

HANFORD COMMUNITIES

May 17, 2024 Hanford News & Updates

On May 15, 1989, the Tri-Party Agencies signed the Consent Order, commonly known as the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA); a comprehensive commitment to environmental restoration and adherence to federal regulations. It serves as a roadmap for achieving compliance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) for remedial actions and with the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) for treatment, storage, and disposal regulations, as well as corrective actions.

Now, 35 years later, the Tri-Party agencies have agreed to make changes, after four years of negotiations.

WA, feds upend plan to clean up of nation's most costly, dangerous radioactive sites

By Annette Cary April 29, 2024

The Department of Energy and its regulators have released a revised path forward for DOE's most costly liability in the nation — the 56 million gallons of radioactive waste stored in leak-prone underground tanks in Eastern Washington. The agreement took nearly four years to negotiate and was made public Monday morning. Highlights include starting treatment of the Hanford site tank waste for disposal on the current schedule of 2025 for the least-radioactive waste and 2033 for the high-level radioactive waste.

The COVID pandemic already had caused delays for starting work the least radioactive waste. Regulators also have agreed to turn some of that waste into a concrete-like grout, rather than immobilizing it in glass. That could potentially save billions of dollars. But it must be shipped out of Washington state for disposal rather than being kept at Hanford as is planned for glassified low-activity radioactive waste.

The high-level tank waste is among the nation's most dangerous nuclear waste and poses a risk to the nearby Columbia River. And it's a complicated toxic cleanup project. It's also DOE's most expensive obligation in the U.S.

[Read More](#)

What We're Watching



S4 E7 National Laboratories Speed Hanford Cleanup

The Department of Energy's 17 national laboratories conduct research and development on some of the world's most vexing challenges—from climate change to the origins of the universe. Most recently, six labs have turned their attention to speeding cleanup of underground tank waste at DOE's Hanford site in Washington State. The labs are using \$27 million in DOE funding to research everything from tank integrity and the impact of corrosion to robotic handling of tank waste. Estimates show this and other work could save \$150 billion in cleanup costs and shave up to two decades

off a 60-year timeline. This week, Gone Fission host Michael Butler talks with Connie Herman, Assistant Director, Savannah River National Laboratory, and Delmar Noyes, DOE Tank Farms Manager at Hanford.

NOTE: The work NNLMES performs is being overseen by the EM Laboratory Policy Office with the support of the EM Technology Operations Office, Hanford Site Office as well as the Office of Science, and ARPA-E.

www.gonefissionpodcast.com

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Upcoming Events

Settlement Agreement 60 Day Public Comment Period

May 30 - July 29, 2024

After federally-mediated discussions initiated in 2020, dubbed Holistic Negotiations, the involved agencies have finalized a settlement agreement with proposed adjustments to cleanup deadlines outlined in the Tri-Party Agreement and the Washington v. Granholm consent decree. These proposed alterations reaffirm a joint dedication to the safe and efficient disposal of tank waste.

A 60-day period for public feedback will commence on May 30, accompanied by public meetings in Washington and Oregon during July. Detailed information will be accessible on the Hanford Events Calendar and Ecology's Public Comment webpage once the comment period begins.

For inquiries, reach out to:

- Jennifer Colborn of the DOE at Jennifer.Colborn@rl.doe.gov
- Beth Clemons of the EPA at Clemons.Beth@epa.gov
- Ryan Miller of Ecology at Ryan.Miller@ecy.wa.gov

For further information regarding the [comment period](#), please refer to the Department of Ecology's website and review the [Summary of Holistic Negotiations](#) press release.

[Link to Settlement Agreement Document](#)

ECA Forum: Building Nuclear Partnerships & Projects

Last week, the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA) held their third annual ECA Forum, supported by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Nuclear Energy in Kennewick, WA.

This event brought representatives from DOE, federal, state, local, and tribal governments alongside developers, utilities, regulators, industry professionals,

and academia. Together, we explored opportunities, tackled challenges, and fostered partnerships crucial for advancing nuclear development.

We actively embrace the potential of the Hanford site and surrounding area, envisioning a future where its possibilities are fully realized. In addition to supporting the cleanup, we stand behind our local industry partners and those spearheading new nuclear ventures in the region.



ECA Chair, and Mayor of West Richland, Brent Gerry providing opening remarks and introduction to the Tri-Cities.



Representative McMorris-Rodgers on Washington State's nuclear related efforts.

ECA Forum Tours

In addition to the forum, ECA provided optional tours of the B Reactor, PNNL and Energy Northwest to pre-registered participants.



Cooling Towers at Energy Northwest



Used fuel storage at Energy Northwest



Group in front of the reactor at the B-Reactor

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