

Tri-Party Agreement Public Involvement Summary 2019

Evaluating Public Perception of Engagement
Opportunities that Address Hanford Cleanup.



Tri-Party Agreement

April 2020

Introduction

The Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies – U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington State Department of Ecology – work together on cleanup of the Hanford Site. The public has opportunities to participate in Hanford cleanup decisions.

The TPA agencies' goals for public involvement are to:

- Engage the public by providing timely, accurate, understandable and accessible information.
- Ensure open and transparent decision-making.
- Consider public values when making decisions.
- Provide educational forums to enable informed engagement and participation.

The TPA agencies strive to accomplish the following as part of public involvement planning:

- Include public input when designing documents and planning public meetings.
- Publish advertisements and advance meeting notices that are easily understood.
- Develop creative and innovative ways to communicate information.
- Ensure meeting locations are convenient, easily accessible, and cost effective.
- Provide speakers who can communicate clearly, concisely, and are sensitive to different views and opinions.
- Provide decision-makers comments so they can consider them in the decision-making process.
- Provide timely feedback after public involvement activities.
- Work with individuals and organizations to identify public information needs.



The TPA agencies conduct a variety of public involvement activities, including public meetings, workshops, public comment periods, and informal feedback periods. In order to evaluate these activities against the goals listed above, the TPA agencies conduct an annual survey. This year's survey, looking at 2019, was available to the public online from February 11, 2020 through March 13, 2020. A message was sent to the Hanford email list inviting people take the survey, and it was also shared via the agencies' websites and social media accounts. Reminders were posted on social media throughout the month.

There were 39 participants, but only 27 completed the entire survey. In 2018, there were 55 responses, and in 2017, there were 119 responses. The decrease in participation is of interest to the agencies, as we do appreciate the feedback. While the majority of participants listed themselves as representing the general public, the next highest participation was from the Hanford workforce. Others listed themselves as state employees, local business people, an interest group, Hanford Advisory board member, or having a tribal affiliation.

Lessons Learned

Public input helps the TPA agencies evaluate opportunities for continued improvement in public involvement. The feedback received during the 2019 Annual TPA Public Involvement Survey helped identify the following information:

When asked how people receive Hanford information, about 56 percent indicated they rely on direct email announcements from the TPA agencies. About 53 percent rely on mass media, and 39 percent social media, as the two most frequented sources. When actively seeking information about Hanford, about 70 percent go to Hanford.gov. Ecology's website and mass media were also highly sought out with 59 percent relying on those sources. Interest group websites or social media were sought out by 41 percent of respondents.

- **Planned Action:** The TPA agencies will continue to look for ways to improve our website and social media sites to provide up-to-date and accurate information to the public.

About 85 percent of respondents felt they received adequate notice about upcoming involvement opportunities. They continue to prefer to receive information at least three to four weeks in advance. The goal of the TPA agencies is to provide at least 30 days' notice on upcoming activities. We will continue to strive to meet that commitment.

- **Planned Action:** The TPA agencies will continue to issue pre-notices describing upcoming public involvement events 30 to 45 days in advance, as well as a detailed notice at the start of a public comment period or prior to a public meeting. The TPA agencies issue these notices using Listserv (email), so we will continue to encourage interested parties to sign up on the Hanford Listserv.

With regard to the notices from the TPA agencies, 46 percent found the information “generally helpful in understanding the topic,” but 44 percent noted that it depended on the source, and 10 percent felt notices were not helpful. The latter is an improvement from last year, when 26 percent were dissatisfied with notices.

- **Planned Action:** The TPA agencies work to ensure that notices have sufficient background information, helpful graphics, use plain language and other accessible features that ultimately result in materials that enable to the general public to become involved and provide input relating to Hanford cleanup.

About 32 percent of respondents said they attended a Hanford-related meeting or other event hosted by a TPA agency in 2019. However, with such a dramatic decrease in survey respondents, this number may not be an indicator of increased attendance over previous years. Another 29 percent indicated they had attended a Hanford-related event hosted by an interest group. The top two reasons listed for not attending any Hanford-related events were lack of interest and the time not working for them. However, only 23 people indicated why they didn’t participate in meetings. Eight respondents didn’t indicate a preferred location for a meeting, while 65 percent indicated the Tri-Cities is a good meeting place and 30 percent wished for a meeting elsewhere around the region.

- **Planned Action:** The TPA agencies will continue to work with Hanford stakeholders and the public to try to schedule meeting times and places that are convenient for most people. The agencies have committed to have at least one regional meeting per year.

Fewer than 18 percent of respondents reported feeling their “input helps influence Hanford cleanup decisions” a slight increase from the prior year. The bulk of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement.

- **Planned Action:** TPA agencies need to do a better job of communicating how public input affects cleanup decisions, and explain if, and why, there are times when it doesn’t. Further, the TPA agencies are working on an online tool that will identify items, which went out for public comment, and provide a link to the response to comment and project documents, so commenters can see how their input was used. The agencies are also considering providing regular updates when a final decision is delayed so that commenters are aware of the delay.

Washington’s Department of Health Radiation Protection division conducts surveys of the Columbia River twice a year.



About 59 percent, said they would be “likely” or “very likely” to participate in a webinar on a Hanford topic, (though 10 percent skipped the question). However, in written comments, many expressed concern about whether there could be real engagement in a webinar setting, and some are concerned about accessibility (e.g. unfamiliar with technology).

- **Planned Action:** The TPA agencies will look for topic-specific items that would be conducive to a webinar delivery where the main goal is to share information and promote understanding of a topic. We are hopeful that if done well, webinars offer a way to increase overall participation in Hanford meetings for those who are unable to attend in person due to the time or location.

