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June 6, 1999

Mr. Tomas Ferns
U. S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
Richland, WA 99352-0350

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DOE-RL/DIS

Dear Mr. Ferns:

I attended the Spokane public hearing on your Revised Draft Hanford Remedial Action Environmental Impact Statement and Comprehensive Land Use plan (HRA EIS). I appreciate the hearing being in Spokane and the information provided in the maps, handouts, and in talking to DOE personnel. Such meetings significantly help to counter the feeling that the bureaucracy oft proceeds without considering public input.

My comments and recommendations are:

- * I strongly concur with the plan to have all Hanford areas north of the river being phased into a National Wildlife Refuge in order to minimize the erosion to the White Cliffs, maximize the river habitat for salmon, and preserve the native wildlife and vegetation. The designation as a Wild and Scenic River is appropriate.
- * My prime concern is the radiation dangers from the 50 odd years of making nuclear materials. Unfortunately, the perception I have from media coverage, from NGOs such as HEAL and Heart of America Northwest and from talking to other people is that the apparent intentional minimization of providing bad news to the public is essentially a "cover up". Such "cover ups" have been practiced in many cases relative to radioactive gas releases & the associated secrecy, storage tank leaks & explosive potential, contamination of ground waters, spread of contamination toward & to the river, areas of high radiation danger to people, planned delays in accomplishing clean-up, and diversion of clean-up funds to projects such as the FFTF hot standby. Much work such as described below is needed before your policies and actions are not viewed with suspicion.
- * The final plan must be open and clear on the radiation dangers posed to the public both at current radiation levels and at probable radiation levels in the future. E. g., to say that the public will be allowed to be in some public areas for only 56 hours a year is, frankly, ridiculous. Radiation danger posed by people in all land areas open to the public, using the river and eating the fish needs to be specified. It must be assumed that small children play in the water and in the dirt. For any EIS or other major planning document to have credibility in the minds of the public, I believe that a respected member of the scientific community with NO affiliation or history of governmental association must be intimately familiar with and sign off on the radiation safety aspects of the document at the time of first public release.
- * At least partly because there has been a \$100 million diversion of clean-up funds to the FFTF, clean-up progress has not met the requirements of the TPA. In fulfilling your responsibility to communicate to the taxpayers in an accurate and timely manner, the USDOE needs to publicly state that Hanford's number one priority is clean-up as opposed to economic development, manufacture of nuclear materials, or turning Hanford lands to local government control. In addition to the absolute right to have Hanford cleaned up in an efficient and expedient manner, the public has the right to know both the short range and long range plans for clean-up.
- * I prefer Alternative #2 with my second preference being Alternative #4: Alternative #3 would be a disaster for the environment.

I look forward to seeing an open, science-based document that the taxpaying public will have confidence in.

Sincerely,



Julian Powers