney for both sides express  
24 their positions. The judge has asked a compelling  
25 question. What has changed since you agreed to the



1 conditions in the decree? It is important to know  
2 that one of the answers is that the defense Board has  
3 continued to revise what you think is an acceptable  
4 and manageable risk. Studies have been undertaken and  
5 significant cost that have delayed the progress of the  
6 project. Tanks continue to degrade and increase the  
7 risk to our region. To my knowledge, the studies that  
8 have been undertaken have largely validated the path  
9 forward. In order to avoid further delays we ask that  
10 you please get any remaining concerns on the table now  
11 so that ORP can complete design and resume full  
12 construction of WTP. We need tank waste treatment as  
13 soon as possible. Because of the litigation with the  
14 State, DOE attorneys have restricted the information  
15 that ORP can share with the public, leaving an  
16 impression that progression is not being made. The  
17 Hanford Communities have had the unique opportunity to  
18 closely observe both ORP and BNI and we can say that  
19 things are have dramatically improved, including  
20 professionalism, working relationships, mission  
21 planning, technical issue resolution and the  
22 integration between tank farms and WTP. New people  
23 have been brought in to leadership positions who are  
24 providing strong direction and they're reaching out to  
25 workers encouraging them to share ideas and concerns.



1 We believe they are taking the necessary steps to make  
2 the WTP plant operational and safe.

3 I have had the opportunity to tour the  
4 vitrification plants at Sellafield, LaHog and Savannah  
5 River and at each of those facilities they have  
6 continued to refine their processes as they have been  
7 treating waste. We can do the same. All possible  
8 questions that could be answered do not need to be  
9 fully answered before the plant begins operation.  
10 Any first of their kind facility needs to learn from  
11 experience. It is time to start.

12 I would like to speak briefly about the  
13 outstanding progress that has been made in  
14 decommissioning and demolition activities at the  
15 highly contaminated Plutonium conditioning plant. DOE  
16 expects to meet their milestone and have demolition  
17 completed in 2018. This has been a difficult project  
18 involving extremely dangerous materials. We're very  
19 encouraged by the work that has been done and the  
20 focus on safety. This evening I want to express our  
21 appreciation for the highly trained scientists,  
22 engineers, technical staff and the remarkable workers  
23 that do the hard tasks of cleaning up Hanford. The  
24 work they do is difficult, stressful and the materials  
25 some of them encounter are very hazardous. We honor



1    them and sincerely appreciate their efforts, which are  
2    improving our environment, remediating risk and  
3    putting us in a position to move forward with a vision  
4    for a clean energy generation, new jobs and a future  
5    no longer tied to Hanford. We are encouraged by the  
6    continuous improvements in the safety culture and the  
7    increased confidence the workforce has that they can  
8    raise questions and concerns about the work they're  
9    doing. My impression from friends and acquaintances  
10   who work at WTP is that the culture is healthy. There  
11   are a number of organizations that seem to love  
12   negative press about Hanford. We have found this  
13   frustrating and distracting from the important issues  
14   that need to be discussed. There's much more cleanup  
15   to be accomplished. We look forward to continued  
16   public dialogue about this work remaining, not just  
17   the issues that generate headlines designed to sell  
18   papers, garner donations and scare the heck out of the  
19   public. Concluding --

20                   CHAIRMAN: I was going to ask you to please  
21   conclude.

22                   MS. LARSON: For those of us who live in  
23   this beautiful region and the extraordinary workforce  
24   who engage in cleanup, we would like to point out that  
25   work is getting done, progress is being made and



1 technical decisions are being made answered. The  
2 cleanup of Hanford is investment worthy, it will  
3 benefit the entire Pacific Northwest both  
4 environmentally and economically. We share with you  
5 the common goal as safely treating waste, the risk of  
6 not doing so is real. The concept of zero risk in  
7 treating waste must be bound with a timely cost  
8 effective and aggressive to get the cleanup done.  
9 Thank you so much for being here and thank you for the  
10 opportunity for public comment.

11 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Larson. Keith  
12 Klein.