Despite ongoing frustration with TPA meetings and materials, about 90 percent of respondents indicated they plan to participate in future Hanford-related activities.

- **Planned Action:** The TPA agencies will continue to work with Hanford stakeholders to plan future Hanford-related activities.

Summary Data

The top responses to each question are provided in the following section. NOTE: Many questions invited respondents to ‘choose all that apply’, so totals may equal more than 100 percent. The full results of the survey, including all the comments, begin on page 8.

Question 1: Do you receive information about Hanford from any of the following?

Email (Hanford Listserv): 56%

Mass media (Newspaper, radio, TV): 54%

Interest group communications and social media: Tied at 39%

Question 2: Where do you go for information about Hanford?

Hanford.gov website: 69%

Department of Ecology: 59%

Mass Media both earned: 59%

Interest group website: 41%

Question 3: Which group do you represent?

General public: 29%

Hanford Workforce: 29%

Interest group member: 19%

State Government: 10%

Advisory Board: 8%

Question 4: Do you usually receive adequate notice about upcoming Hanford public involvement activities?

Yes: 85%

No: 16%

Question 5: How far in advance do you prefer to be notified about upcoming Hanford public involvement activities?

2 weeks: 46%

3-4 weeks: 39%

More than 4 weeks: 10%

Question 6: Are notices from the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies generally helpful in understanding the topic?

Yes: 46%

It depends on the source and topic: 44%

No: 10%

Question 7: Did you attend a Hanford-related meeting or other event hosted by a Tri-Party Agreement agency in 2019?

No: 68%

Yes: 32%

Question 8: Did you attend any Hanford-related meetings or activities in 2018? (e.g. hosted by an interest group)

No: 71%

Yes: 29%

Question 9: If you did not attend a Hanford-related meeting or other event in 2019, please rank the reasons why.

Only 23 people responded. The reasons listed were nearly equally divided between:

they weren't interested in the topic

they didn't understand the topic

the time didn't work.

Question 10: In which location are you most likely to attend a public meeting/workshop or other Hanford-related activity?

Tri-Cities: 65 %

Seattle: 13%

Portland: 10%

Question 11: How would you rate the locations of the events you attended? (For example, hotel, library, etc.)

I have not attended a meeting: 51%

Better than average (good, excellent): 35%

Average: 10%

Question 12: How would you rate the TPA agencies' presentations at the events you attended?

I have not seen a presentation: 45%

Good: 32%

Average: 10%

Question 13: How would you rate the discussion with TPA agency representatives at the events you attended?

Better than average (good, excellent) 37%

Average: 27%

Don't recall: 23%

Question 14: If you provided public comment during a public comment period, were you notified when responses to comments were available?

Yes, by email: 23%

No, I was not notified: 15%

Question 15: How would you answer the following statement: "I believe my input helps influence Hanford cleanup decisions."

Disagree: 30%

Agree: 26%

Neutral: 22%

Question 16: Do you plan to participate in future activities on Hanford topics?

Yes: 89%

No: 11%

Question 17: Would you participate in a webinar or other online forum on Hanford topics?

Very likely: 30%

Likely: 30%

Undecided: 30%

Question 18: Which Hanford topics would you most want to discuss or learn about in a public forum?

Tank waste retrieval and safe storage: 48%

Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP/VIT): 22%

Future land use, worker safety and health, and other: 19%

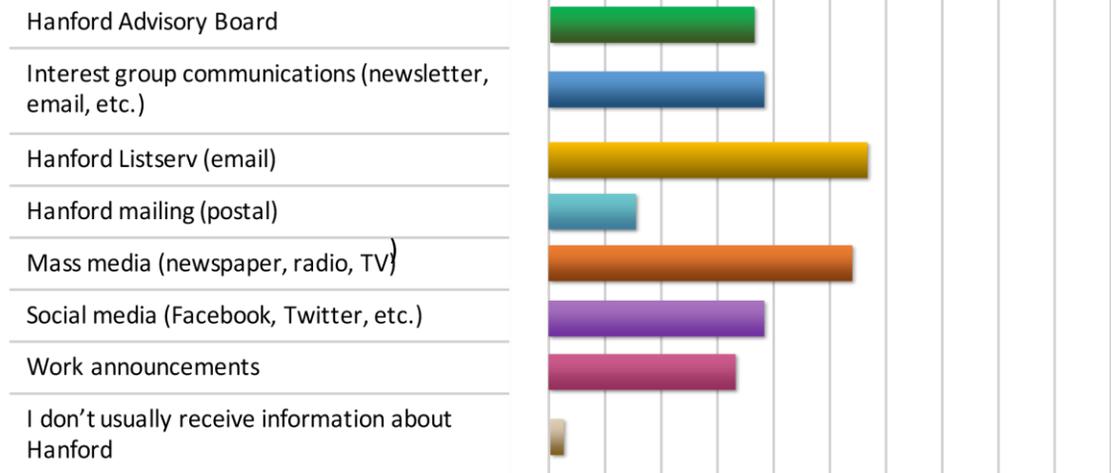
Hanford's 324 Building is one of the last of the 300 Area buildings to be addressed.

Efforts are underway to safely retrieve contamination from below the hot cells.



