Hanford Challenge (Nikolas Peterson)

Hi my name is Nikolas Peterson I'm the executive director of Hanford Challenge a nonprofit based in Seattle Washington with the mission of a safe and effective Hanford cleanup. Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for Ecology's strong commitment to public involvement through things like public meetings, regional hearings, and weekly lunch and learn sessions. This level of transparency and accessibility stands in sharp contrast to the limited public engagement we often see from the Department of Energy 's public involvement process. Ecology's approach is what meaningful public participation looks like. First, please extend the Rev 9 a comment period by 45 days. The public is navigating multiple overlapping Hanford comment periods and Ecology spent 14 years producing this 30,000 page permit and the public needs adequate time to review it meaningfully. Second the permit must contain clear enforceable conditions. Ambiguous or incorporated by reference requirements weaken accountability the RCRA permit should include all compliance critical information directly so workers, regulators, and the public can understand and enforce what DOE must do. Third, please keep holding the Department of Energy accountable for a safe and effective cleanup that protects human and environmental health through the RCRA permit. Ensure that the RCRA permit contains conditions that protect water quality through rigorous groundwater monitoring and sampling protocols, protect worker health and safety through training requirements and safety protocols especially for protections from toxic chemical vapors, and catch problems early through rigorous monitoring protocols, leak detection requirements, and response protocols. Fourth Ecology should prohibit tank farm closure until additional waste removal technologies are developed and deployed. Grouting is irreversible. Any waste left in tanks or soil will remain hazardous for generations. Under the holistic settlement agreement the expert panel must first evaluate and recommend new retrieval technologies. Ecology should add permit conditions preventing closure of C farm or any future tank farms until these technologies are used to remove more waste. And in closing. Ecology's decisions now will shape Hanford 's future for decades. The choices made in this permit will determine whether the cleanup is protective enforceable and resilient or whether risks are deferred to future
generations. Strong clear and enforceable permit conditions are essential to protecting workers, communities, the Columbia River, and the environment. Thank you for ensuring the public has a meaningful voice in this process and for continuing to model the kind of transparent accessible public involvement that Hanford needs. Your leadership is critical to ensuring the cleanup is guided by science, community protection, and long term stewardship not convenience or expedience. As a 4th generation Washingtonian I feel this responsibility deeply. My family has lived worked and raised children in this region for more than a century. We want future generations including my own children Theodore and Abigail to inherit a Columbia River and a Pacific Northwest that are healthier safer and more resilient than they are today. Hanford cleanup is one of the most consequential environmental responsibilities our state will ever face and we only have one chance to get it right. Thank you.