13 MR. KLEIN: My name is Keith Klein. I'm  
14 here representing myself as a citizen of the  
15 community. I in fact know probably most of the people  
16 in room. I spent eight years as the manager of the  
17 Richland Operations Office, prior to that I had the  
18 privilege for working for Ms. Roberson at Rocky Flats  
19 and was dispatched to get WIPP open and we succeeded  
20 in doing that. And have done a number of good things  
21 starting at going back to the Atomic Energy  
22 Commission. I'm speaking her just as behalf of a  
23 citizen of the Tri-Cities, retiring as eight years ago  
24 from DOE. I have been a consultant and working  
25 various tasks through that, been able to maintain



1 contact with many people in the workforce from the  
2 workers that live next door me to the senior managers.  
3 And Gary Peterson stole most of what I intended to say  
4 about us wanting to get on with the cleanup here. But  
5 there's one observation that I guess I will share at  
6 this point and that I don't think it has been said.  
7 And that goes back to the schedule budget pressures  
8 and the impact that have had on a number of things  
9 that have happened here in the past. I think starting  
10 with a whole design build contract where the design  
11 engineering got ahead of the safety analysis and a lot  
12 of that was in response to pressures to meet deadlines  
13 that were set in a tri-party agreement and other  
14 things. People want to please, they did what they  
15 could. But eventually that got caught up. In that  
16 process I would observe that decisions seem to be made  
17 in a rather closed environment, they were not  
18 transparent how they were made, who was making them on  
19 what basis. As a result of the Defense Board  
20 recommendation and other things, I think there's  
21 obviously been a lot more intention, care and caution  
22 that is now being used in the decision-making process.  
23 And I as a virtue of knowing the people here, I can  
24 honestly say that you can't find a more dedicated,  
25 competent, hardworking group of people. I trust them.



1 I know they want to get with on with doing work. So I  
2 hope you will see the goodness, the improvements and  
3 the progress that have been made. And with that we'll  
4 be able to get on with getting the job done here.  
5 Thank you.

6 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Klein. Gene St.  
7 Pierre.

8 MR. ST. PIERRE: Good evening. My name is  
9 Gene St. Pierre, I'm an independent consultant to the  
10 nuclear industry. And I'm here representing myself.  
11 Just a little bit about my background because I think  
12 it will help frame the context of what I have offer.  
13 I was a former vice president of a commercial nuclear  
14 power industry. I was a former corporate vice  
15 president where we had eight reactors at five  
16 different sites and was responsible for all aspects of  
17 operations, including corrective action programs and  
18 that safety culture. Also spent sometime at the World  
19 Association of Nuclear Operators, which is commonly  
20 known WANO. WANO conducts assessments of nuclear  
21 facilities around the world to ensure that they're  
22 operating safely. I was involved with a post  
23 Fukushima assessment and some corporate evaluations,  
24 notably Tokyo Electric, who was the operator of  
25 Fukushima. And the major focus on these assessments



1 dealt with corrective actions and safety culture.  
2 Because of my background I was asked by Bechtel to be  
3 part of the independent team to assess the adequacy of  
4 their management improvement plan, which is commonly  
5 known as MIP. This assignment was approximately 18  
6 months ago. And this was my first exposure to the  
7 Hanford Reservation, so I really got a cold, hard look  
8 indoctrination, if you will, to the organization. I  
9 returned about a month ago at the request of Bechtel  
10 to conduct an independent assessment of their  
11 corrective action program, which is one element of  
12 their management improvement plan. Thus, my insights  
13 span 18 months.

14 First I want to just talk about what a  
15 corrective action program is just so everyone's clear.  
16 A corrective action program serves the purpose of  
17 documenting the deficiencies and areas for improvement  
18 in a systematic and formal way and in then these  
19 deficiencies and improvement areas are tracked for  
20 resolution. A robust and healthy corrective action  
21 plans are an important element for the safety culture  
22 in any facility or industry that deals with  
23 potentially hazardous materials. Thus, the assessment  
24 of the corrective action program provided a window of  
25 opportunity for me to view the safety culture at the



1 Waste Treatment Plant. So my perspective 18 months  
2 ago was that Bechtel's corrective action program was  
3 less than effective, it was not valued by the Bechtel  
4 organization, that is it was not considered part of  
5 their core business. And I believe these inadequacies  
6 help contribute to a strained nuclear safety culture  
7 at the site at that time.

