

# Hanford Communities Issue Agenda for 2020

## Priority Issues: Environmental Compliance & Future Reuse of Land

### *Sustained Progress on Environmental Cleanup*

*Tangible progress is being made to clean up the Hanford Site and meet the requirements of the Tri-Party Agreement and Consent Decree. Adequate funding must be budgeted to keep the progress on track and not continue to drive lifecycle costs higher.*

### *Community Vision*

*The people of the Tri-Cities region have risen to meet some of our nation's highest priority needs, and we are now ready to take on the challenges of the future. We request DOE's continued partnership as we seek to leverage the highly-skilled workforce and federal assets that our region possesses to leave a legacy of economic prosperity for all the citizens we serve.*

## Section I. Top Priorities

**Sustained Cleanup Progress:** The Hanford Communities believe that cleanup of the Hanford site should be cost-effective and based on full compliance with cleanup regulations utilizing the best available state of the art processes and technologies. To sustain congressional support for cleanup funding, the Department of Energy-Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) and the Office of River Protection (ORP) must continue to demonstrate that taxpayer dollars are effectively managed, produce the desired results, comply with Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) requirements and other legal commitments.

**Compliant FY 2021 Hanford Budget Request:** The Hanford Communities support full compliance funding for the Hanford cleanup. The TPA and Consent Decree require that DOE request adequate funding to meet legal requirements in the President's budget. Life-cycle cost analysis should also be provided to communicate the impacts of delaying cleanup work due to less than required funding levels. The Hanford Communities will work with the Energy Communities Alliance and others to request and promote sustained funding levels necessary to meet Environmental Management program commitments. Both DOE-RL and DOE-ORP should receive adequate funding to continue key cleanup activities. All parties need to recognize that the budget request must be realistic and achievable.

The new Hanford cost estimates released in 2019 would require over \$1 billion a year for 60 years to complete cleanup as presently envisioned. Funding at that level is not feasible so it will be necessary for DOE, EPA and the State of Washington to come up with a new plan that will maximize what can be accomplished each year with funding that is consistent with recent appropriation levels. Given these funding realities, the Tri-Party Agencies should also consider new technologies and cleanup options which have the potential to expedite cleanup and reduce costs while meeting realistically achievable cleanup goals. Direct feed of waste to the Low Activity Waste (LAW) vitrification facility should be fully supported. Adequate funding for startup and commissioning is essential. Funding for technologies to pretreat and grout tank waste for shipment to appropriate licensed facilities out of state should be supported.

**Tank Waste Treatment:** The Hanford Communities believe that removing waste from the tanks, stabilizing and immobilizing the material, and putting it into safe storage to reduce risk must continue to be a high priority for the cleanup effort. The tanks are ageing and there is a possibility that there could be another leak in a Double Shell Tank (DST). We are committed to working with ORP and its contractors to ensure that the (WTP) is safely and successfully completed and that the Tank Farms are prepared to safely and reliably deliver waste feed to the WTP. Great progress is being made at WTP with commissioning and the transition to start-up of the Direct Feed Low Activity Waste Facility (DFLAW).

**Tank Farm Operations:** Funding for tank farm operations must be adequate to prepare for waste treatment and ensure maintenance of the aging infrastructure in a safe configuration while waste is removed from tanks. The tanks are well beyond their design life and many single shell tanks and at least one double shell

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tank are known to have leaked. Elimination, or at least reduction of risks must continue to be a top priority. DOE and the State of Washington need to get on with closing tanks, this will prevent tank collapses and intruder possibilities. The Hanford Communities support adding Hanford to the list of sites that can use the provisions of 3116 to close tanks. Adequate funding is essential to support tank farm upgrades and improvements necessary to protect the workforce and reduce the potential for vapor exposures.

**Movement of Cesium/Strontium Capsules to Dry Storage:** The Waste Encapsulation and Storage Facility (WESF) in the Central Plateau holds 1,936 capsules of cesium and strontium that were removed from tank waste and stored underwater. These capsules represent approximately one-third of the total amount of curies at the Hanford Site. WESF was not built for permanent storage of cesium and strontium and the facility presents a significant risk and long-term mortgage cost. The integrity of the concrete walls of the water filled pools has declined due to high levels of radiation. DOE should proceed with acquisition of casks to hold the capsules and construction of a concrete pad to store them.

