Transportation Topic Group Conference Call #4
Monday, June 26, 2000

Participants:

Barbara Byron, CA, WGA
Bob Caylor, TN, SSEB
Ken Grey, CTUIR
Judith Holm, DOE/AL
Tammy Ottmer, CO, WGA
Phill Paull, CSG/ERC
Carol Peabody, DOE/HQ
Max Power, WA, STGW
Tim Runyon, IL, CSG/MW
Lisa Sattler, CSG/MW
Dan Tano, DOE/RL
Ed Wilds, CT, CSG/ERC
J.R. Wilkinson, CTUIR, STGWG

Research staff support: Judith Bradbury, PNNL; Alex Thrower, SAIC

Topics Discussed

1. Status of Secretarial Memo

- Carol Peabody reported that all of the Program Secretarial Offices have approved the memorandum to the Secretary of Energy requesting a decision on whether or not the Department should proceed with a consolidated transportation grant. The memo is currently in the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs and is expected to be sent to the Deputy Secretary and the Secretary within the week. The memo will be sent out, concurrently, to the Field Management Council to give members a "heads up" on what is happening.

  If the memo is approved by the Secretary, the Department will establish an internal DOE working group (similar to the previous working group) to develop an implementation plan within 90 days.

  Carol responded to several questions that participants raised about the Secretary's decision:

  → Specifically what will the Secretary be responding to?

  The Secretary is being asked to make a decision on whether or not DOE should go forward with the grant. The concept of a consolidated grant represents a change in DOE policy. It therefore requires Secretarial approval.

  → What topics will the implementation plan cover?

  The plan will include topics such as schedule, criteria for allocation, Tribal consultation, how the grant will be administered and audit authority.

Will there be some type of iterative process between this topic group and the implementation plan working group?

The working group is expected to work in concert with stakeholders and take into consideration their comments, concerns, and issues, similar to the protocols topic group.

Will the implementation plan have to go back for Secretarial approval?

Yes. The Secretary may have additional options, recommendations, and internal issues to be decided.

Will there be a process for broad stakeholder input?

Yes. The specifics have not yet been decided, but there will be a process for obtaining input.

2. Allocation Issues

Judith B. thanked members for their input on allocation factors and referred them to the matrix that had been distributed with the agenda. Several issues were discussed:

- Differences are evident on the proportion that should be allocated to the base vs. impact components of the grant. WGA members had recommended a 25/75 split, whereas other members (southeast and midwest) believed that a higher proportion should be allocated to the base component. Midwest suggested a 40/40/20 split (base/impact/discretionary).

- WGA had also recommended a minimum base amount of $150K.

  Judith Holm. noted that the actual amounts for each component would depend on the total amount available for the grant; however, initial thoughts had been that a base amount of $75K for each jurisdiction would cover the cost of a staff person for planning, while providing a sufficient amount in the impact component to give more money to those jurisdictions that are more heavily impacted by DOE shipments. Providing $150K in the base amount would leave very little for the impact component.

  Judith also reiterated that the idea behind the grant is not to cut back the amounts that are provided both overall and to each jurisdiction, but to consolidate DOE funds, provide flexibility to States and Tribes, and have consistency in how DOE provides financial assistance to impacted jurisdictions. One of the issues that the Tribal group had raised was the distinction between equity and equality: one of the goals is to provide for an equitable distribution of funding (i.e., fair as opposed to equal shares).

- Differences are also evident on the factors to be considered in allocating the impact or variable component of the grant:

  → Elgan Usrey (SSEB) had emphasized the need to provide for the demands placed on States such as Tennessee that have to coordinate inspection and training activities for DOE sites located in their jurisdictions (these costs re not covered by the AIP grants)

  → Ed Wilds (CSG/ERC) had highlighted the importance of considering transient or working population rather than resident population in a jurisdiction

  → WGA representatives had recommended possible expansion of the area for defining the impacted population (5 - 20 miles as per the emergency planning zones used for DOE facilities) and listed additional factors that they believed should be included: number of jurisdictions along the routes, total shipment miles along substandard roads, and severe changes in elevation along shipment corridors. Population, generally is not such a priority factor for western States as for the eastern, urban States.

3. Discretionary Component

Judith B. noted that it may also be possible to address some of some of the extra costs under the discretionary component of the grant , e.g. the additional burden borne by a jurisdiction with a high transient population or coordination responsibilities. Tammy Ottmer commented that the western States had learned that it is important to work out issues ahead of time: if everything is identified upfront, discussion about discretionary items starts to diminish. Ed Wilds also commented that it is difficult to discuss the discretionary component without first knowing what is in the base component of the grant.

Judith Holm asked participants whether they believed that a discretionary grant is needed. Tammy responded that in some instances a discretionary component is necessary and cited the example of needing to adjust a planned shipment route one year because of construction. This had resulted in a need to train additional emergency personnel. She emphasized that if the base grant is adequate, these types of issues are less likely to arise.

4. Allowable Activities

A copy of the WGA approach, which had been provided by Tammy and distributed to members prior to the call (thank you Tammy!), provides a useful framework for our review. In general, there seems to be agreement on the scope of allowables. The following questions were raised for further discussion:

- Does the training have to be DOE training to be an allowable?

- Who are to be the beneficiaries (local as well as State and Tribal entities)?

- What are some of the possible sub-allowables? If the overall goal is to improve public health and safety, what is the scope of activities that would help achieve that goal?

- How do issues related to the transportation grant cross-cut protocols discussions?

5. Miscellaneous Issues

- Tammy reported that recent discussions with DOE/HQ concerning small quantity shipments highlighted the need to establish the actual routes that would be used so that training needs could be met in a timely manner. The key issue is to get set up a number of years ahead of shipments.

- J.R. asked what types of shipments would be covered under the grant. Judith Holm responded that all types of non-classified radioactive materials shipments would be covered. DOE is discussing internally how to allocate the charges among DOE programs.

- Judith Holm reiterated that DOE would continue to fund the regional State groups, which, as WGA had emphasized, play a vital role in helping with detailed planning. Funding would include funding States for initiating travel for coordination meetings.

- Tammy Ottmer asked whether OCRWM intended to fold the 180©program into the grant. Judith Holm responded that OCRWM did intend to fold in their program, provided the grant meets the requirements established under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act (as amended).

6. TEC/WG Topic Group Meeting

Judith B. reported that the specific agenda for the topic group discussion at the TEC/WG meeting in Indianapolis will depend on whether or not a Secretarial decision on the grant has been reached. However, issues on which it would be helpful to have comments from group members prior to the meeting include:

- (Really helpful to have these in writing!) State and Tribal administrative considerations of which DOE should be aware (e.g., fiscal year, possible limitations on type of activity on which funds can be spent, point of contact for receipt of funding etc.)

- Criteria for/items to be included in, the discretionary component of the grant and the process for awarding such grants

- Implementation concerns/recommendations

- Prioritization of the factors and their relative weightings

- Any additional issues/considerations which we have not discussed over the past few months.

Action Items

1. Judith B. will draw up a summary master list, by category, of issues and viewpoints identified to date.

2. All members will review meeting notes of previous conference calls and the summary list to be provided by Judith Bradbury prior to the meeting (please email or call Judith at 301-862-7536 if you need back copies of our discussions or any other documents related to the grant and are unable to locate them on the web page: http://www.ntp.doe.gov).

3. All members will provide additional written comments to Judith Bradbury on the topics listed in item #6, above, at least ten days prior to the meeting (Friday, July 14), for incorporation into the agenda.

Attachment

Matrix of members' comments on allocation issues