8 So we fast forward now 18 months to now and it's  
9 a completely different story. Today the corrective  
10 action program I believe is valued and it is  
11 considered core business, and this is after multiple  
12 interviews of individuals where you can really test  
13 their belief, if you will, and the value of corrective  
14 action program. This transformation in my opinion has  
15 had a great positive impact on the safety culture at  
16 the Waste Treatment Plant. Today I believe there is a  
17 degree of confidence that if an issue is discovered,  
18 people believe there is a sound mechanism for  
19 documenting an issue and there will be resolution to  
20 the issue. They will not be forgotten or lost. Thus,  
21 a positive effect on safety culture.

22 I'd just like to make a comment on leadership.  
23 To have positive change of this magnitude, the  
24 leadership at Bechtel and the Department of Energy,  
25 Office of River Protection should be commended. In



1 all my experience both domestically and  
2 internationally, I'd be hard pressed to find a  
3 comparable example of such rapid change. That said,  
4 there is no perfect corrective action program that  
5 exists in the world. The key to a healthy robust  
6 corrective action program and safety culture is to  
7 continuously work to improve the programs, that effort  
8 will never end. And I also believe the programmatic  
9 pillars for sustainability are embedded in the  
10 processes at the Waste Treatment Plant, and those  
11 pillars are -- there's governance on the words,  
12 procedures and policies that embed the corrective  
13 action program so it will continue to function. The  
14 roles and accountability are strong and the oversight  
15 both internal and external will ensure that those  
16 programs continue. Thus, if you believe the  
17 corrective action program is going to continue to be  
18 effective then it has a positive effect on safety  
19 culture as well.

20 And I would like to make one last comment too  
21 and it was talked extensively during the discussions  
22 this evening. Leadership. The strong leadership must  
23 continue as it has been over the last 18 months, both  
24 by Office of River Protection and Bechtel. And this  
25 concludes my comments and I'd like to thank the Board



1 for the time to speak.

2 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. St. Pierre.  
3 Thomas Young.

4 MR. YOUNG: Mr. Sullivan and Mrs. Roberson,  
5 thanks for your time tonight to speak. My name is  
6 Thomas Young and I'm the Executive Vice President with  
7 Energy Solution and I run the local office here and  
8 have been around the Hanford Site and in or around  
9 since 1986. I have had the privilege to see a lot of  
10 great leadership teams come and go in and out of the  
11 Tri-Cities area. And I can attest that the current  
12 leadership at DOE and the Waste Treatment Plant and  
13 WRPS are working together to do the right things and  
14 to be inclusive of workers and their ideas and  
15 concerns along the way.

16 Personnel from my organization have performed a  
17 variety of work on the WTP project over the last 10  
18 years. This includes work out at the WTP construction  
19 site and working side by side with the WTP staff over  
20 the most recent last two-year period. We have also  
21 been the test execution organization completing the  
22 pulse jet mixing trials over the last several years  
23 and most recently at test facility at the WSU Tri-City  
24 campus. We've also performed a significant amount of  
25 engineering and test work demonstrating both the high



1 level waste and the low active waste the melter  
2 technology employed at the Waste Treatment Plant.  
3 And we have demonstrated it to be safe, reliable and  
4 effective. In all instances I have been -- I have  
5 seen firsthand that the workforce and the line  
6 management people our organization interfaces with  
7 takes seriously concerns for safety and quality and  
8 always taken the time to get things done right.  
9 Sometimes even if it takes a little longer or costs a  
10 little more, getting the work done right and safely  
11 has been put above all else. I strongly encourage the  
12 DNFSB to get all remaining concerns about the Waste  
13 Treatment Plant out once and for all so that DOE can  
14 complete the design and get the pretreatment facility  
15 back to full construction as soon as possible.  
16 Nuclear safety for us is getting the waste out of  
17 tanks, getting it emptied and putting it into safe,  
18 long term glass waste form. And is not an academic  
19 exercise that every single person has to agree with  
20 every single technical opinion along the way. Thank  
21 you for your time.

22 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Young. Tom  
23 Carpenter.

