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May 17, 1999

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

RECEIVED

MAY 20 1999

DOE-RL / DIS

Re: Draft Hanford Remedial Action Environmental Impact  
Statement (HRA EIS)

Dear Mr. Thomas W. Ferns:

As the world population continues to grow, it becomes increasingly vital to preserve ecosystem variety. We can not know the extent of the loss if areas such as the shrub-steppe ecosystem around Hanford vanish. Too much of our native ecosystem has already been converted to agriculture or degraded by other uses. To open up the 90,000 acre Wahluke Slope is to lose a vital ecological resource to commercial interests that already exist in abundance. Commercial and agricultural development can always take place; a shrub-steppe ecosystem supporting hundreds of diverse native plants and animals can't be so quickly rebuilt if we discover that we've made a mistake.

The Preferred Alternative should be supported:

Protect the ecologically significant lands at Hanford. Manage adjoined DOE lands as a permanent National Wildlife Refuge (these include the Arid Lands Ecology Reserve, the McGee Ranch, DOE's entire Wahluke Slope, the Hanford Reach, and the Columbia River islands). Allow no agriculture, commercial mining, or livestock grazing on these land in order to ensure long-term protection for key native species and systems located across the site.

Making a legacy of our natural environment is more vital to our children than making money.

Sincerely,

