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## Public Notice-Request For Public Comment

SODIUM DICHROMATE EXPEDITED RESPONSE ACTION  
PROPOSAL FOR THE HANFORD SITE

December 1992

The Washington State Department of Ecology, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the United States Department of Energy (USDOE) want your comments on a USDOE proposal regarding an expedited response action (ERA) to deal with an old waste burial ground at the Hanford Site dating from the early 1940s. An expedited response action is an action taken when known and available technologies can be applied to streamline a clearly defined problem; it provides for a rapid solution.

Although the location in question is being called the Sodium Dichromate Barrel Landfill, there are no historical records in existence to indicate the landfill's contents. It is the presence of the drums discovered so far through excavation that prompts the assumption that chromium is the only contaminant of concern in this location; although the landfill is also thought to contain construction debris.

To assist with the evaluation of the extent of existing contamination, ground-penetrating radar, and electromagnetic induction surveys were used and revealed many irregularities (called anomalies) from expected natural conditions. These surveys were done in conjunction with a series of samples taken from the soil surface, two trenches, and a pit. From these, further inferences were made about what lies below the surface; this information is neither certain nor complete.

All members of the public who may be interested in reviewing the options being presented by USDOE are urged to share their views with the regulating agencies. Public comment will be taken from December 9, 1992 through January 7, 1993. The agencies will consider all comments before making a final decision on the Expedited Response Action proposal.

The Expedited Response Action Proposal for Sodium Dichromate Barrel Landfill may be reviewed at any of the Hanford Tri-Party Agreement Public Information Repositories at the following locations:

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Spokane, WA 99258  
(509) 328-4220, ext. 3125  
Attn: Lewis Miller

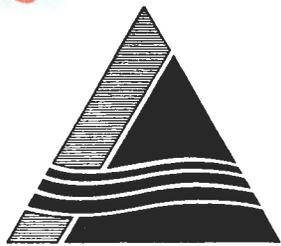
PORTLAND  
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Portland, OR 97207  
(503) 725-3690  
Attn: Michael Bowman

RICHLAND  
USDOE Reading Room  
Federal Building Room 157  
825 Jadwin Avenue Al-65  
Richland, WA 99352  
(509) 376-8583  
Attn: Terri Traub

For more information or to send written comments, contact:

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Hanford Cleanup      1-800-321-2008

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Tri-Party Agreement

# SODIUM DICHROMATE EXPEDITED RESPONSE ACTION PROPOSAL

The sodium dichromate Expedited Response Action (ERA) is to address an old waste burial ground at the Hanford Site dating from the early 1940s. An Expedited Response Action is an action which can be taken when known and available technologies can be applied to streamline a clearly defined problem; it provides for a rapid solution.

This focus sheet is directed to all members of the public who may be interested in reviewing the options being presented by USDOE, and citizens are urged to share their views with the regulating agencies involved: Ecology and the United States Environmental Protection Agency, known as EPA. Public comment will be taken from December 9, 1992, through January 7, 1993. The agencies will consider all comments before making a final decision on the Expedited Response Action proposal.

## BACKGROUND

Located east of the D and DR reactors and west of H reactor, this landfill area is thought to have been in use in 1945 for disposal of discarded and crushed barrels. Barrels containing residual amounts of sodium dichromate, and marked as SODIUM DICHROMATE CRYSTALS, have been found laying about the area and near the surface. This compound was used as an additive to reactor cooling water to prevent pipe corrosion.

No existing contamination has been linked with the landfill but the purpose of the ERA is to reduce the potential for contaminants to become future problems and to further investigate and cleanup the area. Although the location in question is being called the Sodium Dichromate Barrel Landfill, there are no historical records in existence to indicate the landfill's contents. It is the presence of the drums discovered so far through excavation that prompts the assumption that chromium is the only contaminant of concern in this location; although the landfill is also thought to contain construction debris. To assist with the evaluation of the extent of existing contamination, ground-penetrating radar and electromagnetic induction surveys were

used and revealed many irregularities (called anomalies) from expected natural conditions. These surveys were done in conjunction with a series of samples taken from the soil surface, two trenches and a pit. From these, further inferences were made about what lies below the surface.

The landfill is within an area designated as the 100-IU-4 operable unit. The 100-IU-4 is part of its 'address' at the Hanford Site. The 'operable unit' designation is normally given to a grouping of individual waste units primarily determined by either geographic area, as in the case of groundwater contamination; or by having had a common source of contamination, where soils are concerned. In this case the landfill is the only waste site within the operable unit. As such, cleanup of the unit accomplished through an Expedited Response Action may represent the final cleanup efforts (called remediation) scheduled to occur.

## REQUIREMENTS

This kind of cleanup activity takes place under a federal law called the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, or CERCLA. In general, either EPA or Ecology can take the lead for CERCLA cleanups. In this case, Ecology is the lead regulatory agency.

The cleanup actions being evaluated are not considered to be time-critical and federal guidelines require an engineering evaluation and cost analysis. Done in two phases, the first phase considers the action's timeliness and its ability to protect the environment and human health; the second phase considers effectiveness and cost. Effectiveness focuses on technical and administrative feasibility to perform such a cleanup and includes consideration of: equipment, permits, and public acceptance. Cost is given significant consideration, but is not the most important factor in the final decision.

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## ALTERNATIVES

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The following alternatives have been identified by USDOE as meeting the criteria above, the agencies selected the NO ACTION alternative as the preferred choice.

- **NO ACTION** Based on the presence of chromium (up to 50 parts per million) below levels of regulatory concern (100 parts per million), and the assumption that other anomalies discovered, as a result of the geophysical surveys, are only more drums of the type already found. All maps would be changed to indicate the presence of surface debris.
- **SAMPLE ALL ANOMALIES (irregularities)** 144 of these exist and all would be visually examined and sampled to clarify any need for further action. Maps would be changed to indicate the presence of surface debris, disturbed ground would be reseeded.
- **EXCAVATE ALL ANOMALIES** Remove debris and send to landfill. No map revisions would take place, reseeded of the disturbed ground would follow.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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**Hanford Cleanup**: 1-800-321-2008

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