24 MR. CARPENTER: Hello. Thank you for  
25 inviting public comment tonight. My name is Tom



1 Carpenter, I'm the Executive Director of an  
2 organization called Hanford Challenge. And I have  
3 been coming out to the Hanford Site off and on since  
4 1987. Worked with a number of employees and  
5 whistleblower's and workers at the site in various  
6 ways over the years. And tonight I wanted to make  
7 just a few comments about what I didn't hear discussed  
8 that I think should have been discussed and also to  
9 make a now comments about safety culture. And one is  
10 the organizations are in essence Darwinian, right, and  
11 so notice who isn't here tonight. In 2010 the DNFSB  
12 did hold a hearing and before you sat a panel of  
13 people, including the manager of environmental and  
14 nuclear safety, and her name was Donna Bushing, and  
15 she testified in a manner that was a bit shocking I  
16 think to the B and to her peers around her. She  
17 talked about deposition velocity and other technical  
18 matters and in her professional experience raised  
19 concerns about the safety of the plant. And she is  
20 not here today. She's not sitting before you  
21 testifying because she was terminated. That fact has  
22 not been discussed tonight. Or that others have also  
23 been terminated. So the organization has purged  
24 itself.

25 And we heard Mr. Smith here talk about how



1 nuclear safety concerns have largely gone a lot  
2 smoother without Donna there. Well, maybe people  
3 aren't raising those concerns, you know, in the same  
4 way certainly. And maybe you need to hear those kind  
5 of concerns.

6           So I think it is important that the Board know  
7 that last Thursday I received an e-mail and the Board  
8 was also cc'd on this e-mail, don't know if you got it  
9 or not, from a WTP engineer. And he wrote, I have  
10 worked at WTP for many years, I have been deeply  
11 concerned about the safety culture, it's not improved,  
12 it's the worst I have ever seen. Never in my long,  
13 professional career have I seen anything that even  
14 resembles the deceit and lack of integrity that I have  
15 seen here. I have raised issues and solutions and in  
16 my opinion I have been retaliated against. As an  
17 engineer it is my job to fix things but under the  
18 current environment that is not possible without  
19 risking my livelihood and further retaliation. I  
20 apologize for the obscurity of this e-mail but if it  
21 were found out that I was even thinking the truth or  
22 bringing up these issues, I would be looking for  
23 another job. I have been waiting for months for the  
24 Department of Energy to issue the attached report,  
25 which was disclosed this morning. But this upcoming



1 public meeting has prompted me to get the word out.  
2 I'm disappointed in the lack of transparency and  
3 leadership has demonstrated in this regard. Some of  
4 these issues if not resolved will result in millions  
5 of dollars of costs to the tax payer and could  
6 possibly result in injuries to future workers. This  
7 is simply unacceptable. I wish we had a culture that  
8 would allow me to talk freely and openly.

9 So there is at least one person out there who  
10 feels a little differently than what you've heard  
11 tonight. And I can attest that there are a few others  
12 out there who also feel very strongly who aren't here  
13 tonight and don't feel like it is safe to stick their  
14 head up and talk about what's going on.

15 What's not talked about tonight, there have been  
16 four OSHA decisions in last year validating Hanford  
17 whistleblower concerns in the last year alone. There  
18 have been three disclosures to the Office of Special  
19 Counsel by DOE Federal employees at Hanford about ways  
20 for audit abuse and alleged retaliation from this site  
21 from Federal workers. Recently in the last couple of  
22 years there have been two senate hearings about  
23 whistleblower terminations . There was a DOE IT  
24 investigation that was initiated by the secretary of  
25 energy after one of those senate hearings, that



1 investigation was shut down because of lack of  
2 cooperation from the contractors. No accountability  
3 there. They just didn't make a decision. That was  
4 supposed to look into the circumstances of Donna  
5 Bushing's termination. Similarly, one of your  
6 recommendations in 20 dash -- 2011-1 was to look into  
7 the circumstances of the termination of Dr. Tomasitis  
8 in 2010. And that investigation was never conducted.  
9 I don't know why not but there was never any followup  
10 on that.

11 So in 2013 there was a memo issued by Dr. Moniz  
12 affirming a safety culture and several weeks later Dr.  
13 Tomasitis was terminated. A couple of months later  
14 Donna Bushing was terminated. So the memo maybe  
15 didn't have its desired effect other than high profile  
16 terminations of people. And I would submit to you  
17 that that is a much stronger message than any memo,  
18 poster, paycheck insert or training session that a  
19 worker might receive out there. It is going to be  
20 behaviors that inform people about what is safe and  
21 what is not safe. And that was missing from the  
22 discussion tonight. And as long as you have those  
23 examples out there then people aren't going to believe  
24 the training, they're not going to believe the payroll  
25 inserts or the memos that come out. That's mostly



1 what I heard tonight is we've got memos.

