STATE REPRESENTATIVE
8th LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT
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State of Washington House of Representatives

TECHNOLOGY, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, & VETERANS
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ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY
RULES

October 7, 2026

Washington State Department of Ecology Nuclear Waste Program
RE: Support for Hanford Tank Waste Permit Modifications

Dear Washington State Department of Ecology:

As a representative of a community near the Hanford Site, I support continued progress toward the safe, timely and effective cleanup of Hanford's tank waste.

Hanford is home to approximately 56 million gallons of radioactive tank waste stored in aging underground tanks. After decades of work, we have reached an important point in the cleanup mission. The Waste Treatment Plant has begun turning some of the treated waste into glass and disposing of it on the Hanford Site. That is an important milestone, but vitrification alone was never designed to address the full inventory of Hanford's low-activity tank waste.

The scale of this challenge demands that we pursue every treatment option that can safely and effectively move the cleanup forward.

The tank-side treatment system removes approximately 99.9 percent of the radioactivity from waste before it proceeds to additional treatment. The Department of Energy has proposed using grout alongside vitrification to treat additional low-activity waste. According to DOE, using both approaches could accelerate cleanup and reduce costs while maintaining safety and effectiveness.

That opportunity deserves serious consideration.

We have an obligation to stop passing this problem on to future generations, to protect American taxpayers and to pursue opportunities to move treated Hanford waste out of Washington when an appropriate, licensed disposal pathway is available.

There is precedent for using both grout and glass. At the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, more than 13 million gallons of waste have been treated through a combination of grout and vitrification. Hanford should have access to the same kind of consideration of multiple treatment approaches, provided they meet all applicable health, safety and environmental requirements.

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With 56 million gallons of waste remaining in aging tanks, we cannot measure meaningful progress only in hundreds of thousands of gallons. We need to reach the millions of gallons if we are going to make a substantial dent in the inventory.

The Department of Energy has indicated that, with the appropriate state approval, approximately 500,000 gallons of additional waste could have been shipped out of state this year, in addition to waste being vitrified and stored onsite. DOE has also projected that by 2030, more than 9 million gallons annually could potentially be retrieved, treated and shipped out of state. If those projections can be achieved while meeting applicable safety and environmental standards, they represent the potential to accelerate cleanup by decades and reduce long-term costs to taxpayers.

The people I represent deserve an approach that considers every technically viable option to safely treat, stabilize and dispose of Hanford tank waste. If there are additional ways to move this waste safely and responsibly toward final disposal, it is the responsibility of the Department of Energy and the State of Washington to evaluate those options and keep the cleanup moving forward.

When it comes to Hanford, we should be looking for opportunities to say yes to safe and technically sound solutions: yes, to glass, yes to grout and yes to every viable pathway that can help complete this cleanup.

I therefore encourage the State of Washington to act expeditiously on the proposed permit modifications. If Ecology determines that the approach outlined in the permit request is not technically viable, I encourage the agency to clearly and publicly identify the scientific or technical basis for that determination.

Hanford has reached a pivotal point in its cleanup history. We have an opportunity to build on decades of investment, scientific work and workforce expertise by treating more waste, moving it out of aging tanks and, where appropriate, getting it out of Washington and into licensed disposal facilities.

The communities I represent deserve meaningful progress. I urge Ecology to continue its regulatory review with that goal in mind and to support safe, scientifically sound approaches that allow the Hanford cleanup mission to move forward.

Sincerely,

