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October 19, 2012

Matt McCormick
U.S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550
Richland, WA 99352

Re: Proposed Conveyance of Land at the Hanford Site

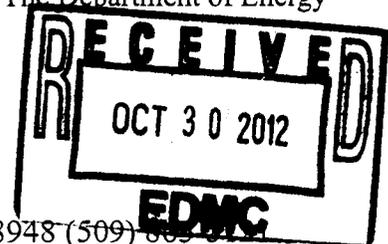
Dear Mr. McCormick:

The Yakama Nation submits the following comments and request for government-to-government consultation with the Department of Energy in response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Conveyance of Land at the Hanford Site.

As way of background, the "Manhattan" Project" was initiated by the United States as a top secret National Security Project near the Columbia at Hanford to win World War II. The residents of the area were relocated almost overnight and were restricted from visiting their homelands for several generations. To this day the Yakama people are restricted to certain areas for hunting and/or gathering their traditional foods. Furthermore our people are restricted from the most sacred spiritual sites known to us.

Once the "Manhattan Project" was completed, Hanford became the Nation's largest depository for some of the worse biological, chemical, and nuclear pollutants in the world. The "environmental racism" of pollution depositories near or on tribal lands is a well known situation in Indian Country. The Yakama Nation continues to challenge the Department of Energy with their obligation to clean our homelands to standards acceptable to us and our future generations. The Yakama Nation is very concerned for the people and natural resources exposed to the pollution from Hanford. Our water and salmon are the most sacred blessings we have been offered from this world. Hanford has spoiled our gifts and is not doing an adequate job of cleaning it up.

The Department of Energy continues to disgrace and disrespect us as a sovereign nation and as the true stewards of our homelands by not offering the Yakama Nation a "first right of refusal" on conveyance of lands associated with the Hanford Site. We do not support the land being conveyed to "TRIDEC", any other organization, or tribe associated with the area. The benefits from the "Manhattan Project" and the depository have been realized by the world and especially the United States at the expense of the Yakama people and their sacred resources. The Department of Energy



needs to correct the wrongs of the past and at a minimum conduct "face to face" consultation with the Yakama Nation. As such, the Yakama Nation requests government-to-government consultation with the Department of Energy to discuss this important matter.

The Yakama Nation also has concerns on how the traditional cultural property (TCP) study will be carried out. Generally contractors do not consult directly with Tribes, rather consultation is carried out directly between the Federal agency and the Tribes. A comprehensive and good faith effort for TCP studies must include Tribal input. TCP studies must consist of interviewing tribal members familiar with the area through first-hand knowledge or oral history. Only the people who place cultural significance on an area are able to identify it and speak of its significance.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please contact Philip Rigdon, Department of Natural Resources Deputy Director to assist with arranging a government-to-government meeting. Mr. Rigdon can be reached at (509) 865-5121 x. 4655 or at prigdon@yakama.com.

Sincerely,


Harry SmiSkin, Chairman
Yakama Nation Tribal Council

Cc

Warren Spencer

Sam Jim, Sr.

Phillip Rigdon

Kate Valdez

Steve Rigdon

Russell Jim

Mona Wright

Administrative Record

Vivian Babs George

Stella Washines

Tom Zeilman

Rob Whitlam

Ruth Jim

Marlene Shavehead

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