

Sharon Fasnacht

COMMENTS ON HANFORD CLEANUP

Thank you for allowing me to comment on Hanford cleanup after attending the July 10 2024 presentation in Olympia at the DoubleTree Hotel, 415 Capitol Way North. It was excellent! Materials shared by Presenters, and attendees were much appreciated. The U.S.Dept. of Energy, & State of Washington Dept. of Ecology, distributed a 6 page document that was very helpful. Columbia River Keeper offered a 5 pager that also was well done. Heart of America distributed a 6 pager that I found invaluable in preparing my response.

FYI: My family lived in the tri-cities in the 70's. We experienced the waters of the Columbia River warming significantly during that time, and I've tracked the progress of cleanup – or lack thereof - ever since. We now live in Olympia.

Why did I track the cleanup? At some point Hanford began to be referred to as the most contaminated nuclear waste site in the U.S.. Since we'd lived there, I had to track the cleanup in the event it had affected our health. In addition, Hanford is surrounded by the invaluable Columbia River, which must be protected in order to save the humans and animals that depend on the Columbia for water, the farmers who need the water for crops, and the Salmon & Orca, who will go extinct without the Columbia. Our Indian Tribes will lose sacred sites along the river, and so, much of their cultures. And then there's our fishing industry.

MY BIGGEST CONCERN: **An EARTHQUAKE** !! In the late 1990's or early 2000's, USGS data predicted a possible earthquake underneath Hanford. And just recently, that possibility was mentioned again in the local news as a real disaster that could happen! But of course, there's no good way to predict exactly when it might happen. The USGS says we just know it will happen.

We need to develop **a statement of what the environmental impact on Hanford** will be. ***USDOE wrote that a catastrophic release affecting the entire region will happen if the earthquake happens before waste is removed.***

Part of the environmental impact could be the destruction of the LAW (Low Activity Waste) processing plants at Hanford, and other structures. But more alarming would be the destruction of those sites where nuclear waste, treated and untreated, is now stored.

It would be necessary to move low and high level waste "tanks". It would also be necessary to remove liquids & cesium and Strontium being stored in a water filled pool in the 200 area, called the Waste Encapsulation Storage Facility (WESF). We have to remove the poisons in our ground water also.

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BASED ON USDOE's STATEMENT THAT "A CATASTROPHIC RELEASE AFFECTING THE ENTIRE REGION WILL HAPPEN IF THE EARTHQUAKE HAPPENS BEFORE WASTE IS REMOVED;" MY PROPOSALS.....

PROPOSAL # 1

STEP # 1: I would like the members of the tri-party Agreement to GATHER INFORMATION ABOUT A POSSIBLE EARTHQUAKE UNDER HANFORD, **and meet again.** *Assuming that an earthquake is on its way, agree to set aside their current plan, and develop a new plan for the removal of waste from the Hanford site to a safe storage place of their choosing ASAP, outside the earthquake zone.*

Step # 2: Investigate possible waste storage sites, including West Texas, and Utah.

I encourage the Tri-Parties to look at possible sites in Washington & its border states, since transport would be less of an issue than West Texas or Utah. Of course, this must be done with the cooperation and agreement of Washington State Officials, or those from the States of their choosing. Given the dangers of the earthquake to our northwest States, I can't imagine not being given approval – and help! Have the search for a site be done ASAP.

If resistance is inevitable, contact a National Authority that could authorize this work NOW. Request permission to seek a new site for Hanford waste and permission to transport the waste from Hanford to the new site ASAP.

OUR LAST BIG MISTAKE: Choosing a place on a massive river like the Columbia for a Nuclear site was the BIGGEST MISTAKE. We cannot survive if we allow our most plentiful supplies of water – that in our rivers – to be poisoned / destroyed. WE CANNOT SURVIVE WITHOUT WATER. IT IS LIFE BLOOD.

Step # 2 a. Take every opportunity while looking for a site to begin determining what the best "corridor" from Hanford to the site would be. Consider that any nuclear waste transported, by rail or truck, MUST BE TREATED FIRST. We will need to ask for support from Law Enforcement, and possibly the military, when transporting.

Step # 3: **Choose the site.** *Ideally, the site would be larger than Hanford.*

MOVE ALL NUCLEAR WASTE AT HANFORD TO A SAFER LOCATION – OUTSIDE THE EARTHQUAKE ZONE ASAP.

Hanford has become the most contaminated nuclear waste site in the U.S.. Contractors have had no choice but to build processing plants, and do the remedial processing on site, and store the waste, processed and unprocessed, at Hanford. Because of lack of

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space, Contractors have been limited in building processing plants for LAW (Lower active waste), AND HAW (Higher active waste). We do not have the number of LAW plants needed, and the design of the HAW plant isn't developed yet.

OPINION: I feel it is partially because of a lack of adequate space to build processing plants or store treated waste that Contractors are so far behind in tackling the HAW plants' design and building one for Hanford. Even if we do not suffer an earthquake at Hanford in the next 9 years, we dare not wait until 2033 to design a High Activity Waste plant or learn that it's not going to be designed. The Earthquake under Hanford might happen in 2033 or after!

PROPOSAL # 2

PLAN "C"

PLAN B ?? OR A PLAN C ?? The Tri-Party Agreement members have updated the plan, but we needed a Plan B, in case that revised plan ran into problems. Rather than a Plan B, I'd like to propose a PLAN C.

CONSIDER CREATION OF MORE NUCLEAR WASTE STORAGE SITES IN THE NATION

FYI: The Bush Administration granted, I believe, 17 permits for new Nuclear Power Plants. New power plants would produce MORE nuclear waste, but I am not aware of any existing plans regarding treatment or storage of that waste. We need to monitor!

We also have sites where nuclear weapons are either developed or stored. Do those sites have adequate, safe, storage for their nuclear waste?

STEP # 1: With the cooperation and support of Nationwide leadership; (all states, Governors, EPAs, U.S. Congress, the President, etc..) Pursue the creation of a Department within an existing National Organization, or a new Organization. Have this "Department" do the following:

STEP # 1 a.: Determine the National need for safe processing and storage of nuclear waste.

STEP # 1 b.: Identify sites: Determine if there are sites that belong to ALL citizens, yes, like Closed Military sites, etc., where this poisonous nuclear waste, that's been treated for shipment, might be treated for storage, and stored safely. These would be sites without the ground water geography, in addition to the sites in West Texas/Utah.

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STEP # 2 : Set the needed amount of land **aside for processing plants & storage**
THAT WOULD SERVE THE NATION!

Push for Legislation that makes it clear that these sites will be made available to all states who have nuclear power plants, (or Nuclear weapons sites) and who can process waste for shipment, and need processing plants and permanent storage for their waste.

STEP # 3: Ask for National Legislation permitting Dedicated travel corridors, where needed, to use to transport treated waste, perhaps even using train routes.

STEP # 4: Develop a work group, within the Department (see Step 2: that schedules shipments of treated waste, informs the public, and Coordinates with other Departments/Organizations to have Police or possibly National Guard to assist with scheduled shipments.

STEP # 5: Take responsibility for staffing these sites to build necessary Low & High Activity treatment plants, and safe storage facilities for treated waste.

Cordially,

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