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Kettle Range Conservation Group

P.O. Box 150

Republic, WA 99166

June 3, 1999

Mr. Tom Ferns
USDOE, Richland Operations Office
P. O. Box 550, MSIN H0-12
Richland, WA 99352

Dear Mr. Ferns:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Revised Draft Hanford Remedial Action Environmental Impact Statement and Comprehensive Land Use Plan (HRA-EIS). We would like to commend DOE for recognizing the invaluable natural assets of the Wahluke Slope and the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River in your Preferred Alternative within the HRA-EIS by designating them for preservation.

We support the position of the Lower Columbia Basin Audubon Society and the Columbia River Conservation League. They point out that the Preferred Alternative fails to recognize the considerable biological resources of the central Hanford Site. The Industrial, Conservation, Research and Development, and Recreation areas depicted in the Preferred Alternative are not based on studies, data, or demonstrated need. They are presumptive and speculative, and therefore not appropriate for recommendation in a NEPA document such as the HRA-EIS. For these reasons, and for preservation of the unique biological resources of the Hanford Site, the Kettle Range Conservation Group endorses Alternative Two in the HRA-EIS.

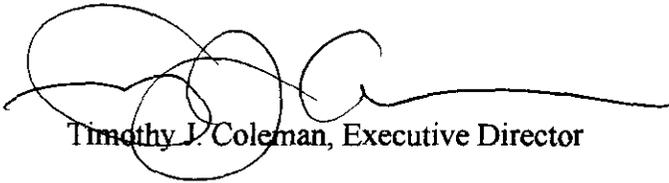
The Kettle Range Conservation Group also recommends the following:

- * Designate all lands within the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve, Wahluke Slope, the islands of the Hanford Reach, and Riverlands/McGee Ranch area as a National Wildlife Refuge overlain by the Hanford Reach Recreational, Wild & Scenic River. All these areas should be managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- * Issue a Record of Decision before the end of calendar year 1999 for the areas listed above. This may be an interim or separate Record of Decision from that for the central Hanford Site if the issues concerning central Hanford are too complex or if comment periods are extended for the HRA-EIS.
- * All mining should be restricted to those mineral resources necessary to support Hanford cleanup activities and should occur only in areas of low biological integrity. Mining on the Hanford Site should occur only after an environmental review per NEPA and as a non-conforming use if within preservation areas.
- * Agriculture and grazing should not occur on any Hanford Site lands.

* Any trails constructed along the Hanford Reach or within the Hanford Site should be for non-motorized use. Such trails must be located away from sensitive wildlife habitat and avoid riparian areas.

* We look forward to issuance of the final HRA-EIS and will continue to support preservation of the Hanford Site's unique natural legacy and preservation of the Hanford Reach of the Columbia River while providing for reasonable economic development of Hanford lands.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right. The signature is positioned above the printed name.

Timothy J. Coleman, Executive Director