



**Heart of America Northwest**  
 The Public's Voice for Hanford Cleanup  
 A Citizen's Guide to the Hanford State of the Site Meetings, Fall 2008  
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## USDOE's Proposed Delays to Contamination Cleanup

The USDOE continues to propose decades of delays to cleanup of contamination at Hanford and in the Columbia River. This proposal would:

- delay emptying the leaky single shell tanks of High-Level Nuclear Waste by 22 years, from 2018 to 2040
- delay completing the processing/treatment and closure of High-Level Nuclear Wastes in the tanks by 20 years, from 2028 to December 31st, 2047
- delay until 2052 completion of cleanup at the High-Level Waste Tank Farms and other final cleanup

USDOE's White House-approved budget for Hanford Cleanup through 2015 fell \$5 Billion short of funding the requirements for the Tri-Party Agreement and other cleanup law obligations.

While requesting less money for cleanup, USDOE has asked Congress for more money for nuclear weapons and energy programs likely to create more waste

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## Time for WA to Take Strong Action so DOE Doesn't Add More Waste or Delay Cleanup Further, By Gerry Pollet

USDOE and the Bush Administration have proposed decades of delays to Hanford cleanup, while moving to dump more waste at Hanford. For more than two years, USDOE has gotten its way by dragging out negotiations. The State needs to issue orders and take action now. The contamination is spreading and USDOE plans to issue decisions soon to add more waste to Hanford's problems.

USDOE wants to delay cleanup by decades, but refuses to agree to amend the Hanford Cleanup Agreement to: 1) stop dumping of more waste from other nuclear weapons plants while existing wastes are contaminating our environment; or, 2) make any new schedules enforceable in court. The public needs to support Governor Gregoire and Ecology issuing compliance orders and asking courts to enforce schedules in the face of the ludicrous claims - from people who don't want the state to act - that state enforcement action will "delay cleanup."

With USDOE poised to add more wastes to Hanford, we need to use the authority which the courts have said Washington State has. The state should amend state hazardous waste law and issue permits to bar contaminated sites from dumping more waste while existing wastes are not in compliance and are contaminating the environment.

Come to the State of the Site meeting to insist on enforceable, timely deadlines and "Cleanup First."

*-Gerry Pollett*

## Hanford Cleanup Agreement: USDOE Wants Decades of Delays - State Wants Enforceable Schedules - Talks Nearing an End?

Nearly three years have gone by since the United States Department of Energy ("USDOE") proposed delaying cleanup deadlines by decades.

Now, efforts to negotiate the Hanford Cleanup Agreement (Tri-Party Agreement or TPA) are near an end, said Polly Zehm, Deputy Director of the Washington State Department of Ecology. Whether they will result in an agreement ensuring enforceable, timely deadlines and cleanup of contamination before allowing more waste to be added to Hanford remains a question.

The state wants "protective, aggressive and realistic" actions to address risks to human health and the environment. DOE must be held accountable

for complying with the agreement. The outcome must be "credible and fair" and supported by the public, said Zehm.

Zehm told the Hanford Advisory Board at its Seattle meeting in early September that the state would prefer to reach an agreement which will serve the interests of the state, rather than take legal action. But, if negotiations fail,

**The State of the Site is your chance to applaud the state for refusing to negotiate away the Tri-Party Agreement AND to voice your support for enforceable, timely deadlines & "Cleanup First"!**

she said, the state is prepared to litigate to enforce the cleanup agreement.



## Inside this Citizen's Guide to the Hanford State of the Site Meetings - Fall 2008 -

Proposed Delays to Tri-Party Cleanup - Three Plans to Add More Waste to Hanford  
 How YOU Can Make a Difference at this Year's State of the Site Meeting  
 Details for a Public Meeting Near You

## The State of the Site is your chance to applaud the state for refusing to negotiate away the Tri-Party Agreement AND to voice your support for enforceable, timely deadlines & "Cleanup First"!

Funding for this publication is provided in part by a Public Participation Grant from the Washington State Department of Ecology. The Department of Ecology has reviewed this material for consistency with the purposes of grant only.



## Insist on Timely Cleanup and No More Shipped Waste to Hanford Attend a Public Meeting Near You!

- Kennewick: October 2
- Hood River: October 21
- Seattle: October 7
- Portland: October 22



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## USDOE's Proposed Delays to Cleanup of Contamination

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to bury at Hanford: waste from nuclear weapons production plants, highly radioactive Plutonium and other wastes from reactors and weapons programs, and, more liquid High-Level Nuclear Waste from reprocessing of spent commercial reactor fuel (as part of the GNEP program).

At Heart of America Northwest we have consistently urged **cleanup of Hanford contamination before adding more waste** - a concept most of us learned in Kindergarten. **"Cleanup First"** should be a part of the Tri-Party Agreement, to stop USDOE from adding more waste until the existing waste is cleaned up and in compliance with hazardous waste law standards. The agencies have no set goals for groundwater cleanup, especially along the Columbia River. The Tri-Party Agreement is currently designed only to "contain" the expansion of contamination, not to clean it up.

Heart of America Northwest's alternatives to USDOE's proposed delays include: building new tanks, emptying waste from the old, dangerous Single-Shell Tanks before more leaks occur, and beginning early startup of the Low Activity Waste vitrification plant, which could begin processing tank waste in 2013 and help get waste out of the leaky tanks.

