

RECEIVED  
NOV 30 2005

0067749



EDMC

NEWS from U.S. Senator

**PATTY MURRAY**

Washington State

## Murray Disappointed by Cuts to Hanford Cleanup

***Bush Administration's Targeting of Vit Plant as a "Lower Priority Project" Undermined Funding Effort in Congress;***

***\$100 Million Cut Could Result in Layoffs, Higher Costs and Missed Construction Milestones***

(Washington, D.C.) – Today, U.S. Senator Patty Murray (D-Wash) expressed her disappointment that the federal government will cut funding for the vitrification plant by \$100 million in Fiscal Year 2006.

The cut was part of the FY 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, which was passed by a joint House-Senate conference committee today. Next the bill goes to the full Senate and House for final passage and will then be sent to President Bush.

Murray has consistently argued that cleaning up Hanford is a national obligation given the Tri-Cities' role in helping America win World War II and the Cold War. Murray expressed frustration with the Administration for proposing in February \$64 million less the contractor's contract calls for and then for designating the vitrification plant a "lower priority project" in the President's Katrina Supplemental just two weeks ago.

"The White House and Energy Department say they support this project, but the Vit Plant was the only Energy Department project targeted for cuts in the President's supplemental two weeks ago. Actions speak louder than words," Murray said. "The White House called the vit plant a 'lower priority project.' How can cleaning up the most polluted site in our country be deemed a low priority?"

First the Administration proposed under-funding Hanford by \$64 million in President Bush's February budget. Then on October 28<sup>th</sup>, the White House sent Congress a list of "lower priority projects" that it proposed to cut in order to fund the Administration's Katrina supplemental package. Only one project was targeted for cuts in the entire U.S. Department of Energy budget -- \$100 million from the Vit Plant.

The funding cut will likely result in layoffs, construction delays, and higher costs to complete the project. The funding cut will also likely cause the project to fall behind schedule and to fail to meet Tri-Party Agreement milestones.

Murray said it is now up to the Administration to show it will honor its commitment by supporting funding that will get the project back on track.

<MORE>

**The Hanford budget, as approved by the conference committee today, follows:****Hanford Site FY 2006**

<b>Project</b>	<b>President's Request</b>	<b>Conference level</b>
Nuclear material stabilization & disposition PFP	190,772	198,668
SNF stabilization and disposition	58,479	58,479
Nuclear facility D&D, river corridor closure project	168,501	178,501
HAMMER facility	0	7,500
B-reactor museum	0	2,000
<i>Subtotal, 2012 accelerated completions</i>	417,752	445,148
Solid waste stabilization & disposition 200 area	165,113	167,113
Soil & water remediation-groundwater/vadose zone	72,955	74,495
Nuclear facility D&D-remainder of Hanford	70,812	70,812
Operate waste disposal facility	5,861	5,861
SNF stabilization and disposition/storage	1,813	1,813
Richland community and regulatory support	15,411	15,411
<i>Subtotal, 2035 accelerated completions</i>	331,965	335,505
<b>Total Hanford Site</b>	<b>749,717</b>	<b>780,653</b>
<b><u>Office of River Protection</u></b>		
Vitrification Plant	625,893	526,000
Tank Farm Activities	302,413	329,471
<b>Total Office of River Protection</b>	<b>928,306</b>	<b>855,471</b>

**Senator Murray's issued this statement today:**

"I appreciate the work that went into the bill this year, recognizing how difficult it was given the allocation and given the level of support by the Administration. I am particularly concerned about some specific levels within the bill, like funding for our nation's Environmental Management program within the Department of Energy's clean up responsibilities. Specifically, the Waste Treatment Plant, or Vitrification Plant, at the Hanford site is one of those nationally important projects. The Hanford Site played a critical role in support of national security efforts in WWII and the Cold War. As a result, tens of millions of gallons of radioactive waste was left behind. It is the obligation of the US government to clean up that site and the Department of Energy identified the Vit Plant as the flagship project in that clean up effort.

Officials at DOE claim the administration is 100% dedicated to the project. Actions speak louder than words. The request for this fiscal year was \$64 million below necessary funding, according to the Department's own out-year projections. On top of that, the supplemental package sent to Congress

came with rescissions for "lower-priority" programs including a \$100 million cut for the Vit Plant. How can cleaning up one of the most polluted sites in our country be deemed a lower priority? Given this lack of support from the Administration, I understand how difficult the project is to defend this year, and understand the hesitation on the part of this subcommittee to go beyond the official request by this White House.

And while the cuts to the funding are deep, and while I have deep concerns about what they will mean for our nation's commitment to cleaning up this dangerous waste, it could have been worse. I'd like to specifically thank Senator Reid and his staff for his last-minute assistance in limiting the cuts to the Vit Plant, and I would like to thank the Chairman for being receptive. When I met with Senator Reid last week he shared my concern for this project and together we were able to fight back additional cuts. I will continue to support the clean up efforts at the Hanford Site."

###