2 So I want you to reconsider, you know, some of  
3 the evidence that's out there and discuss it and maybe  
4 consider having some OSHA people up here to discuss,  
5 you know, or whistleblower's, people who are on the  
6 receiving end of the system. Thanks for considering  
7 my comments tonight.

8 CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Carpenter. Next  
9 I have Dawn Wellman speaking for Steven Ashby, that's  
10 what's written down. So Ms. Wellman, you've had your  
11 five minutes. You're speaking for someone else?

12 MS. WELLMAN: Speaking on behalf of Dr.  
13 Steven Ashby, Director of Pacific Northwest National  
14 Laboratory.

15 "I wish to affirm my commitment to the  
16 partnership we have developed and underscore the  
17 laboratory's continued support in providing  
18 scientifically defensible solutions to the challenges  
19 at the Hanford Site. I know that we are committed to  
20 the success of the Hanford mission and for ensuring  
21 the safety of those executing that mission.

22 As mentioned earlier, PNNL has supported the  
23 Hanford mission and site operations for more than 50  
24 years. We have developed considerable expertise in  
25 the areas central to the cleanup efforts and we are



1 proud of our many contributions. We also feel a sense  
2 of shared responsibility for the future. After all,  
3 we and our families live in this community. It should  
4 be no surprise that we're fully supportive of the need  
5 to remediate the site as quickly and cost effectively  
6 as possible.

7           Institutionally, our scientific roots lie within  
8 the original Hanford Site mission. Before we became a  
9 national lab we were the site laboratory providing the  
10 scientific and technical needed to develop the  
11 chemical and engineering processes to address the tang  
12 waste at West Valley, Savannah River and Hanford. As  
13 the site mission progressed, we contributed to the  
14 development and treatment processes being implemented  
15 today. Over time the site mission evolved and PNNL  
16 grew into a multi-program national laboratory. During  
17 these transitions there was a period in which we were  
18 not engaged in the maturation of technology and  
19 development of next generations and solutions needed  
20 to reduce the cost and risks at the Hanford mission.  
21 I am pleased to say this is no longer the case. DOE,  
22 the site offices, contractor and national laboratory  
23 leadership have worked collaboratively to reinvigorate  
24 our working relationships around the common goal of  
25 solving one of the nation's most important cleanup



1 challenges. Over the past two years we have seen a  
2 change over in how the Hanford offices and site  
3 contractors approach and engaging the national labs.  
4 We're once again viewed as strategic partners in the  
5 cleanup mission. It is recognized that we are at our  
6 best when working on the most difficult technical  
7 problems, especially those that will require sustained  
8 effort over many years. We are encouraged to raise  
9 concerns openly and they are debated without fear of  
10 reprisal. As a result of this renewed engagement,  
11 PNNL is working on mission critical challenges to  
12 enable the baseline. We are also conducting analyses  
13 and maturing technologies to provide alternative to  
14 that baseline that reduce the risks and costs of  
15 cleanup for tomorrow.

16 For example, PNNL is currently leading and  
17 contributing expertise to help integrate teams of  
18 Bechtel National and PNNL experts to resolve the  
19 technical issues of mixing, criticality and flammable  
20 gas retention. These issues identified by then  
21 Secretary of Energy Steven Chu must be resolved in  
22 order to resolve design and construction of the Waste  
23 Treatment Plant.

24 Additionally, PNNL is developing new glass  
25 formulations and alternatives processes approaches



1 that enable significant improvements on waste loading  
2 while still meeting those processing and product  
3 performing constraints. Developing glass as a more  
4 tolerant key waste component not only provide a  
5 technical basis for increasing waste loading and  
6 ultimately decreasing production counts, but also  
7 provides opportunities to minimize or eliminate  
8 certain pretreatment options. The integrative program  
9 is focused on reducing the overall WTP mission life  
10 and costs by decreasing the waste input for WTP  
11 facility operations.

12 In closing, we greatly appreciate the emphasis  
13 on partnership with PNNL by DOE in general and by  
14 leadership at the Office of River Protections in  
15 particular. The decision to more fully utilize PNNL's  
16 historic knowledge as well as our world leading  
17 expertise to help provide solutions to long term  
18 scientific and technical challenges is essential to  
19 the success of the Hanford mission. We look forward  
20 to continuing this productive partnership well into  
21 the future.

22 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Tim Feth.

23 MR. FETH: Hi, I'm Tim Feth. I'm a legal  
24 intern with Hanford Challenge. I just have two quick  
25 points. The first is that we at Hanford Challenge



1 don't agree that the safety culture assessment  
2 reflects a shift in the safety culture at the WTP.  
3 There are a number of reasons to feel this way. I'll  
4 just touch on a few of them briefly. First, there was  
5 a low response rate of the employees at Bechtel, the  
6 changes measure at ORP according to the assessment  
7 were statistically insignificant. Several key  
8 questions were reworded from prior assessments. There  
9 were less independent oversights than prior  
10 assessments.

11 And finally, we feel that there wasn't enough  
12 meaningful data included in the assessment and that by  
13 that I'm mostly referring to the fact that the  
14 assessment relies heavily on averages as opposed to  
15 telling us specifically how many people do or don't  
16 agree with a given statement. So in short, we feel  
17 that the assessment as published doesn't reflect any  
18 change in safety culture at the WTP. We can't really  
19 draw any viable conclusions from the assessment.

20 The second point that I want to make is that  
21 treatment of whistleblower's is an important part of  
22 safety culture even if those whistleblower's are the  
23 so called legacy whistleblower', these cases from the  
24 past. Current treatment of those whistleblower's does  
25 reflect current safety culture. And when a company --



1 when a company fights a meritorious whistleblower  
2 claim they prove to their employees what happens when  
3 people stand up for safety. And a good example of  
4 that is the case of Walt Ford. Now recently an OSHA  
5 investigation found that Mr. Ford was retaliated  
6 against by Bechtel for raising safety concerns. And I  
7 think that demonstrates to people at Bechtel and at  
8 other Hanford -- with other Hanford companies, that  
9 the safety culture still is not where we want it to  
10 be. And that concludes my two points. Thank you for  
11 your time.

12 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Patrick Gutner.

13 MR. GUTNER: Thank you. Members of the B,  
14 thank you for allowing us to speak as a public  
15 citizen. I'm an American patriot and I'm a concerned  
16 local citizen about the delay in the procrastination  
17 of this project. It's been going on 15 years and  
18 that's enough. And it looks like you, members of the  
19 board, are our only last resort to get this thing  
20 going. An excellent manager once said, if you get  
21 safety and quality correct everything else goes  
22 properly. I'm a firm believer, I have worked on many  
23 projects, and I have seen that happen time and time  
24 again. And I heard a lot of motherhood and apple pie  
25 tonight, I did not hear anything about evidence of how



1 things are improving, I did not hear anything about a  
2 lessons learned program. And I have heard all this  
3 many many times before. So my point is -- I'll keep  
4 it short since I'm the 12th man it makes me special,  
5 I implore you as our last resort to make things -- to  
6 get this thing right and make it happen. It's been  
7 going on for 15 years. We're exposed to these  
8 potential and manifested problems of nuclear and  
9 biochemical chemical environmental insults in this  
10 community. So I think it can be done. Yes, I have  
11 heard it is difficult and it probably is. But it is  
12 not rocket science. We built this -- the man finished  
13 the atomic bomb in two and a half years and we put a  
14 man on the moon in seven years after JFK made the  
15 announcement. Thank you.

16 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. That concludes  
17 everybody who was on our list. Are there any -- is  
18 there anyone else here who wishes to speak? Okay.  
19 I'm not seeing any hands go up. So that concludes the  
20 section of public comment. I'm going to turn now to  
21 Ms. Roberson for closing comments.

22 VICE CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Thank you, Mr.  
23 Sullivan. Just briefly, I'd like to say that I  
24 appreciate that the Department is taking many actions  
25 to improve WTP project safety culture in response to



1 the Board's Recommendation 2011-1. However, these  
2 actions do not address the main concern that led the  
3 Board to issue the recommendation. Further, DOE can  
4 only sustain progress if senior leaders at the  
5 Department embrace and continually practice the  
6 behaviors that reinforce a culture of safety within  
7 their organizations. As I learned from our previous  
8 public hearings, leaders establish the working climate  
9 and climate drives the culture of their organization.  
10 And culture change cannot be sustained by external  
11 influences. Numerous actions have been undertaken but  
12 the effect is still unknown. The Board's  
13 recommendation was driving by concerns with current  
14 technical decision-making involving safety matters. I  
15 have reviewed the sustainment plan for the project and  
16 it is a good plan for pursuit of an organic culture  
17 change which we all know takes many many years. But  
18 work and decisions are being made now. And it is  
19 unclear what the key compensatory measures are that  
20 are being relied on in the interim so that they can be  
21 sustained while the project moves forward through the  
22 many challenges that have been cited throughout the  
23 night that are still to come. Because of the  
24 complexity of this unique project, it is essentially  
25 that DOE has a strong culture of safety today while it



1 is designing and building the plant. Even if it is  
2 not the Departments's desired instate, it is  
3 absolutely vital for supporting the quality and safety  
4 framework that this project requires. Thank you, Mr.  
5 Sullivan.

6 CHAIRMAN: Thank you. So now I have some  
7 comments that are my own. I was not a member of the  
8 Defense Nuclear Facility Safety Board back in the  
9 2010, 2011 timeframe when many of the issues which led  
10 to this recommendation were coming to the forefront,  
11 so I can't speak to personal experience what  
12 conditions were like back then. But I did come to the  
13 Board in September of 2012. Shortly after I arrived  
14 Secretary Chu basically put the brakes on this project  
15 in order to resolve technical issues. They changed  
16 the leadership out in early 2013 to install Mr. Smith  
17 and Mr. Hamel, who you heard tonight, and in early  
18 2013 just as they were taking their job I was here and  
19 then I was here again in 2014 and in 2015. I can tell  
20 you from my personal experience the improvement in  
21 just the time I have spent here has been measurable  
22 and it is palpable just walking around. So I have  
23 seen a change in leadership. And I have also seen a  
24 change in leadership under Secretary Moniz, who has  
25 continued to put emphasis here.



1 I believe that safety culture is first and  
2 foremost about leadership. I'm not sure that there's  
3 any program that anyone can put in place that will  
4 guarantee that we have future leader -- good leaders  
5 in the future unless you can guarantee who those  
6 particular people are going to be. Nevertheless,  
7 looking at what we're doing now and in my discussions  
8 with our staff, who regularly come out here, spend  
9 time here. I have detected -- I have continued to ask  
10 the question whether or not there's any indication  
11 that information is being withheld from us and I get  
12 no indication that any information is being withheld  
13 from us. So when you look at safety culture and you  
14 look at what oversight needs to do there's always  
15 going to be problems, nothing's ever going to be  
16 perfect. But my key question is if this information  
17 is not getting to us then we can't do our job. We  
18 could not do the job we need to do in order to make  
19 sure that when this plant operates it will operate  
20 safely. If there's no indication that we are not  
21 getting information then I'm convinced that we will be  
22 able to do our job.

23 So all of the indicators I get say that there  
24 has been improvement, it's been in the right  
25 direction, that doesn't mean it is perfect. And I



1 think we need to look at this, we as a Board need to  
2 look at this not for perfection or not for zero  
3 defects but to assure ourselves that there is no issue  
4 of adequate protection because that's our job. Will  
5 the public be protected when this plant starts up.  
6 And the public will be protected if leadership is  
7 strong and leadership is making sure that issues are  
8 getting resolved and that no information is being  
9 hidden. So I think that's a key consideration for us  
10 to consider as we move forward in our oversight of the  
11 this project and its safety culture. So that  
12 concludes my remarks.

13 As we close this hearing, I want to reiterate  
14 that the record for the hearing will close on  
15 September 28th, 2015. If any member of the public  
16 would like the Board to consider additional statements  
17 or information on topics presented here this evening,  
18 please mail or e-mail them to the Board by that date.  
19 This includes those individuals from the public who  
20 have viewed this hearing via live video streaming on  
21 the internet. Contact information to send in  
22 additional information can found on the Board's public  
23 website DNFSB.gov. This concludes the hearing of the  
24 DNFSB. We are now adjourned. Thank you all for  
25 attending.



1 (Hearing recessed at 7:57 p.m.)

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