

Sent By: ;



The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

April 4, 2001



The Honorable Bob Taft II
Governor of Ohio
Columbus, OH 43215

Post-It [®] Fax Note		7671	Date	# of pages ▶
To	Don Aronoff		From	Bob S
Co./Dept	CENS		Co.	ANA
Phone #			Phone #	
Fax #	505 986-1973		Fax #	

Dear Governor Taft:

In my confirmation hearing before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, I pledged to work with the Congress, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the States to find ways to improve the progress of the Department of Energy's (DOE) program to clean up the environmental legacy of more than 50 years of nuclear weapons production. I take that pledge very seriously and want to work with you on ways to more effectively address these cleanup challenges. I also plan to engage the governors of the states in which our sites are located.

As you know, this Administration is firmly committed to safely cleaning up the DOE complex and complying with applicable environmental laws and regulations. As we embark on this new Administration, we need to take the opportunity to examine whether we are conducting our cleanup in the best and most practical way possible.

Over ten years ago, the Department of Energy committed to clean up the environmental legacy of the Cold War and worked with the states and EPA to establish a compliance framework for all our major sites. Since that framework was established, we have seen a number of changes:

- technology has advanced significantly so that we can now solve cleanup problems that had no solutions ten years ago;
- we have characterized the waste at our sites, improved our knowledge of the risks, and better understand the scope of the problems we are addressing as well as the potential solutions; and
- we have tried some potential solutions - some have worked, some have not.

We have learned from all these experiences. It is clear that we need to continue to push to find more efficient and better ways of doing business at our sites.



Printed on recycled paper

010411



I have directed Dr. Carolyn Huntoon, Acting Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management, to lead an effort in the Department to look for additional ways to strengthen our project management, ensure that work is governed by sound science, and implement contracting strategies that drive cleanup work to be completed safely, on-schedule, and within budget.

The Department can and will work on all of these matters. However, if we are to be successful, we will need your help, as well as help from the States and the communities around our sites. I, therefore, request that you designate a representative who will work with us to examine ways to improve the compliance framework that currently governs much of our work with EPA regions across the country, and promote safe, cost-effective, on-the-ground results:

In pursuing these objectives, we would like to examine innovative or non-conventional approaches, including using or testing new technologies. In addition, we may find that modifying the framework and work priorities to reflect new and more effective ways of doing business. Some areas that we could jointly examine range from broad issues, such as agreeing on the end state for site cleanups and the best approaches to achieve that end state, to more specific issues such as more effective ways to manage the disposition of transuranic waste.

My goal is to develop a stronger partnership with EPA and the States that will allow us to pursue the most efficient cleanups possible at our sites. I look forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact me, or Dr. Huntoon, at (202) 586-7709 to discuss this matter.

Sincerely,


Spencer Abraham