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May 18, 1999

Mr. Thomas W. Ferns
U.S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550, MSIN H0-12
Richland, WA 99352-0550

Dear Mr. Ferns,

I'm writing to provide public comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement that will determine land management at Hanford for the next 50 years.

I believe ecologically significant lands at Hanford must be protected. The Hanford Site contains the best of what remains of the shrub-steppe ecosystem that once blanketed eastern Washington.

I support the Preferred Alternative, but I think the following adjoining DOE lands should be managed as a permanent National Wildlife Refuge: the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve, the McGee Ranch, DOE's entire Wahluke Slope, the Hanford Reach, and the Columbia River islands. To ensure long-term protection for key native plant and animal species, there should be no agriculture, commercial mining, or livestock grazing permitted on these lands.

To expedite a final decision on management

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of uncontaminated lands, DOE should issue separate decisions for these areas.

Sincerely,

James L. Boone
Joseph J. Bucuzzo

254 Independence Rd.
Rochester, WA 98579

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