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October 15, 1998



Mr. Larry Gadbois
U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
712 Swift Blvd., Suite 5
Richland, WA 99352

Re: Proposed schedule for K Basins Spent Nuclear Fuel Project

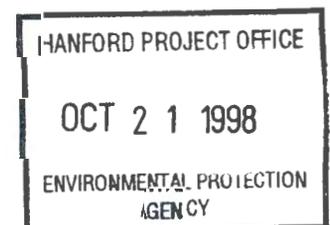
Dear Mr. Gadbois:

I wish to make the following comments with regard to the above referenced matter as set forth in a recent mailing from the Tri-Parties.

Earlier this month, I attended the conference, "Hanford, A River Runs Through It" which took place here in Portland and in Vancouver, Washington. The K Basins were mentioned by several of the speakers at that event as the most serious and pressing danger at the Hanford site. Both Dirk Dunning of the Oregon Department of Energy and the Honorable Ron Wyden, U. S. Senator from Oregon told us that the K Basins were an area of special concern and at the top of the priority list for clean up.

I share this sense of urgency. The revised schedule appears to be a move in the right direction. However, the information contained in the Request for Public Comment does not indicate what will be done to keep the work on schedule and what measures will be taken if the work does not progress as scheduled. In view of widespread dissatisfaction among Oregon and Washington residents over the progress of Hanford Clean Up, we need to know how DOE intends to insure compliance with the new schedule.

It is not clear from the information furnished how the spent nuclear fuel will be stored. We in Oregon have clearly expressed our preference for vitrification of high-level nuclear wastes, especially those wastes that include plutonium and other radioactive substances with long half-lives. All high-level



wastes removed from the K-Basins should not simply be moved to another compound, they should be so treated as to immobilize them and incase them in shielding that will insure their safe storage for the period during which they decay to safe levels.

There was no information regarding what treatment water in the K Basins will receive. Will this treatment insure that the treated water is no longer radioactive?

There was no description of the radioactive and toxic materials present in the K Basins. Are there toxic metals and metallic compounds, radioactive isotopes of uranium and trans-uranium elements present? If so, in what amounts and what form?

Also unanswered in the question of what steps will be taken to remediate the K Basins themselves after clean up. We cannot consider that the K Basins Spent Nuclear Fuel Project is complete until the K Basins have been removed and the sites restored to something resembling their pre-1940's appearance.

Finally, the U. S. Department of Energy needs to show that it has the resources to carry this work out. In the past, milestones have not been met and work has not been carried out because of shifting priorities within DOE and lack of secure funding. We, the affected citizens of states surrounding Hanford need assurance that this ten-year project has the possibility of being completed on time.

Every delay in remediating the wastes in the K Basins increases the risk of escape of these extremely dangerous substances and permits increasing corrosion and degradation of the waste materials. For myself, the K Basins and the other radioactive materials present at Hanford present a danger as great as the presence of an armed nuclear bomb in the Portland Metropolitan Area. It must be clear that the federal DOE will allow no deviations from the published schedule, provide adequate resources to complete the work, and utilize every effort to complete this work before the scheduled deadlines.

Please send me a copy of the annual report on quantities, character, and management of K Basins debris.

Very truly yours,


Bruce W. Frazier

copy to: files
Hon. Ron Wyden, U. S. Senate
Ms. Paige Knight, Hanford Watch

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