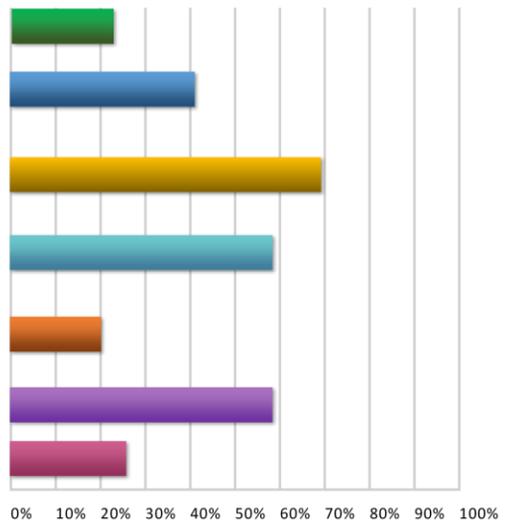
**Q1: Do you receive information about Hanford from any of the following?
(Select all that apply)**

ANSWER CHOICES



**Q2: Where do you go to find information about Hanford?
(Select all that apply)**

ANSWER CHOICES	Responses	
Hanford Advisory Board Meetings	23.08%	9
Interest group (website or social media)	41.03%	16
U.S. Department of Energy (website or social media)	69.23%	27
Washington State Department of Ecology (website or social media)	58.97%	23
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (website or social media)	20.51%	8
Mass Media (newspaper, radio, TV)	58.97%	23
Public meetings	25.64%	10
Total Respondents: 39		

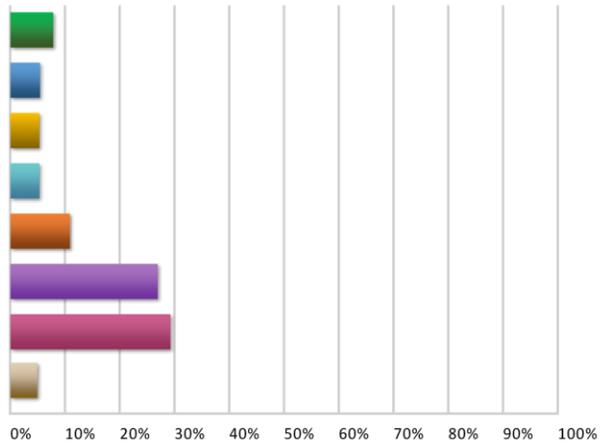


Other (please specify)

Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board

Q3: Which group do you represent? (Please select the one that best applies)

ANSWER CHOICES	Responses	
Advisory Board	7.89%	3
Business /Industry	5.26%	2
Interest Group	5.26%	2
Federal Government	5.26%	2
State Government	10.53%	4
Hanford Workforce	26.32%	10
General Public	28.95%	11
Tribal Nation	5.26%	2
Total Respondents:		38



Other (please specify)

Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board

Retired DOE Engineer

Q4: Do you usually receive adequate notice about upcoming Hanford public involvement activities?

ANSWER CHOICES	Responses	
Yes	84.62%	33
No	15.38%	6
Total Respondents:		39

Additional thoughts (please specify)

- There are rarely meetings in Seattle and some of these I miss because of inadequate notice.
- Sometimes they arrive the day of the event
- Need more notice of any scheduled news/meetings with at least 15 days notice. Many folks have their calendars/schedules that far out.

Q5: How far in advance do you prefer to be notified about Hanford public involvement activities?

ANSWER CHOICES	Responses	
Less than a week	2.56%	1
1 week	2.56%	1
2 weeks	46.15%	18
3-4 weeks	38.46%	15
More than 4 weeks	10.26%	4
Total:		39

Q6: Are notices from the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies generally helpful in understanding the topic?

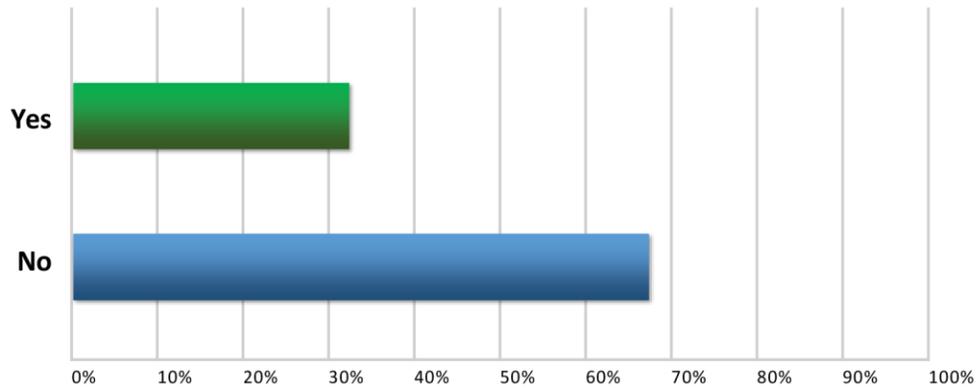
ANSWER CHOICES	Responses	
Yes	46.15%	18
No	10.26%	4
It depends on the source and topic	43.59%	17
Total:		39

Please share specific examples

- Too political
- Nearly all external communications assume some level of Hanford knowledge. It is very difficult for someone new to Hanford to engage in a meaningful way. Typically takes several years before "new" voices are heard and respected.
- It seems you are enthralled with administrative activities. The notices about changes to the TPA are very funny. Nothing seems to be done except slowing the work down. That waste should have been vitrified years ago. At least it would be impossible for a leak. EPA and Ecology have been a disaster for the clean up. Savannah River, West Valley, and others have been done for decades.
- A lot of the acronyms aren't spelled out at times.

