

MARIA CANTWELL
WASHINGTON



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4705

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July 15, 2010

The Honorable Lee Hamilton, Co-Chair
Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585

The Honorable Brent Scowcroft, Co-Chair
Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Co-Chairs Hamilton and Scowcroft,

I would like to welcome you and all the members of the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future (BRC) to Hanford and the Tri-Cities. I very much appreciate the BRC making the effort to better understand the tremendously challenging nuclear waste clean-up and disposal issues affecting this community and region. In many ways Hanford is unique, requiring a site visit to grasp both the scope and technical difficulty of the current clean-up effort, as well as the federal government's legal and moral responsibility to ensure that clean up occurs in a timely manner.

I have long called for a comprehensive national strategy to address our nation's nuclear waste disposal problem. We need a plan that matches up nuclear energy use with ways to safely and effectively address *all* levels and *all* sources of existing and future nuclear waste, including both commercial and defense waste streams. I believe that can only be accomplished by basing our policy decisions on sound scientific analysis. Future generations will have to live with our decisions long after today's political winds have blown themselves out. Only a decision based on sound science will stand the test of time.

Whatever the merits of past efforts to address these issues, they have indisputably failed to confront the whole problem. For example, even if Yucca Mountain were to eventually open, it would only store a small percentage of Hanford's waste, and be unable to meet our national civilian nuclear waste disposal needs. Clearly, a more comprehensive solution is required. That is why I supported the formation of the BRC and applaud your efforts to take a comprehensive review of America's nuclear future.

While nuclear energy production issues receive the most attention, any credible national strategy must incorporate and dedicate the necessary resources to clean up Hanford in a timely manner. The Tri-City community sacrificed a lot to help America win the Cold War and we have an obligation to make the region and its citizens whole. I urge the Commission to keep that in mind during what I hope will be a pleasant and productive visit.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Cantwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and a long, sweeping tail.

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator