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New Environmental Restoration Paradigm

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The Environmental Restoration program at the Rocky Flats Office was developed from a "verbatim compliance" mentality as reflected in the Interagency Agreement (IAG). Both EG&G and DOE have attempted to deliver quality deliverables that met the full requirements of the regulators. When these requirements expanded and budgets could not expand to keep pace, then schedules were delayed. Attempts to reduce requirements or streamline IAG processes have been limited and sporadic. We have also experienced poor success in meeting regulator expectations, even with a strong focus on meeting their requirements. The Operable Unit (OU) No 1 Phase III RFI/RI Report is a classic example of this failing. Combined with the technical problems is a realization of minimal budget growth in the foreseeable planning horizon.

The adage, "Work smarter, not harder" is directly applicable to our present situation. Several initiatives are underway to start to address the broader IAG problems. A Quality Action Team (QAT) has tackled several problems including the basic IAG structure. A systems analysis of the environmental restoration program has been developed and is in coordination. Streamlining efforts are underway in OU2 and OU4. In addition to these good efforts, I would like to create a fundamental shift in the paradigm for environmental restoration work. It is my belief that performance is more important than paper, and action now is better than action later. An emphasis along these lines should drive EG&G and DOE to focus on streamlining administrative tasks and process "requirements" whenever possible. Additionally, schedule performance should be emphasized to accomplish cleanup sooner and limit the ongoing caretaker expenditures.

A key to success in implementing this new paradigm and accelerating our performance is a shift in the assumption of risk. In general I am willing to accept increased technical scope risk for improvements in schedule. Some near term budget increases may also be appropriate with resulting reductions in life-cycle costs. These actions require several steps to mitigate and manage the increased risk.

- 1) Dialogue with the regulators and other stakeholders should be increased to the maximum extent. This will minimize communication problems and facilitate support of innovative approaches.

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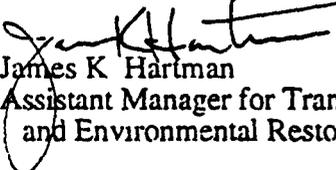
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2) Programmatic risk analysis (scope, schedule, and budget) should become a routine part of all decision processes. DOE will require risk analysis information as part of the decision criteria for environmental restoration work. This risk analysis does not need to be extensive and can be qualitative, but should be sufficient to provide information on the risk versus benefit tradeoffs for environmental restoration decisions.

3) Regulators need to be educated and involved in budget development and priority decisions. This will enhance their participation in streamlining processes and acceptance of increased risk.

4) Celebrate success! Successful accomplishment of cleanup actions will be rewarded in preference to "zero defects" in technical content. Technical and budget adjustments are part of the expected challenge of managing projects, completion of actual work is the goal.

I believe this new paradigm is completely consistent with the administration goal to Re-invent Government. As such my staff will be implementing it immediately and throughout all aspects of the environmental restoration program. I expect to provide further information on this topic and welcome your suggestions. Please disseminate this correspondence amongst your staff and feel free to discuss it with me.


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