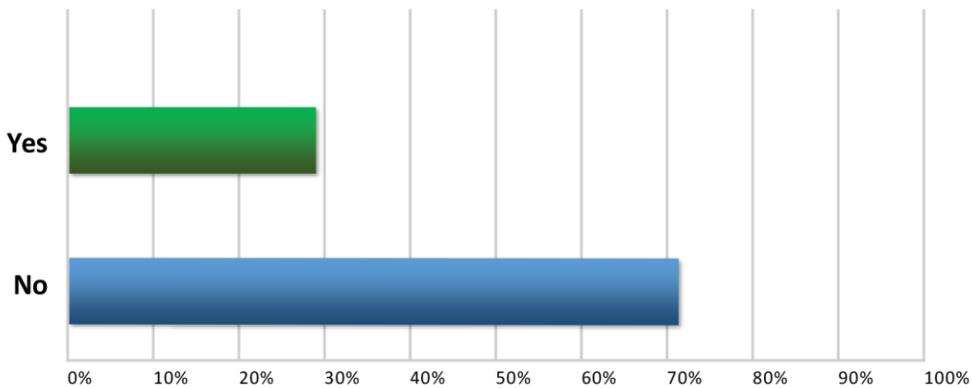
Q7: Did you attend a Hanford-related meeting or other event hosted by a TPA agency in 2019?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 8



Q8: Did you attend any other Hanford-related meetings or activities in 2019? (e.g. hosted by an interest group)

Answered: 31 Skipped: 8



If yes, please specify

- Hanford Challenge (2 events: film and speaker)
- HAB
- 3 Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board meetings, Hanford STGWG meeting,
- HAB Anniversary celebration
- Board Meetings, budget and permit webinars
- Public interest meetings in Port. area sponsored by non-gov.
- Joined via phone from East Coast

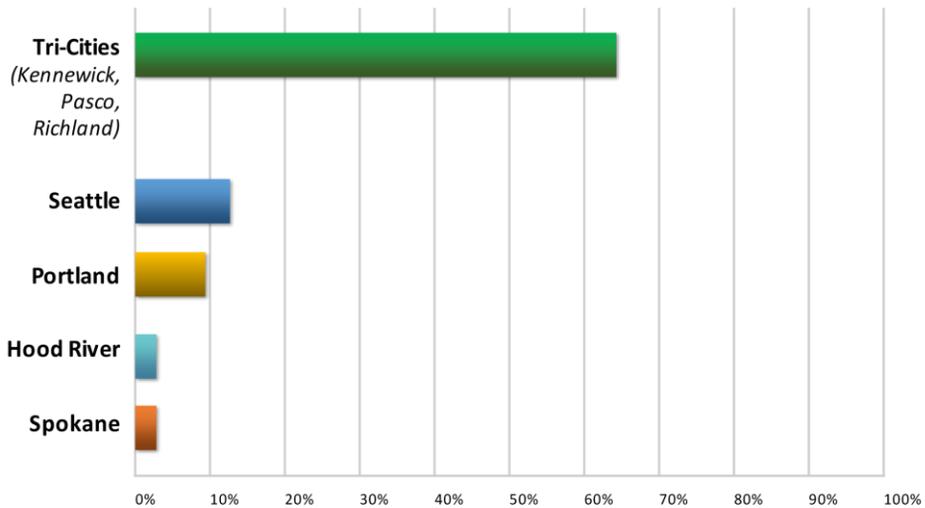
Q9: If you did not attend a Hanford-related meeting or other event in 2019, please rank the reasons why.

Answered: 23 Skipped: 16

ANSWER CHOICES	1	2	3	4	5	N/A	Total	Score
I wasn't interested in the topic	31.58% 6	5.26% 1	15.79% 3	5.26% 1	10.53% 2	31.58% 6	19	3.62
I wasn't aware of any meetings or events	11.11% 2	16.67% 3	16.67% 3	5.56% 1	16.67% 3	33.33% 6	18	3.00
I didn't understand the purpose of the meeting or event	0.00% 0	25.00% 5	20.00% 4	15.00% 3	5.00% 1	35.00% 7	20	3.00
The time didn't work for me	22.73% 5	18.18% 4	4.55% 1	22.73% 5	4.55% 1	27.27% 6	22	3.44
The location didn't work for me	19.05% 4	9.52% 2	14.29% 3	9.52% 2	19.05% 4	28.57% 6	21	3.00

Q10: Where are you most likely to attend a public meeting/workshop or other Hanford-related activity?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 8



Other (please specify)

