



# Tank Waste Remediation Systems Privatization

U.S. Department of Energy • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Washington State Department of Ecology

December 1995

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) and the Washington State Department of Ecology are asking for public comments on the proposed Tri-Party Agreement change package. A 45-day public comment period will run from January 2 to February 15, 1996. USDOE recently completed an analysis of privatization (contracting with private companies) options for cleanup of the tank waste. Under the privatization approach, private companies will contract with USDOE to treat Hanford's tank wastes and return a treated product to USDOE. Privatization anticipates that multiple contracts will be awarded to encourage innovation and competition between contractors. The selected contractors will invest private funds to design, construct, and operate the necessary facilities to meet the needs of Tank Waste Remediation Systems (TWRS). USDOE will define and monitor the requirements to be met by selected contractors in order for the treated tank waste to be returned to USDOE control after treatment. USDOE will offer incentives to the contractors to reduce immobilized waste volumes and to optimize waste loading, which should reduce the costs of future processing, storage, and disposal.

The privatization strategy is to be accomplished in two phases. The first phase will demonstrate the technical and business viability of using privatized facilities to treat and immobilize Hanford tank wastes. The Phase One treatment facility will be capable of treating six to 13 percent of the low-activity tank wastes. Phase Two, the full-scale production facility, would be capable of processing and immobilizing the remaining waste on a schedule that will accommodate removing waste from single-shell tanks by the year 2018.

## BACKGROUND

In December 1991, the USDOE established TWRS to ensure that radioactive tank wastes in the large underground storage tanks are immobilized in a safe and cost-effective manner. The TWRS mission is to conceptualize, develop, design, construct, and operate the physical system and technologies necessary to

retrieve waste from Hanford's large underground waste tanks located in the Hanford Site's 200 East and 200 West areas, and convert that waste into a solid form suitable for ultimate disposal.

## ISSUE

The privatization of programs and facilities that will pretreat and immobilize low activity waste will be accomplished via one of two pathways. The primary pathway calls for two or more facilities owned, built and operated by two or more independent contractors. This pathway is known as the contractor-owned, contractor-operated path.

The alternative path is driven by milestones which serve as a fall-back technical and regulatory path for privatization of the TWRS program. These milestones are not enforceable as long as USDOE is making progress on the primary path. Should USDOE fail to make progress along the primary path, the alternate path milestones will become enforceable. The ability to meet major Tri-Party Agreement milestones is a factor for acceptability in privatizing the pretreatment and immobilization of low activity waste.

It is recognized that to be able to take advantage of the commercial technologies available, the methods for processing the waste should not be restricted to vitrification. However, before employing any technology other than vitrification, the performing contractor(s) will prove that the alternate technology meets or exceeds the performance standards applicable to vitrification. Such demonstration will be subject to stakeholder public involvement and must represent an opportunity to reduce costs and accelerate schedules. This change will not affect the major milestones for the processing of tank waste by 2028 or delay completion of the Single Shell Tank Retrieval major milestone. Using a technology other than vitrification may affect Single Shell Tank retrieval interim milestones, requiring adjustment to the sequencing of tank retrieval.

105200

**TRI-PARTY AGREEMENT CHANGES**

The changes would recognize USDOE's plans for private financing and operation of tank waste treatment facilities. Key dates in the new timelines include:

- Jan 1997 Award multiple private contracts
- July 1998 Issue notice to proceed with selected contractors
- Dec 2002 Startup of actual treatment

All low activity wastes are to be treated by 2024, four years earlier than called for in the current milestone.

High Level Waste pretreatment and vitrification may also be included in the privatization contracts. A decision on including or not including, High Level Waste into this initiative will be based on vendor interest.

USDOE has released a draft Request for Proposal which specifies dates for completing work earlier than the Tri-Party Agreement requires. Ecology fully supports USDOE in its efforts to complete work earlier than required. The dates specified in the Tri-Party Agreement do not prevent USDOE from completing the required work early.

**HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED**

Ecology and USDOE are asking for public comments on the proposed Tri-Party Agreement change package. A 45-day comment period will run January 2 to February 15, 1996.

Public meetings are tentatively scheduled for:

- January 30 in Portland
- February 1 in Richland

*Negotiators from Ecology and USDOE are also available upon request for presentations to interested groups and organizations.*

Copies of the Change Package are available for review and copying at the following Information Repositories or by calling Hanford Cleanup toll-free at 1-800-321-2008.

**Portland**  
 Portland State University  
 Branford Price Millar Library  
 Science and Engineering Floor  
 SW Harrison and Park  
 (503) 725-3690

Seattle  
 University of Washington  
 Suzzallo Library  
 Government Publications Room  
 (206) 543-4600

Richland  
 Washington State University Tri-Cities  
 Public Reading Room, Room 130 West  
 100 Sprout Road  
 (509) 376-8583

Spokane  
 Gonzaga University  
 Foley Center  
 East 502 Boone  
 (509) 528-4220 ext. 3829

*For more information, contact Toby Michelena, Ecology, (360) 407-7144, or Carolyn Haass, USDOE, (509) 372-2731.*

The Tri-Party Agreement agencies are equal opportunity agencies and do not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, disability, age, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, disabled veteran's status, Vietnam Era veteran's status, or sexual orientation.

*If you have special accommodation needs or require this material in an alternative format, please contact Michelle Davis at (360) 407-7126 (Voice) or (360) 407-6206 (TDD).*

