

Diana Gordon

HOLISTIC AGREEMENT ON CLEANUP OF HANFORD TANK WASTE due 9/1/24

RE:LAW Disposal

I am wondering what is happening with the low level waste vitrification plant. It sounds as though it is just about ready for use and I would like to know if the TPA agencies are going ahead and planning to get it on line by the 2025 timeline. Is it really completed and does it really work?

I like the idea of vitrification much more than grouting because it sounds safer for longer. However, the Test Bed Initiative is showing positive results so far and I do like the idea of removing low activity grouted waste from Hanford and shipping it for storage in a place where groundwater is not a problem. (Needless to say, liquid waste should never be shipped.)

Both licensed low level waste repositories where the waste is headed are many miles from Hanford - in Texas and in Utah. It sounds as though shipping grouted waste is pretty safe though I have been unable to find out very much about how the grouted waste will be shipped. I am assuming that the cylinders of grouted waste will be in metal containers so that, in case of accident, the waste would have an added layer of protection. (The picture on Energy's Test Bed Initiative page isn't very clear.) However, even in the best case scenario, the danger to the public in communities the grout is shipped through is not negligible. Those communities are entitled to know about the routes the waste will take and examine an EIS detailing the planned route, the form the waste is in, especially the safety issues, etc. Oregon does not seem thrilled with the prospect of waste traveling through and I doubt Spokane and other cities will be either.

But what about the low level waste vitrification plant? Surely it should be used for as much of the waste as possible. I am sure that such a plant cost millions (at least) and I hope we are not losing that investment. I'm sure it shows my ignorance to say that I think they should use both methods and finish the job more quickly! Faster is better for us downstream communities.

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