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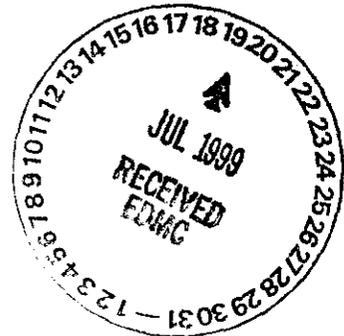
Nez Perce

ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION & WASTE MANAGEMENT
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May 17, 1999

Ms. Linda Bauer
US DOE
3350 George Washington Way
2C45 MSIN H0-12
Richland, WA 99352

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DOE-RL / DIS



RE: Funding for Additional Chromium Toxicity Studies

Dear Ms. Bauer:

As you are aware the Nez Perce Tribe ERWM is an active participant on the Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council (NRTC). The NRTC forum has been a good source of information regarding projects that can potentially impact habitat and natural resources at Hanford. One of the main objectives of the NRTC is to protect natural resources and work with the DOE and Hanford contractors on mitigation and restoration projects.

One of the most important projects that the NRTC is currently involved with is the work that has been contracted to the USFWS regarding the potential impacts of chromium on salmon. Given the issues surrounding the Hanford Reach and the decline of the salmon this study will provide valuable information that is not now available. During the past year the USFWS has been conducting laboratory studies. The next phase will include early life history laboratory studies using Hanford water and field studies on the Hanford Reach.

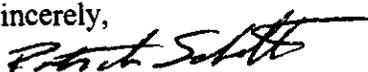
In the last NRTC meeting in May 1999 we were briefed by the USFWS regarding the laboratory work that has been conducted to date and about some potential options for field work that could be conducted this fall. There was considerable discussion about conducting fertilization and avoidance studies. Of course, these studies would necessitate additional funding for this project, but it was felt that the benefits of filling in some essential data gaps regarding chromium toxicity and salmon was well worth the effort.

The Nez Perce ERWM encourages the DOE to augment the budget in order to collect more data regarding fertilization and avoidance. Considering the millions of dollars that are being expended on other Hanford projects, we feel that the thousands needed to

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collect more data about the potential impacts of chromium to salmon is well worth the cost. If you have any questions about this issue please contact Dan Landeen 208-843-7375 (danl@nezperce.org) of the ERWM staff.

Sincerely,


Patrick Sobotta
Interim ERWM Director

cc: Kevin Clarke
Jay McConnaughey