Remote-Handled Waste at the Idaho National Laboratory Site

During the meeting on September 19, 2007, the Idaho National Laboratory Site (INL) Site Environmental Management (EM) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) was provided an overview and status of the Remote-Handled Waste Treatment Project at the INL Site. This project has the potential to greatly enhance public confidence in the Department of Energy's (DOE's) commitment to a viable and timely cleanup of the INL as long as adequate funding is provided to ensure critical milestones are not missed. The INL Site EM CAB learned that the DOE Site contractor, in its conceptual design, intends to retrofit an existing building versus building a new facility for remote treatment operations. The INL Site EM CAB fully supports this initiative and looks forward to an update on the design as it progresses.

The INL Site EM CAB's concerns with this project are not with the current status of the project, but with DOE ownership of the project and the potential of not receiving adequate out-year funding for this project. It is the INL Site EM CAB's understanding that the DOE-Nuclear Energy (NE) owns the project but transfers funds to DOE-EM to do the work. This often creates confusion as to accountability and dilutes priorities when it comes to requesting funds for the project. To ensure that this important project stays on track and budget, and milestones are not compromised, the INL Site EM CAB has the following recommendations:

1. Transfer the entirety of the program from DOE-NE to DOE-EM. This would include the scope, budget, schedule, and accountability.

2. Ensure there is enough funding requested for all out-years. The INL Site EM CAB is requesting information as to how much funding is allocated versus how much is required for this project by DOE in its Fiscal Year 2009 planned budget.

Because of the level of importance of this project viewed by the INL Site EM CAB, periodic updates will be requested on regulatory milestones and the funding status of the project.