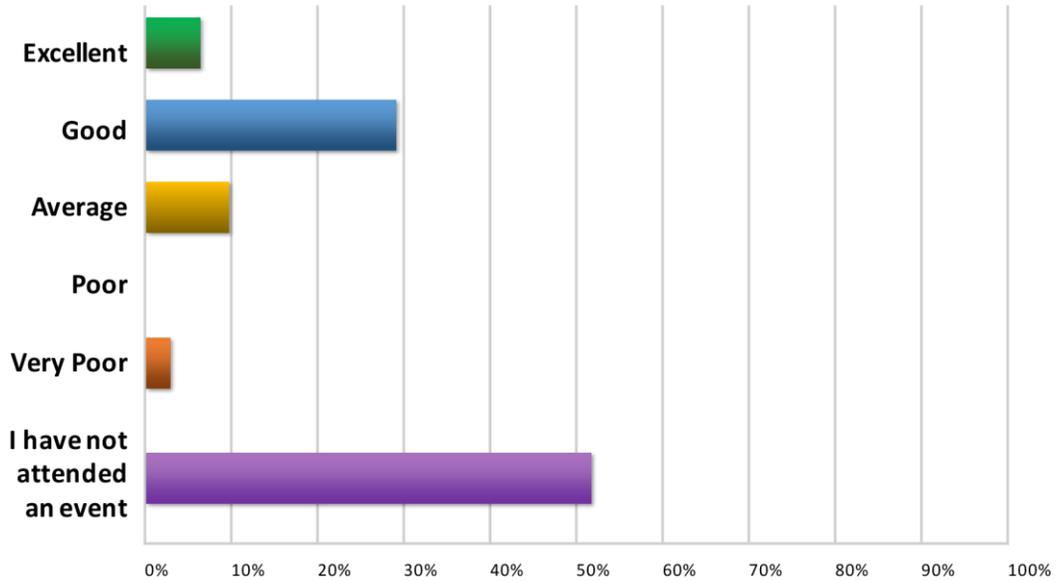
No other areas offered

Vancouver

Not really applicable as am on East Coast

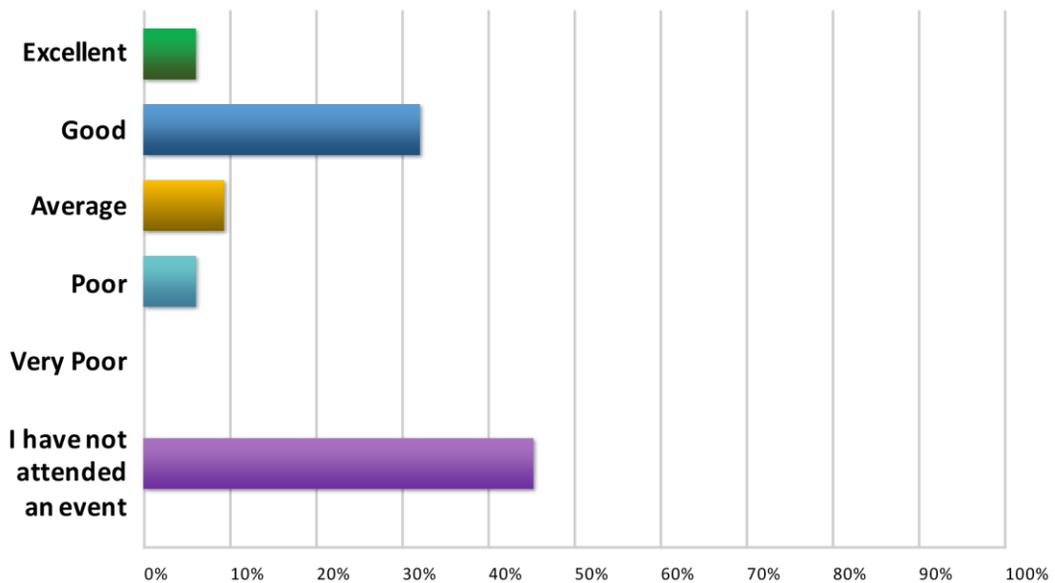
Q11: How would you rate the locations of the events you attended? (For example, hotel, library, etc.)

Answered: 31 Skipped: 8



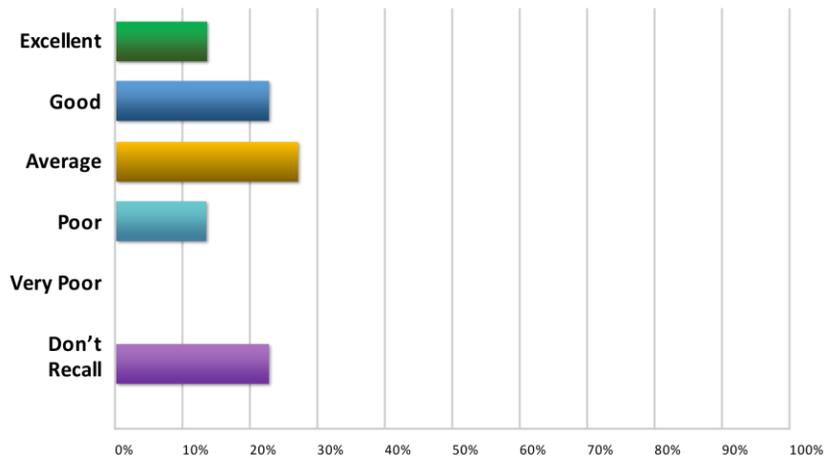
Q12: How would you rate the TPA agencies' presentations at the events you attended?

Answered: 31 Skipped: 8



Q13: How would you rate the discussion with TPA agency representatives at events you attended?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 17

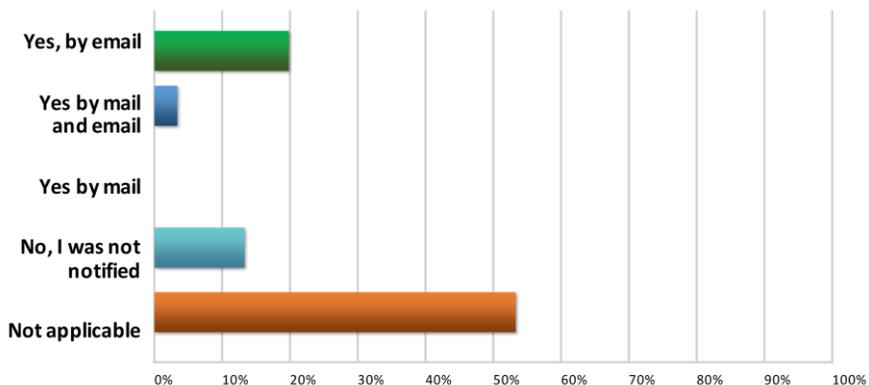


Any specific comments?