**Groundwater Remediation:** Great progress had been made in recent years on groundwater remediation with the completion of pump and treat facilities. However, groundwater remediation is far from complete. The existing systems must be optimized to reach their full capacity and to be able to respond to emerging conditions in the tank farms or elsewhere in the Central Plateau. This is essential to ensure the protection of the Columbia River and prevent the migration of contamination from the Central Plateau to the River Corridor. A long-term strategy for groundwater management is also essential.

**River Corridor:** The Hanford Communities believe it is critical for DOE to remediate the high-rad waste site underneath the 324 Building which is close to the Columbia River and the City of Richland. Continued efforts to remediate the uranium plume must also be a high priority.

**Plutonium Finishing Plant:** Completion of the Plutonium Finishing Plant demolition has been a high priority for the Hanford Communities for many years. We look forward to completion of the work this year.

**Tri-Party Agreement (TPA):** Much of DOE's cleanup of Hanford falls under its "Tri-Party Agreement" with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Washington's Department of Ecology. The Hanford Communities strongly support the Tri-Party Agreement including changes and amendments, as appropriate, to incorporate such issues as improved technology developments, better scientific understanding and options for efficiencies. The commitments in the TPA are out of date. It is hoped that the current negotiations between the Tri-Parties can come up with a new path forward and supportable goals and milestones. The time is right for the Tri-Parties to reexamine the milestones in the agreement, taking into consideration the risk posed by different materials and what should be prioritized in the next decade, using realistic budget assumptions and schedules.

**Hanford Workforce:** The Hanford workforce is ageing and it is essential to recruit and train new employees. Hanford workers are well trained and experienced to perform these complex work activities but their safety must be the highest priority. In order to prepare individuals for future Hanford jobs there needs to be a concerted effort to expand STEM education from primary grades through post-secondary programs. Apprenticeships and internships should be developed in partnership with union programs, K-12 and Community Colleges. As DOE and their contractors reach out to hire individuals from outside of this area we should assist them by providing information about the quality of life of our region and communities.

**Infrastructure:** Critical infrastructure systems including water, fire protection, sewer systems, primary electrical power, and roads require ongoing maintenance to ensure safety and reliability. Additionally, the focus of work to the Central Plateau and startup of operational facilities on-site creates the need for updates and modifications of the systems to support future operations. There has been significant progress made in the last few years, however, funding for infrastructure must remain a high priority. We call on DOE to work with our communities to address traffic congestion generated by the Hanford commute.

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## Section II. Local Priority Issues

**Manhattan Project National Historical Park and B Reactor:** The Hanford Communities support the preservation and restoration of Pre-Manhattan Project facilities located on the Hanford site. An amendment to expand the boundary of the park at Hanford and a funding request for infrastructure improvements is also supported. It is important that these facilities as well as the B Reactor be made accessible to the public through the combined efforts of the DOE and the National Parks Service.

**HAMMER Training Center:** Consistent and highly effective site-wide training requirements should apply to all contractors and subcontractors. HAMMER has repeatedly demonstrated its value to meet Hanford's comprehensive training needs. The upcoming change in operational focus will increase the need for site-wide training programs to ensure the safety and efficiency of workers on site. The Hanford Communities encourage DOE to explore opportunities to continue to enhance the facility's missions and capabilities in the future.

**Economic Development and Diversification:** The Hanford Communities support transferring surplus Hanford assets, including land and excess personal property to TRIDEC/TARC to foster creation of private-sector jobs and diversification of the regional economy. We encourage TRIDEC and DOE to put in place a new agreement and procedure to replace the previous program that is out of compliance. Our community seeks future missions in the areas of clean energy, biosciences, environmental and computational sciences, grid and cybersecurity.

**Natural Gas Pipeline:** A natural gas pipeline to supply the Central Plateau is strongly endorsed and the EIS should be completed. DOE is encouraged to use an Energy Savings Performance Contract to replace diesel boilers and other equipment at WTP when they have reached the end of their design life, with those that use natural gas. A natural gas pipeline will eliminate use of 45,000 gallons of diesel each day for steam generation at WTP alone. It will result in cost savings for DOE as well as enhancement the environment and less wear and tear on regional highways and support statewide desires regarding carbon emissions.

**Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT)** In 1996, DOE entered into agreements with Benton, Franklin, and Grant counties to provide PILT payments based on historical use of the site before the lands were expropriated by the Manhattan Project. PILT funds are distributed by the counties to local entities including school districts, library districts, and hospital districts, among others, to support the provision of basic public services. A new formula for calculating Hanford PILT billings has been developed and accepted by all parties. DOE should request funding to meet the commitment in their federal budget request. The Hanford Communities support payment levels that are on-time, in-whole, and are otherwise consistent with the agreements.

**Public Information and Involvement:** In 1998, the Hanford Communities and the Washington State Department of Ecology identified the need to more fully engage the Tri-Cities metropolitan region in the Hanford cleanup. A program was developed to inform area residents and stimulate meaningful involvement. The Hanford Communities recognize that this program will continue to be a high priority during 2020. It is the goal of the Hanford Communities to renew the program and contract with the Department of Ecology for the next state fiscal year. We also will encourage DOE to refocus their outreach to the residents of this region.

**Yucca Mountain:** Yucca Mountain was originally designated to receive high-level defense waste from DOE sites around the country including Hanford's high-level vitrified tank waste and spent nuclear fuel that has been packaged and stored in the Canister Storage Building. We support congressional funding efforts to complete necessary analysis and get Yucca Mountain open for business.

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**Ambient Air Boundary:** The Hanford Communities encourage DOE and Ecology to reach agreement on the Hanford Site Ambient Air Boundary which will allow continued public access for Manhattan Project National Historical Park and Hanford Site cleanup tours.

**High Level Nuclear Waste:** The Blue Ribbon Commission Recommendation to establish a new entity dedicated solely to implement the nation's high level waste management program is endorsed by the Hanford Communities. The establishment of a licensed nuclear repository and an interim storage facility in Eddy County, New Mexico, or in another community interested in hosting a site is also supported. The Hanford Communities support the DOE effort to look at waste streams across the complex that are currently defined as high level waste, simply based on where they originated. Waste should be handled based on its level of radioactivity and risk. This process opens up disposal options other than a deep geologic repository. Opportunities to ship waste off the Hanford Site should be fully explored.

**Local Governments as Host Communities and Service Providers:** Although good relationships exist between local area governments and local DOE offices, ports, cities and counties adjoining DOE sites are often relegated to the subordinate role of special interest groups. It is important the DOE acknowledge that local elected officials have authority and responsibility for services used by DOE such as sewer, water, electricity, roads, law enforcement, and emergency response. Local elected officials also have regulatory authority over land use planning and economic development on land adjacent to the Hanford Site. DOE-RL, DOE-ORP and their contractors should partner with local government to make maximum use of their capabilities. DOE must take into account wear and tear of roads, as well as unique traffic issues and consider all transportation options for delivering glass forming material to WTP.

**Emergency Management:** Whether a large brushfire, a transportation accident involving hazardous waste, or a radioactive materials incident, emergencies at Hanford directly affect our local communities and its citizens. Cooperation and coordination between DOE and local emergency responders is essential. DOE provides funding for emergency management to the State of Washington and the state passes these funds on to county emergency management agencies including Benton and Franklin counties. Funding for local emergency preparedness necessary to coordinate with Hanford has not kept pace with inflation, and costs such as PERS and health insurance continue to rise much faster than the available funding from DOE. The Hanford Communities believe that DOE should increase its funding to the Benton and Franklin Emergency Management Agencies, either through its allocation to the state or directly to the local counties.

**Use of CERCLA in place of RCRA for Nuclear Waste Remediation;** The Consortium for Risk Evaluation with Stakeholder Participation (CRESP) Omnibus report suggested that using CERCLA (Superfund) regulations in place of RCRA makes more sense for radioactive contamination. We were encouraged that state regulators and EPA have met to explore this and other opportunities to seek solutions for management and disposal of waste that reduces cost and improves schedules. We hope their efforts will continue and they will eliminate dual regulatory processes.