

Federal Facilities Task Force
and the
Combined Intergovernmental Working Group

Conference call with Deputy Assistant Secretary Merle Sykes
July 24, 2:00 pm EDT

"An integrated discussion on the allocation of scarce resources"

- 2:00 pm Welcome and introductions (Doug Frost, David Borak)
- 2:05 pm Introductory remarks by Assistant Secretary Sykes
- 3:10 pm Q&A session about DOE-EM's budget/priority-setting process, with prepared questions:

I. Factual Background: DOE-EM's priority-setting process in light of scarce resources

1. How does DOE-EM determine which milestones, if any, will be in jeopardy if the budget is not sufficient?
2. How does DOE-EM determine which **non**-milestone-related-work will be funded ahead of any milestone-related work?
3. How does DOE-EM decide which milestones will be submitted to OMB as "within-target" and which milestones, if any, will be submitted to OMB as "over-target"?
4. What are "analytical building blocks" and how are they used in the budget development and/or priority-setting process?
5. DOE-EM emphasizes "risk-reduction" as the key criterion used in EM's budget priority setting. What criteria, if any, in addition to risk-reduction does DOE-EM use to guide its priority setting?
6. When DOE-EM believes that risk reduction and regulatory compliance "don't match up," what course of action is prescribed?
7. Does DOE-EM believe that it cannot commit to project milestones that exceed the amount of OMB/DOE planned budget target levels?

II. Making the connection between regulatory milestones and scarce resources

1. In what way are enforceable milestones identified and tied to specific funding requests in budget documents that go to OMB?
2. How does OMB establish out-year budget targets for DOE-EM? What information does it rely on to make these determinations?
3. How does OMB go about deciding whether "over-target" requests will be included in the proposed budget?

III. Operational questions

1. How can the intergovernmental groups help DOE reduce or eliminate the need for budget realignments, or make them easier to achieve?

Background: In FY08 and FY09 budget realignments have been necessary to meet cleanup milestones at some sites. The need for realignments creates uncertainty and may lead to inefficiencies as work waits while a realignment is

- accomplished. The Groups are is interested in potential budget flexibilities or influence points that can smooth out this process.
2. To better work with DOE, the intergovernmental groups need clarification about what can and can't be discussed after the budget embargo takes effect. For example:
 - Can DOE/regulators/stakeholders discuss relative priorities?
 - Can DOE/regulators/stakeholders discuss specific milestones, including whether or not they are "at risk" due to funding issues?
 - What are the specific types of information that must not be discussed?