

Anonymous Anonymous

Remove leakable liquids from High Level Waste tanks
Stop the can do to lower the risks from nuclear weapons production at Hanford.

Your comments toady on Washington Department of Ecology's proposed permit for
Hanford's leaking High Level Nuclear Waste tanks cannot continue to be ignored.

The Test Bed Initiative (TBI) offers the opportunity to remove leakable liquids from tanks that are leaking today or are likely to start leaking soon.

Hanford's groundwater and the Columbia River will be contaminated for thousands of years if all the waste that is currently planned to be removed from Hanford's tanks is disposed in landfills onsite.

The "Test Bed Initiative" (TBI) offers the first hope for speeding up removal of leakable liquids from High Level Nuclear waste tanks decades ahead of current plans for vitrification (glassification) and for reducing how much waste is disposed in landfills along our Columbia River at Hanford.

TBI will test if 2,000 gallons can be removed from a High Level Waste Tank, solidified and treated to be disposed at sites where there is no drinkable groundwater that can ever be contaminated (the sites are in West Texas or Utah).

The US Department of Energy (USDOE) can solidify and treat the waste at a licensed facility next to Hanford so that there is no risk from spilling liquid waste in a truck accident on I-90.

Instead, USDOE wants to ship the waste as a liquid through Spokane for either 900 or 1,900 miles to be treated in Utah or Texas.

The Umatilla Indian Tribe (CTUIR) objects strongly to shipping the liquid wastes through their Reservation or through Spokane:

"The current plan to transport waste in liquid form poses for us an unacceptable risk of spills and harm to the environment, First Foods, and our citizens. The current proposal is especially disappointing given that shipping waste in a grouted, immobile, solid form is a viable and much safer option.

"To be clear, the CTUIR requests the following:

1. Do NOT ship liquid Hanford tank waste across the Columbia Basin. Only ship this waste in GROUTED/SOLID form.
2. Move forward with large-scale grouting and out-of-state disposal as soon as reasonably allowable to decrease the risk of leaking Hanford tanks on the CTUIR's treaty-protected resources."

We agree with the Umatilla Tribe (CTUIR). The Tribe and we need your comments to help make this happen.

Heart of America Northwest has spent decades fighting USDOE's plans to truck more waste to be dumped at Hanford, including successfully stopping shipments through Spokane. The TBI is our first hope to remove waste from Hanford, instead of adding more risk to the Columbia River.

But it has to be done safely by only trucking solid, treated waste with very low radioactivity – not trucking untreated liquids through Spokane and other vulnerable communities and Indian Reservations.

Use our sample comments from the section below to Washington's Department of Ecology, but please add in your words why this is important to you. Perhaps you live near I-90 in Spokane. Or, you have hoped for years that we could remove waste from Hanford.

Ecology comment form:

<https://nw.ecology.commentinput.com/?id=tNePGUiA5>

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Use these sample comments - adding a few words on why removing waste from Hanford or not shipping liquid waste through Spokane are important to you (comment period closes Thursday)

To Washington Ecology and Governor Inslee:

Ecology should not permit the US Department of Energy (USDOE) to truck untreated liquid wastes from Hanford's High Level Nuclear Waste tanks through Spokane or across Oregon and the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

I strongly support moving forward with the test to remove and treat 2,000 gallons from Hanford's tanks for disposal offsite in licensed facilities where the waste does not create any risk to groundwater, Ecology has a duty to consider and take "mitigation" action to prevent the risk from a truck accident in Spokane or anywhere on the 900-1,900 mile truck routes. This is an environmental justice issue as well as a risk to the Spokane River.

I agree with the Umatilla Tribe whose Chair wrote to USDOE:

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USDOE agreed not to truck the waste through Oregon and the Umatilla Reservation. Unselfishly, the Umatilla Tribe has continued to advocate that liquid wastes should not be trucked at all when there is a licensed facility that can solidify and treat the waste next door to Hanford and avoid trucking wastes through Spokane on I-90 for 900 miles to Utah or 1,900 miles to Texas for disposal.

I want the test for 2,000 gallons of waste to proceed. But if it succeeds there will be thousands of shipments. Ecology has a duty under SEPA and the HEAL Act to consider and mitigate the risks from truck shipments through low income "overburdened" communities in Spokane or on Indian Reservations by requiring that the waste is solidified and treated at the licensed facility adjacent to Hanford instead of trucking untreated liquid waste.

Any spill of liquids from Hanford will be an international news incident as well as putting residents and the environment at risk.

USDOE did not even consider risks from the chemicals in the liquid wastes and acknowledges that there is a risk of one "accidental crash" for a truck with these wastes every 884 shipments from Hanford to Texas. That is too high a risk to go without Washington requiring that the waste be solidified before being trucked through Spokane or Oregon and the Umatilla Reservation.