- The TPA representatives do not have much credibility, especially USDOE and EPA. Ecology isn't much better. Very dissatisfied with the track record of all three.
- The production values , i.e. audio and video could use some work
- They have specific talking points = that's it; conversation over.
- Need more time allocated for answering Questions raised and sent in via email. Is really needed, especially on the PURX Grouting - never really answered or justified and the revisions to the Waste Water treatment methods

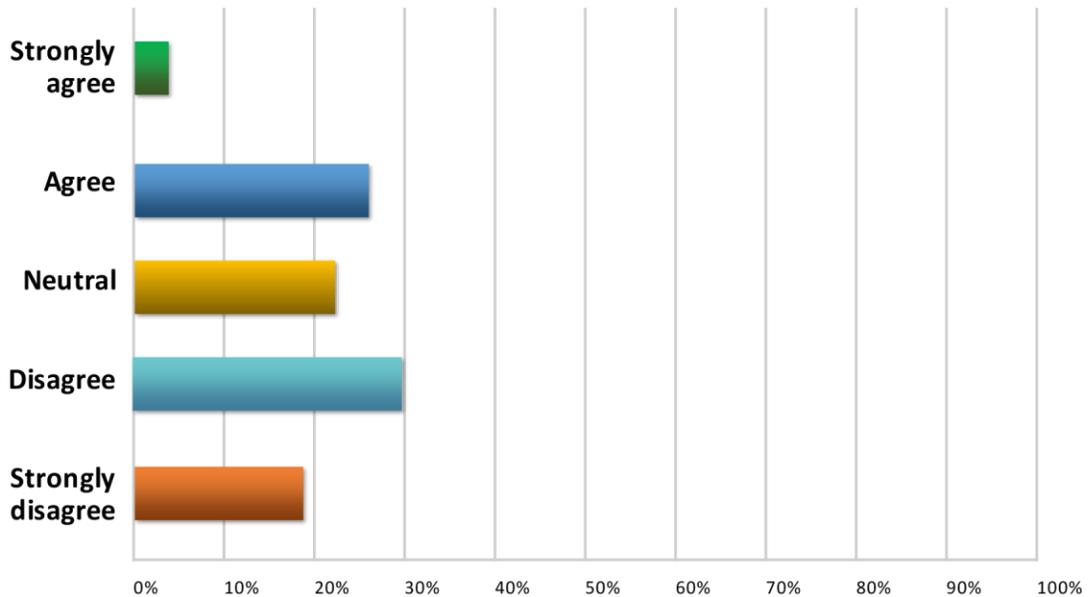
Q14: If you provided comment during a public comment period, were you notified when responses to comments were available?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 12



Q15: How would you answer the following statement? "I believe my input helps influence Hanford cleanup decisions."

Answered: 27 Skipped: 12



Please explain

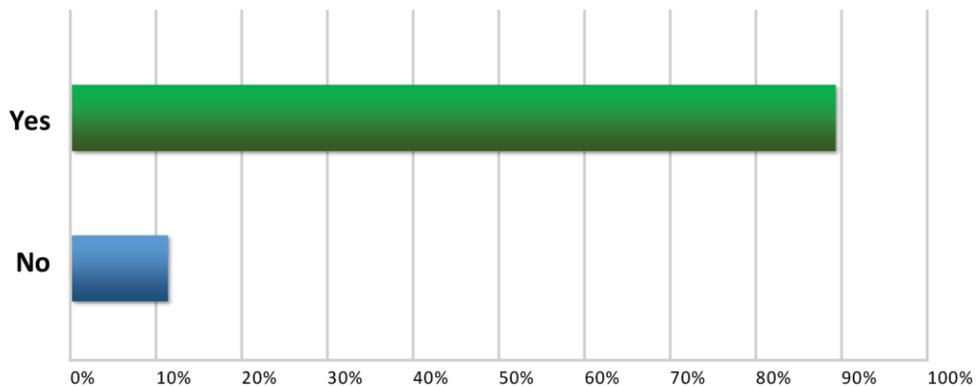
- I believe my input **SOMETIMES** influences decisions - but more often, it does not.
- HAB is an active participant in cleanup decisions
- The liquid wastes should have been solidified decades ago.
- They have their agenda; that's it.
- Both DOE and the state don't seem to have the cleanup goal as the primary goal.
- All comments never responded too and if requested... we know better attitude!!!
- I'm an Ecology regulator

The TPA Agencies value public input, through in-person events as well as in writing.



Q16: Do you plan to participate in future activities on Hanford topics?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 12

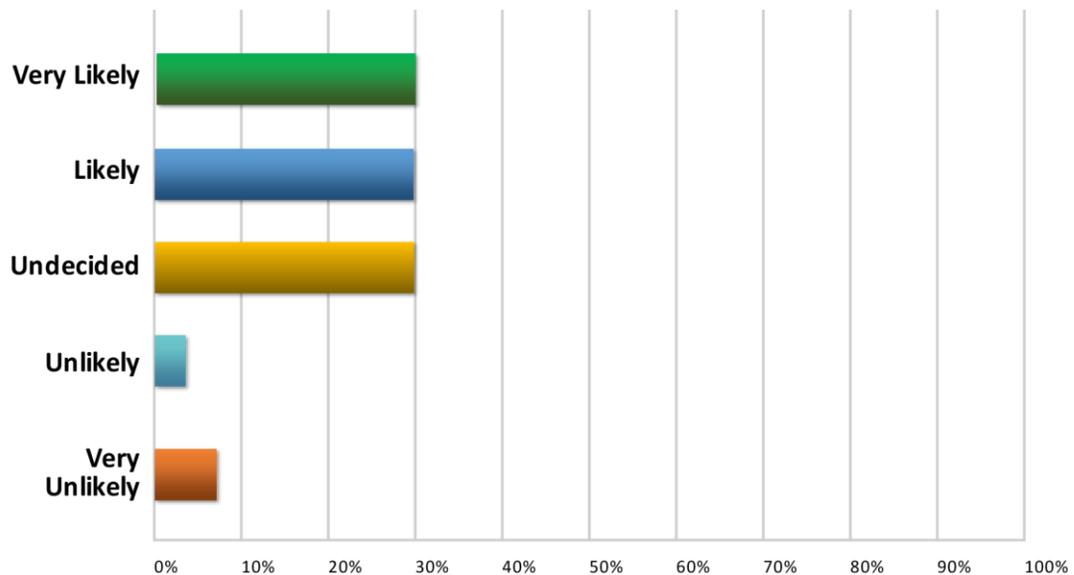


Please explain why or why not?