### Proposed Delays:

- Emptying Leaky Single Shell Tanks of High-Level Nuclear Waste Delay: 22 years from 2018 to 2040
- Processing of Tank Wastes Delay: 20 years from 2028 to Dec. 31, 2047
- Completing cleanup of High-Level Waste Tank Farms and other final cleanup delayed to 2052

## What Has Public Involvement Accomplished for Hanford Cleanup?

**1991-1994**

- Ended USDOE dumping untreated liquid wastes directly into the soil along the Columbia River.

**1996-2001**

- Stopped USDOE from restarting the FFTF Reactor and making more liquid High-Level Nuclear waste at Hanford.

**2004**

- Stopped USDOE from dumping radioactive waste in unlined soil trenches.

**2004-2008**

- Halted USDOE use of Hanford as a hazardous/radioactive waste site for the Nation's nuclear weapons waste.

**2007**

- Made "loud and clear" to the Washington Department of Ecology that the public wants Cleanup of Contamination First - before more waste is added. This gave the state support for not relaxing deadlines without making new deadlines enforceable and barring USDOE from adding even more waste at Hanford.

**2008**

- In a letter to Heart of America Northwest, Governor Gregoire committed to use existing authority to implement the principle of Cleanup Contamination First.

## Three Separate Plans to Add More Waste to Hanford

USDOE is proposing three separate plans, each evaluated in a separate Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), to add more waste to Hanford before existing waste is cleaned up and in compliance with state and federal law.

### Hazardous/Radioactive Waste

The first plan being studied is to use Hanford as a national waste site for both radioactive and "mixed" radioactive/hazardous waste from further nuclear weapons production. The State of Washington and citizens successfully opposed USDOE's 2004 Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as inadequate and halted waste shipments scheduled for 2004. But USDOE says it will issue a

new EIS this Winter, likely moving forward its plan to make Hanford a dump for the Nation's nuclear weapons waste.



### High Level Nuclear Waste

The second plan being studied calls for up to 100,000 truck loads of High Level Nuclear Waste to be shipped to Hanford for storage and "reprocessing." Reprocessing is the melting-down of fuel rods in acid to extract Plutonium. It creates the same radioactive and

toxic combination that is sitting in the leaking tank complex.

### Extremely Radioactive Plutonium Waste

The third USDOE plan being studied calls for trucking extremely radioactive plutonium waste to Hanford for burial. We have already won a Federal Court injunction stopping these shipments, based on the fact that Hanford has no facilities for storage and treatment of wastes. USDOE is now attempting to re-name these dangerous wastes and ship them to Hanford with other highly radioactive wastes to be buried in shallow landfills and boreholes above the ground water, a great risk to the Columbia River.

USDOE wants to delay cleanup by decades and ship more waste to Hanford.

This is *your* chance to urge Washington to take action rather than accept delays or more waste.

Insist on timely, enforceable deadlines & cleanup of contamination first

## What you can ASK for at the State of the Site Meeting

- 1. Ask** Washington Ecology and USEPA **not** to agree to USDOE's proposals to delay cleanup of contamination by decades. Instead, urge the agencies to issue orders and schedules for tanks to be emptied, early startup of Low Activity Waste treatment and cleanup of groundwater.
- 2. Ask** the Tri-Parties to agree to the state's calls to strengthen the Cleanup Agreement and to build in greater enforcement of cleanup requirements. Schedules in the agreement must be made readily enforceable in court through judicial decrees in order to ensure they are met instead of allowing endless appeals and minor penalties for missed deadlines.
- 3. Ask** that no more waste be added to Hanford before we cleanup the existing contamination. This principle of "Cleanup First" should be part of the TPA.
- 4.** If USDOE refuses to include "Cleanup First" in the TPA, the State of the Washington should include "Cleanup First" in the state hazardous waste (RCRA) permit for "mixed" (hazardous/radioactive waste mixed together) and hazardous waste at Hanford. The court has said that the state has this authority.
- 5.** With a new administration, the time will be right to propose that a "Hanford Cleanup Commission", dedicated to cleanup, replace the USDOE in management of cleanup. The states of Oregon and Washington should collaborate with Tribes, public interest groups and local governments proposing a new management structure for cleanup, with a commission that oversees contracts and deadlines. USDOE has shown that cleanup is not its priority, and its management record is abysmal.



## Public Meetings Happening Near You

Heart of America Northwest, with other public interest groups participation, will hold workshops to help you prepare for the meeting, answer your questions and help you get involved, starting at 6 pm at each location. In addition, the Tri-Party Agencies will host an Open House from 6-7 pm with display material, staff and management available to talk one on one with you about Hanford cleanup.

**Kennewick**  
Thursday, October 2, 2008  
2008 Red Lion Hotel  
1101 N. Columbia Center Blvd  
6-7 pm Workshop and Open House, 7 pm Public Meeting

**Seattle**  
Tuesday, October 7, 2008  
North Seattle Community College  
9600 College Way North  
6-7 pm Workshop and Open House, 7 pm Public Meeting

**Hood River**  
Tuesday, October 21, 2008  
Best Western Hood River Inn  
1108 E. Marina Way  
6-7 pm Workshop and Open House, 7 pm Public Meeting

**Portland**  
Wednesday, October 22, 2008  
Lloyd Center Doubletree  
1000 NE Multnomah Street  
6-7 pm Workshop and Open House, 7 pm Public Meeting