Resolution No. 2011-0090

A resolution of the Spokane City Council in support of public meetings in Spokane regarding the cleanup of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation urging the United States Department of Energy, the Washington Department of Ecology and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to hold public meetings in Spokane and increased input from Spokane residents in regard to Hanford.

WHEREAS, Spokane is the most significant population center downwind of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, which is the most contaminated area in the Western Hemisphere and poses numerous nuclear and chemical waste risks; and

WHEREAS, Spokane faces unique risks from proposals to dispose of tens of thousands of truckloads of radioactive and chemical wastes at Hanford due to routes including Interstate 90 through Spokane in addition to the documented risks to groundwater and the Columbia River from adding more waste to the existing contamination at Hanford; and

WHEREAS, one pending proposal to utilize Hanford to dispose of extremely radioactive wastes with nearly as much radioactivity as in all of Hanford's leaky and dangerous High-Level Nuclear Waste tanks (referred to as Greater Than Class C wastes), and the draft environmental impact statement covering the other proposal acknowledged that groundwater contamination projected from existing wastes, before considering adding even more waste to the soil burden, would exceed health and state cleanup standards for thousands of years; and

WHEREAS, Spokane's economy as well as public health and safety are affected by decisions regarding the timing, level and scope of cleanup at Hanford which have the potential to increase contamination of the Columbia River or groundwater, or which could lead to releases of contamination in the event of fires, earthquakes or accidents; and

WHEREAS, the wastes in the oldest, Single Shell High-Level Nuclear Waste tanks at Hanford would not be completely emptied until the year 2040 under current agreements; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Energy (USDOE), which operates the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Washington Department of Ecology, which form the Tri-Party Agreement agencies for cleanup at Hanford, have not held regular meetings in Spokane to solicit public input on cleanup decisions; and

WHEREAS, the Tri-Party Agreement Agencies are updating and revising a "Public Involvement Plan" for Hanford Cleanup.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the City Council of the City of Spokane as follows:

1. The City formally urges the Tri-Party Agreement agencies to commit to holding public meetings in Spokane on key cleanup decisions for Hanford, and to have at least one annual meeting for public feedback and discussion of public concerns as well as to undertake other efforts to improve notice and involvement for Spokane's residents; and

2. The City of Spokane urges residents to comment on how they wish to be further involved in Hanford Cleanup decisions at a public meeting on November 16, 2011; and

3. The City of Spokane urges the United States Department of Energy to withdraw its two pending proposals to use Hanford as a national radioactive and "mixed" radioactive chemical waste dump and, instead to commit to cleanup efforts which retrieve Plutonium and other wastes from soil sites, cleanup groundwater contamination, and to empty Single Shell Tanks as rapidly as possible to reduce the total potential contamination threats to groundwater from existing wastes in soil or tanks.

4. This Resolution shall be submitted as a formal comment to the Tri-Party Agreement agencies on the proposed revision of the Hanford Cleanup Public Involvement Plan; and, transmitted to Secretary of Energy Steven Chu of the United States Department of Energy, the Governor of Washington State, and the Director of Washington State Department of Ecology.

ADOPTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL ON November 7, 2011

City Clerk

Approved as to form:

Assistant City Attorney

CITY OF SPOKANE WASHINGTON