

Pamela Howard

Dear WA State Department of Ecology Hanford Nuclear Site,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Class 2 Permit Modification for the Waste Encapsulation Storage Facility. I am very concerned about getting the WESF capsules into dry storage sooner rather than later. If a major earthquake or other event causes the water to drain from the WESF capsule storage pools, it could trigger a catastrophic release of radioactivity that could make the Hanford Site inaccessible for hundreds of years. We can't let that happen. Thank you for considering my comments:

-Require Concrete Testing: Due to the scarcity of data on the effects of gamma radiation on dry concrete, it is incumbent that Ecology require collection of concrete testing data at WESF for use in assessments under Ecology's permits to make conditions safer now and in the future.

-Don't Delay Transfer to Dry Storage: Work hard to stay on schedule to complete work by August 2025, while ensuring a safe work environment.

-Fully Fund WESF: Deliver a unified message on fully funding Hanford cleanup to ensure crucial cleanup work, such as transferring the capsules to dry storage, is completed.

-Include Catastrophic Release Emergency Response Plans: Ensure that robust, specific and detailed emergency response plans for a catastrophic release of radioactivity at WESF are included in the permit. The emergency response plan is even more important in light of the delays to the 2025 milestone.

The 1,963 capsules containing cesium and strontium have been stored at Waste Encapsulation Storage Facility (WESF) since the mid 1970's. Getting the capsules to dry storage should be the number one remediation priority at Hanford. The basin containing the pools of cooling water has been compromised by gamma radiation emitted by the capsules. It is not known to what degree the basin has been weakened. I urge the government to completely fund this critical project and urge the US Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency to safely complete the dry storage project by 2025. According to estimates the amount of radioactivity stored in the WESF is approximately the same amount released during the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

Sincerely,
Pamela Howard
Portland, OR 97210
pamhow48@gmail.com