

## Framework for Hanford Communities Comments to the Blue Ribbon Commission July 14, 2010

- Brief comments about the Hanford Communities organization (Brochure Attached)

### Hanford Issues

- We are pleased to welcome the Blue Ribbon Commission to the Tri-Cities. The decision to visit our community is a positive sign. It will give the Commission a firsthand opportunity to gain an understanding of our concerns about indefinite storage of nuclear waste materials at Hanford that are legally destined for a deep geologic repository. It will also inform you of the challenges of proceeding with cleanup at this site without the certainty of waste acceptance criteria for a high level repository.
- The \$12 billion Waste Treatment Plant (WTP) under construction at Hanford has been designed to produce high level vitrified waste to meet Yucca Mountain acceptance criteria. Waste that has been vitrified at the SRS and West Valley has already been processed to meet those criteria. As you look for an alternative location, start with the assumption that the new site must be able to accept this material.
- 2100 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel has been processed at Hanford and put into dry storage in containers designed to meet Yucca Mountain acceptance criteria. If a new location has different criteria, this waste may be stranded or it could be subject to repackaging at significant taxpayer expense.
- While we do not have concerns that the spent nuclear fuel or high level vitrified glass will adversely impact the environment, we are frustrated by the staggering security costs of the storage facilities. Money that must be spent for guards and guns comes out of our cleanup budget. That is not acceptable to our region.
- We have 177 underground tanks that hold over 50 million gallons of highly toxic radioactive waste. Sixty- seven of those tanks are suspected to have leaked. It will take decades to treat this waste at WTP. When the material has been vitrified, we expect the federal government to uphold their commitment to ship the high level waste away from Hanford to a deep geologic repository.
- Waste generated during weapons production years has taken a massive toll on the Hanford Site. In addition to the solid waste buried at the site there are many square miles of contaminated soil and groundwater. Some of this material has made its way to the Columbia River. This is not the place for a national repository.
- “Interim storage” may very well translate into “permanent storage.” This is not what local communities bargained for with DOE. As we get on with cleanup, our region is working to transform the Tri-Cities into a recognized leader in providing clean sustainable energy solutions.

### Work with Local Government

- It is essential that the Commission and the Department of Energy (DOE) fully involve local government officials in making their decisions on the future disposition of high level nuclear waste. We ask you to undertake a collaborative process and relationship with us and DOE, not just a public involvement process.
- We expect local community issues and concerns to be considered throughout the decision-making processes.
- We expect recommendations and decisions to be based on science not politics. We also call on you to abide by an open informative process as you proceed with your deliberations.
- We feel that retention of the Yucca Mountain Repository for defense waste is necessary for the timely removal of nuclear waste from our community. We are encouraged by the recent decision of the Atomic Safety and Licensing Board that concluded that DOE could not withdraw the license application. Accordingly we strongly encourage this Board to reconsider its decision to exclude Yucca Mountain as an alternative.
- We feel “closing the fuel cycle must be taken into consideration. Recycling/Reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel must be examined as an option.
- Our communities are members of the Energy Communities Alliance and on behalf of our sister communities we hope that your visit is the first of many to sites around the country that have hosted DOE Defense Programs and are dealing with the cleanup of legacy waste. Thank you for the opportunity to testify to the commission.