- The budget is not sustainable for the current cleanup plan, particularly for the waste tanks and vitrification. Much of the LLW could be treated and disposed of offsite by alternative methods as studied in the NAS review. Much less costly and sooner.
- Retiring and leaving the state
- Main responsibility of my job
- no time
- As I continue to participate in the HAB
- The cleanup is tied up in red tape, completion is uncertain.
- Never give up.
- Health permitting
- The Hanford Site is taking too much money and time to decommission and the Engineering Companies are not really working efficiently or cost effectively...to many change order requests and tying projects/programs up with delays and lack of oversight from independent auditors and general public entities. Is all about the profit and keeping the Job running for years..... such as grouting the Purex tunnels , which now will require extensive research and engineering on how to get the grout from around all the trucks/equipment in the tunnels without damaging the encased items...will be years and Billions of \$\$\$\$\$\$.
- Have to, part of my job
- I am bound at home most of the time, but hope to get out more this year.

Q17: Would you participate in a webinar or other online forums on Hanford topics?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 12



Any specific comments?

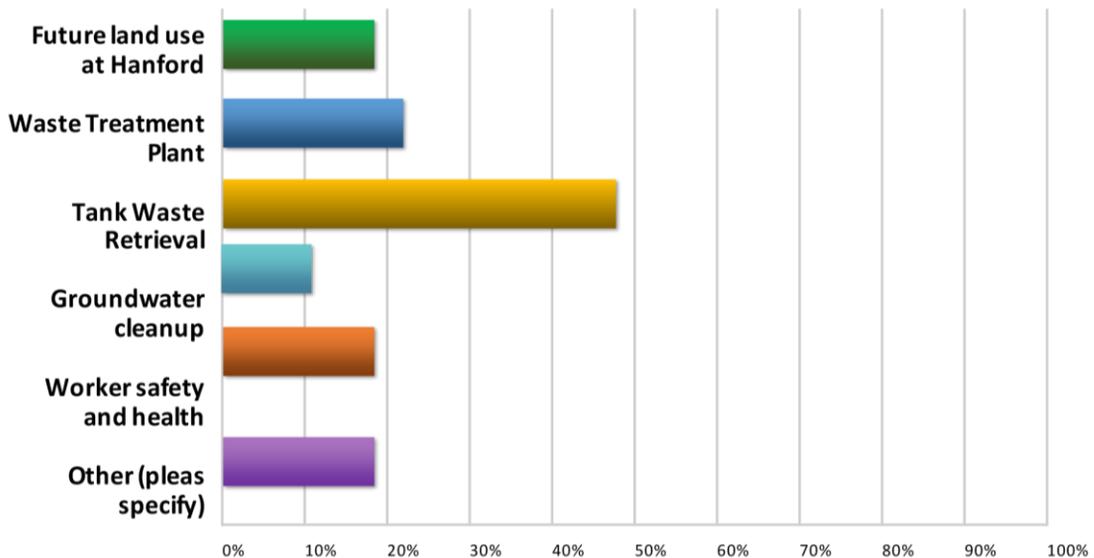
- I do not think it would do any good.
- Why not make video put them on YouTube.
- Only if required to do so as part of job assignment



Only about ten percent of the 580-square-mile Hanford's Site has any contamination. The large buffers required for safety and security now provide invaluable wildlife habitat. It is also home to many rare species of plants and insects.

Q18: As we plan for general public meetings to inform the public about Hanford Cleanup, which topic would you MOST want to discuss or learn more about in a public forum?

Answered: 27 Skipped: 12



Other (please specify)

- Alternative treatment and disposal options.
- End states
- Cancellation of the Tri Party Agreement
- None. Stop worrying about public involvement. Get the cleanup done.
- Vadose remediation



Staff from all three agencies help with local events to encourage students to pursue STEM or skilled trades.

Ecology's Lilyann Murphy is an Air Quality engineer who enjoys supporting young women interested in STEM through mock interviews.

Q19: Please provide us with any other thoughts on Hanford public involvement.

