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This is a message from the Tri-Party Agreement Agencies

30-day notice prior to public comment period

UPCOMING PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TRI-PARTY AGREEMENT FOR THE 200 AREA NON-TANK FARM WASTE SITES and GROUNDWATER CLEANUP PROCESS

The U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office (RL), the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (the Tri-Party Agreement Agencies) are completing negotiations on draft changes to the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA). These draft changes lay out the regulatory processes for Central Plateau non-tank farm waste sites and groundwater.

Over the last few years the TPA agencies participated in many public forums where Central Plateau values and issues were shared. Based on tribal and stakeholder input, the Tri-Party agencies have re-evaluated the need for additional data leading to cleanup decisions in the Central Plateau. This approach changes the sequencing of when characterization data is gathered, requiring more site characterization to be completed prior to making cleanup decisions as opposed to confirmatory sampling normally performed after cleanup decisions are made. Conducting additional characterization prior to cleanup decision-making provides the opportunity to better understand the potential impact waste sites or existing groundwater plumes pose to the environment. This approach, we believe, will provide greater confidence that cleanup decisions are protective of human health and the environment.

Because additional characterization data will be gathered prior to cleanup decisions, this approach changes and extends two major milestones M-015-00 and M-015-00C, by three years. These milestones complete investigations and remedy recommendations in the Central Plateau. The completion date for the overall Central Plateau cleanup remains unchanged (September 30, 2024).

The proposed draft change package also includes a milestone to address deep vadose zone contaminant uncertainties. This milestone establishes a treatability test plan supporting the identification of potential technologies to address the hazards presented by these contaminants. Another proposed change will tighten up the transition from the remedial investigation/feasibility study (evaluation/study) process to the remedial action (cleanup) stage. The Parties propose new language and milestones that require USDOE submit a work plan for remedial design and actions. The work plan(s) must be submitted within 180 days after the signing of a ROD, or another period named in the ROD, for lead regulatory agency review and approval. The plan will include a schedule with draft milestones.

The agencies plan to hold a 45-day public comment period expected to run from mid- October through mid December. At this time no public meeting is scheduled. If you are interested in a public meeting, please contact Karen Lutz (509-376-4766).

For more information, please call the Hanford Cleanup Line at 800-321-2008.

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