

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 9, 2017

President-elect Donald J. Trump
Trump-Pence Transition Office
1717 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear President-elect Trump:

We write to share with you the importance of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) ongoing cleanup mission at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in the State of Washington, a region that underwent dramatic transformation nearly 75 years ago to help the United States win World War II, and later the Cold War. We believe, with your strong support, we can continue the vital nuclear waste cleanup and environmental remediation work currently underway at Hanford. This work is essential to protecting the health and safety of the Tri-Cities community, the Columbia River, Washington state, and our nation from waste that was created from over 40 years of nuclear weapons production. Continued cleanup progress, along with strong and predictable funding, is crucial to the federal government fulfilling its legal and moral obligation to remediate the 54.6 million gallons of nuclear and radioactive waste currently stored at Hanford. Additionally, this vital cleanup mission is a top priority for the local communities and our constituents in Washington state, as well as to the strength of the local and regional economies.

Our nation's security has benefited from the nuclear defense programs that created large quantities of radioactive and non-radioactive wastes at 17 defense nuclear sites located in 11 states across the country. This nuclear deterrent protected America and our allies, and was made possible by the sacrifice and dedication of the workers at sites like Hanford.

The weapons activities at Hanford pioneered the technology required to successfully extract plutonium from irradiated uranium, leading to the production of more than 65 percent of the nation's plutonium at Hanford. These efforts came at a high cost, affecting our environment and the workforce. As a result, the weapons production mission has shifted to a cleanup mission focused on millions of gallons of liquid radioactive waste, thousands of tons of spent nuclear fuel, large volumes of transuranic and mixed/low level waste, huge volumes of contaminated soil and groundwater, and thousands of excess facilities.

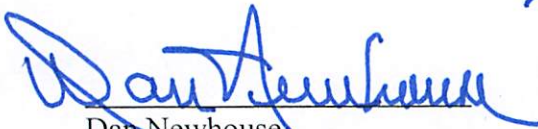
DOE's Office of River Protection is responsible for treating the approximately 54.6 million gallons of nuclear and radioactive waste stored in 177 underground storage tanks at Hanford and addressing the risks posed by this tank waste by immobilizing it through a process known as vitrification. This is the largest and most complex environmental remediation project in the nation and is critical to ensuring the safety and well-being of those who live both in the Tri-Cities and downstream of Hanford along the Columbia River. Furthermore, the federal government is subject to legally enforceable milestones on tank waste retrieval and treatment through a Consent Decree between the State of Washington and DOE.


DOE's Richland Operations Office is responsible for all non-tank waste cleanup activities throughout Hanford including soil and groundwater remediation, facility decontamination and decommissioning, stabilization and disposition of nuclear materials and spent nuclear fuel, and the disposition of non-tank waste. While the Richland Operations Office has done a commendable job on cleanup activities along the Columbia River Corridor, many important projects remain from remediation of the 324 building to continued groundwater remediation that prevents dangerous contaminants from reaching the Columbia River, as well as a long list of waste sites and facilities on the Central Plateau that require additional cleanup work.


Previous administrations and Congress have repeatedly supported the legal and moral obligation of the federal government to clean up Hanford, and we urge your Administration to do the same. A critical component to this support is proper funding levels, which enables progress and ensures our top priority—worker safety—is achieved while these dangerous cleanup operations take place. It is essential that the safety of the more than 9,000 workers come first as they are doing a remarkable job and their efforts keep surrounding communities safe.

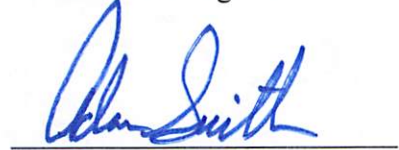
We look forward to discussing Hanford, ongoing cleanup work, and its importance to the Tri-Cities community and the Pacific Northwest with you and your Administration in more detail in the coming days and months. Together, we can ensure that the federal government fulfills its obligation through continued progress and safe remediation of the Hanford site.


Sincerely,

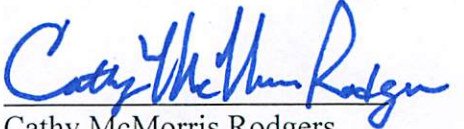

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Member of Congress


Patty Murray
United States Senator


Maria Cantwell
United States Senator


Adam Smith
Member of Congress

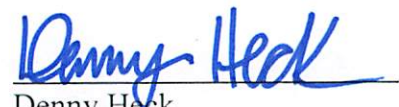

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

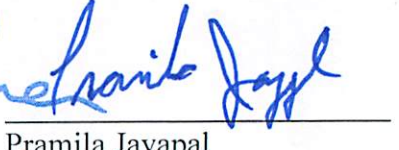

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