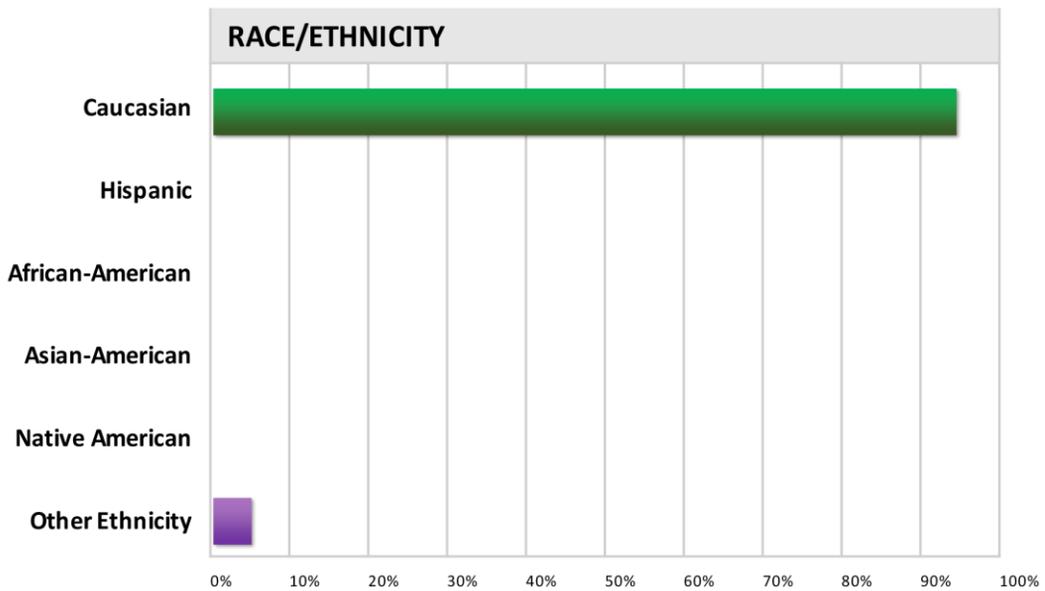
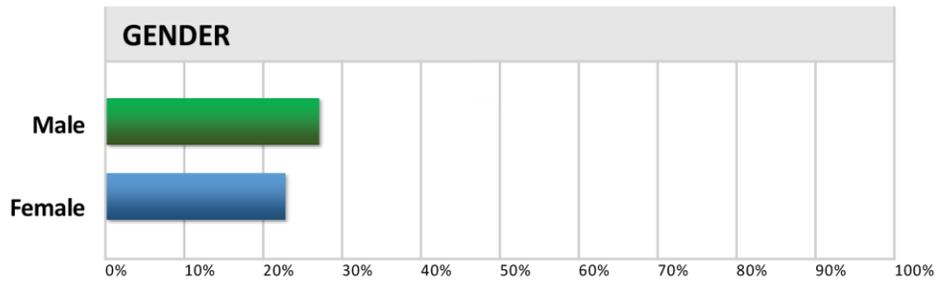
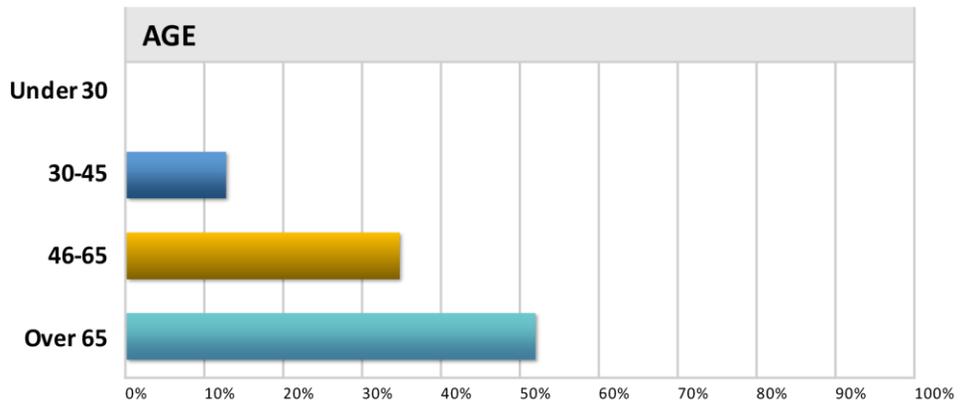
(Open-Ended Response)

Note: *these are left as contributed, no edits or corrections are made.*

- Seems as though there hasn't been much of substance to comment on lately -it's been primarily permit modifications.
- What good can we do....the area is a mess...the stories of the dishonest managers is terrible. The red tape in protecting the workers is beyond awful. Often DC has to be called to put a hold on toxic waste being hauled to Pasco on dump...The people there have Berrium in their systems from the dumping of this in their area. Their are still hot rooms no one should have to go into but have to. The tank farms are horrid. My husband has 3 deadly diseases from the areas neglect to protect him from its poisons. By God's grace he is still alive and doing well..The area is unbelievably mismanaged. Some managers need to fined and/or do prison time. there needs to be consequences for dishonesty and stealing from the area...
- The public involvement seem to be enthralled with change orders.
- The public is woefully unaware of the dangers that will lurk forever at Hanford. It's an out of sight situation, and will probably not change unless a catastrophe develops.
- Live feed video OR make videos of meetings.
- There needs to be a fully transparent dialogue between Hanford, the engineering companies and the general public, with no denials or is not in the Public's interest (as has been stated several times over the past 3 years).
- I think DOE has become a top down, control the message agency. I believe that DOE is now only checking the boxes when it comes to public involvement. Is the TPA really a 3-party collaboration anymore?
- Please stop wasting state and federal tax payer dollars trying to enhance or make public involvement more "useful". The agencies need to start focusing on making the best choices to accelerate cleanup. The time for meaningful public input has passed. Stop pandering to vocal minorities who have their own agendas. Every dollar that is wasted on public involvement is a dollar that is not available for cleanup.
- Make Budget information more visible by program and by contractor

Demographic information (Optional)

Answered: 23 Skipped: 16



For the most up-to-date information please bookmark our websites and follow us on social media.



Web:

Ecology.wa.gov/Hanfordfacebook.com/EcologyWAHanford/

Twitter: @ecyhanford



Web: www.hanford.gov/

facebook.com/HanfordSite

Twitter: @HanfordSite



Web: epa.gov/fedfac/hanford-site-spotlight

Thank you for supporting Hanford Cleanup!