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I appreciate the opportunity to pass along some observations on the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Tank Waste Remediation System at the Hanford site.

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My comments are not so much based on the August 1996 Summary Statement, which I reviewed with interest, but on the handouts and discussion at the December 3 presentation in Hood River. I did not have easy access to the full form of the EIS with all its Appendices. I do not have the qualifications to comment in any useful way on the technical aspects of the remediation alternatives. However, I do have a background in land use planning, and since concerns of this kind were the focus of most of the December 3 hearing, I want to pass along some thoughts which I hope will be useful.

It would be my recommendation to dissociate the purpose of this EIS from the essentially different purpose of preparing a comprehensive land use plan for the area. The purpose of waste cleanup should be just that. And the purpose of a land use plan should be with the future land uses of the Hanford area in the context of a future achievable cleanup of DOE lands. An EIS on the future use of land on the Hanford site should follow on after hazard/risk cleanup is in an advanced stage.

On the basis of the handouts and comments made at the hearing on December 3, much of what was said really only focused on land classification rather than on a land use plan in the normal use of the term -- primarily classification by hazard/risk conditions. Such a classification of areas is a perfectly legitimate way to characterize areas where different cleanup actions are being pursued during the remediation process. As areas progress in their cleanup process, their classification may change. This should not be confused with the designation of different areas for different land uses in a Richland Metropolitan Area Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Local units of government can certainly proceed with preparing their Land Use Plans, if they have not already done so, but they would continue to omit land use details for the Hanford site until cleanup is further along and DOE has released cleaned-up areas for sale. At that time a separate EIS process would be followed and the kinds of concerns expressed at the December 3 meeting could be considered, including even additional cleanup to achieve a change of land classification.

Sincerely,

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