



DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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November 15, 2007

Mr. Dave Brockman, Manager
U.S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550
Richland, WA 99352

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EDMC

Re: 183-F Clearwell Demolition

As Hanford natural resource trustees, the Washington State Department of Ecology and Department of Fish and Wildlife are concerned about the demolition of the 183-F clearwell.

At the October 2007 meeting of the Natural Resource Trustee Council, we learned that more than 2,000 female Yuma myotis bats use this facility as a roost and nursery. According to Washington Closure Hanford natural resource specialist Ken Gano, this may be the second largest colony of Yuma myotis in Washington State.

We also learned the facility is not contaminated and is structurally sound. Assuming this is the case, would it make better sense, from a budget and a natural resources viewpoint, to spend the money to fence this facility rather than to demolish it? In doing so, the risk of losing the colony altogether could be prevented, and the bats would continue to thrive in this important roosting habitat.

Though this clearwell is not considered natural habitat for the bats, it provides optimal habitat conditions. Protection of this site is our priority, as well as an added value to Washington's natural resources. As such, we would be open to banking this site to offset other Hanford mitigation needs associated with arid land impacts.

We are also concerned with disturbances to the colony. Maternal bat roosting colonies are very sensitive to disturbances, especially during pup rearing. If disturbed, they may abandon their young, and mortality can occur. We would like to learn more about the monitoring activities taking place in the clearwell and would be happy to meet with your staff to discuss the monitoring and alternatives to demolition. Please contact Larry Goldstein for Ecology at 360/407-6573 or Charlene Andrade for Washington Fish and Wildlife at 360/902-2546.

Sincerely,

Jane Hedges, Manager
Nuclear Waste Program

Curt Leigh, Manager
Major Projects Section

cc: Joe Franco, USDOE
Nick Ceto, EPA
Rod Lobos, EPA
John Price, Ecology
Hanford Natural Resource Trustee Council

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