



Heart of America Northwest

The Public's Voice for Hanford Cleanup

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Hanford Clean-Up Agreement Background

Send in your comments!!



Unacceptable Delays in Hanford Clean-Up Agreement (TPA) Cannot be the Price for Long Awaited Milestones to Cleanup Contaminated Groundwater Entering the Columbia River

For over two and a half years, the federal Energy Department (USDOE) and Washington's Department of Ecology and US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have been negotiating changes to the Hanford Clean-Up Agreement (called the Tri-Party Agreement, or TPA) after USDOE proposed decades of delays to cleanup schedules. **USDOE's proposed delays included delaying the emptying of the Single Shell High-Level Nuclear Waste tanks from a deadline of 2018 until 2040.** Those tanks have leaked over a million gallons of deadly liquid High-Level Nuclear Waste. **USDOE's inadequate budget plans would *only empty one or two tanks a year between now and 2019* – while there are 140 of the tanks remaining to be emptied** with 35 million gallons. Washington and Oregon states have now gone to court over the delay in emptying those tanks.

USDOE also proposed multiple other delays, while Washington State and EPA sought to follow public input urging that the TPA have a plan, with enforceable milestones, for the first time for cleaning up the highly contaminated groundwater flowing into the Columbia River. Apart from the tank waste schedule, USDOE, Ecology and EPA kept negotiating and have proposed a large number of other changes to the TPA.

Hundreds of citizens joined Heart of America Northwest and other citizen groups at public meetings over these two years to urge that:

- Any agreement to change the TPA must **include a bar on USDOE adding *any more off-site waste*** to Hanford while existing wastes are out of compliance;
- ***Milestones have to be more enforceable*** – in court – than existing TPA milestones have been; and, USDOE must not be allowed to avoid meeting milestones by failing to request adequate funding;
- The TPA must have an ***enforceable plan to cleanup the contaminated groundwater*** – which covers an area nearly the size of the entire City of Portland or Seattle.

The Good News & the Bad News

The proposed agreement has good news and bad news for citizens. ***Your comments can change the agreement – the comment period ends April 23rd.*** The comment period has been extended - with public meetings in Portland and Seattle in mid-May.

Good news: The agencies propose to accelerate some milestones for cleanup along the Columbia River Corridor. For the first time the TPA would have specific goals for cleaning up the contaminated groundwater flowing into the River today.

Bad news: Ecology and EPA are ready to accept years of proposed delays for other important milestones, such as for retrieving Plutonium/Transuranic waste from unlined burial grounds and having treatment available for mixed radioactive chemical wastes.

(more bad news on the flip side)

This product was funded through a grant for Washington State Department of Ecology. While these materials were reviewed for our grant consistency, this does not necessarily constitute endorsement by the Department.

More Good News & Bad News *(but mostly bad)*

More Bad news: Ecology and EPA are ready to accept years of delays, not to mention:

- **The agencies explicitly traded off the work along the River for delays elsewhere.**
- The proposed agreement and public notice says that these delays are made necessary because the agreement was negotiated **“based on currently anticipated funding levels.”**
- The regulators did what they said they would not do: negotiate based on USDOE’s inadequate budget plans. **WORSE**, the agencies failed to consider that efforts to dramatically increase Hanford Clean-up funding would succeed – adding over \$2 billion in fiscal year 2009 and Stimulus funding through 2012. This makes the proposed delays totally unnecessary!
- The TPA will still not have a provision barring USDOE from dumping more waste at Hanford from other sites while existing wastes are not in compliance or cleaned up.

Hanford Clean-Up Agreement Factsheet

Great to use for your commenting!

1. The Agencies negotiated the TPA milestones, **changes and delays based on USDOE’s inadequate FY 2009 Budget Request** from the Bush Administration to Congress and USDOE’s inadequate “target” budgets for the next five to ten years.
2. They assumed they would receive no additional money & **have not accounted for the nearly \$2B in stimulus** money Hanford will be receiving over the next three years to accelerate clean-up
3. **The proposal is for a trade-off between projects which accelerate cleanup of groundwater and soil contamination along the River in exchange for delaying other projects that are important for safety or to stop the spread of contamination**
4. **The agencies apparently ignored public input, including Hanford Advisory Board’s advice, to:**
 - Get back on track retrieving TRU
 - Treat backlog of Mixed Wastes and TRU and have a new treatment capacity available
 - Move ahead to meet milestones for clean-up of the Central Plateau soil sites and huge processing plants (called canyons), based on meeting the existing 2024 TPA deadline to complete all such cleanup outside the High-Level Waste Tank Farms

Instead they proposed DELAYS, which remove enforceable milestones:

- **Delays** removing Transuranic (Plutonium) wastes from unlined burial grounds
 - **Delays** treating the backlog of stored wastes
 - **Delays** cleaning-up of “burial” grounds inland from the Columbia River
 - **Delays** milestones... and accepts USDOE’s budget based scheduling
 - **Ironically**, USDOE says it will use stimulus money for some of these same projects whose enforceable milestones would be **delayed** or made unenforceable
5. “Clean-up of contamination threatening the Columbia River today must not be used as a justification for delaying clean-up”
 6. Include in the TPA a ban on USDOE adding more waste until existing wastes are brought into compliance and are cleaned up: the “Clean-Up First” Principle
 7. They want to delay clean-up **AND** currently have three separate plans this year to add more waste to Hanford and use Hanford as a national radioactive / hazardous waste dumpsite
 8. There has been a history of mismanagement and misuse of funds – let’s do it right! When there is increased funding and money (ie., from the stimulus bill for clean-up) we need increased accountability
 9. The agencies missed the opportunity to hold public meetings for the public to tell them where the \$2 B extra dollars should be focused
 10. Proposals replace enforceable milestones (as Ecology promised) with **unenforceable** “targets” with dates **“TBD”, to be set in future negotiations**
 - The TPA becomes LESS enforceable – a major step backwards
 - Conflicts with Governor’s effort to be more enforceable
 11. The Obama Administration should make a new commitment at Hanford and throughout the Energy Department to listen to the public and states about how clean-up funds are spent and to add oversight



How to Comment on TPA

Submit *written* comments to:

Paula Call

U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550, A7-75, Richland, WA 99352

Submit *email* comments to: TPACH@rl.gov

Attend a TPA Public Meeting Premeeting Workshop at 6:15pm with HOANW

Seattle

Monday, May 11th at 7pm at the Seattle Center
305 Harrison Street – Conf. Room A

Portland

Tuesday, May 12th at 7pm at the Portland State Office Bldg