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**Isom, Debra A (Debbi)**

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**To:** Isom, Debra A (Debbi)

**Subject:** FW: ECOLOGY - Thirty Day Advanced Notice: Comment Period for Draft Permit relating to Waste Treatment Plant

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**From:** Wireman, Ginger [mailto:GWIR461@ECY.WA.GOV]

**Sent:** Thursday, August 04, 2005 10:09 AM

**To:** HANFORD-INFO@listserv.wa.gov

**Subject:** ECOLOGY - Thirty Day Advanced Notice: Comment Period for Draft Permit relating to Waste Treatment Plant

This is a message from the Washington State Department of Ecology.

The Washington State Department of Ecology has tentatively scheduled a comment period for draft permit conditions for constructing a portion of Hanford's Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP). The comment period is scheduled to run from September 6 to October 21, 2005.

The Waste Treatment Plant is being built to vitrify (turn into glass) millions of gallons of highly radioactive waste currently stored in aging underground tanks. This draft modification incorporates construction details of the tank waste treatment facility into the Hanford Facility's Dangerous Waste permit. Specifically, this modification may include information for installation of tanks and ancillary equipment. The draft permit modification may also include adding information to the appendices, clarifying conditions, and correcting minor errors.

#### Waste Treatment Plant Information

Under the Tri-Party Agreement that governs Hanford cleanup, the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) is required to build a waste treatment facility to treat waste remaining from years of nuclear production. The process outlined in the Tri-Party Agreement is vitrification. The waste treatment process treats the radioactive tank waste by separating the waste into high-level and low-activity waste streams, combining each waste stream with glass-forming materials, and melting the glass formers and waste at very high temperatures (a process called "vitrification"). The molten waste is poured into containers and the waste rapidly cools to form a glass immobilizing the radioactive and most dangerous elements in a stable waste form. The treatment facility will have the capability to treat and immobilize both low-activity and high-level waste, producing containers of immobilized low-activity waste and immobilized high-level waste. The containers of low-activity glass will be disposed of at Hanford. The containers of high-level glass will be stored at Hanford temporarily, with final disposition planned for the National Repository. Building this type of dangerous/hazardous waste facility requires permits from the State of Washington.

#### Waste Treatment Plant Permit Process

The Hanford Facility's Dangerous Waste permit encompasses both dangerous and mixed waste management requirements for the Hanford Site. Ecology issued this permit in August 1994 under provisions of the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) and the Washington State Dangerous Waste Regulations. This permit is modified periodically to

remove, modify and/or add permit conditions for treatment, storage, and disposal units currently in the permit, and to add new units, such as the Waste Treatment Plant. Ecology plans to modify the WTP portion of the permit in phases as new design information becomes available, and as new or modified permit conditions are developed. This phased approach has already allowed construction to begin on one section of the treatment plant while design on future sections is being completed. As each phase of design work is completed, Ecology will review the design information for the next section of to be built, and once approved, modify the WTP portion of the permit to include the new design information. Ecology will ask for your input on each of these future permit modifications before they are finalized.

#### What Does This Permit Cover?

According to the current schedule for modifying the permit, this draft permit modification will allow USDOE and its contractor to install tanks and ancillary equipment. More specific information is not available at this time, will be published in a fact sheet and distributed via this listserv prior to the beginning of the comment period.

Future permit modifications will incorporate new or modified design information, and new or modified permit conditions (as necessary) for installing equipment such as processing tanks, piping, leak detection instruments, and construction of subsequent levels of each building. Ecology will ensure that each phase of the construction meets state requirements before issuing each subsequent phase of the permit.

This permit modification does not cover future operations of the Waste Treatment Plant. Once construction is complete, Ecology will conduct inspections and prepare a draft permit modifications detailing operational permit conditions, and will ask for your input before approving the final operations permit.

#### How can you get involved?

A 45-day public comment period will be held from September 6 to October 21, 2005. No public hearing is planned at this time; however, Ecology will consider requests for a hearing. All comments received during the public-comment period will be considered and responded to when Ecology issues the final permit decision on whether to approve modification of this portion of the permit.

Copies of the permit will be available for review at the Hanford Public Information Repositories beginning on September 6, 2005. Information about the repositories is available at <http://www2.hanford.gov/arpir/>. Please contact Ginger Wireman (gwir461@ecy.wa.gov) for more information or to request a public hearing.

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