BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION ON AMERICA'S
NUCLEAR FUTURE

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MEETING

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WEDNESDAY,
July 14, 2010

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The Committee convened at 1:30 p.m. in the Great Hall of the Three Rivers Convention Center at 7016 West Grandridge Boulevard, Kennewick, Washington, Lee Hamilton and Brent Scowcroft, Co-Chairs, presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

LEE HAMILTON, Chair
BRENT SCOWCROFT, Chair
VICKY A. BAILEY
ALBERT CARNESALE
PETE V. DOMENICI

CHUCK HAGEL
JONATHAN LASH
ALLISON MacFARLANE
RICHARD MESERVE
ERNIE MONIZ
PER PETERSON
JOHN ROWE

PHIL SHARP

ALSO PRESENT:

TIM FRAZIER, Designated Federal Official

DAVE BROCKMAN, DOE-RL

WARREN SPENCER, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation

BROOKLYN BAPTISTE, Nez Perce Tribe

STUART HARRIS, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

ALYSSA BUCK, Wanapum Tribe

KEN NILES, Oregon Department of Energy

SUSAN LECKBAND, Hanford Advisory Board

CARL ADRIAN, Tri-City Development Council

GERALD POLLETT, Heart of America NW

SARAH MINKLER, Heart of America NW

VIC PARRISH, Energy Northwest

ELIZABETH SCHEELER, Office of US Senator Jeff Merkley

P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

1:30 p.m.

MR. FRAZIER: If the Commissioners will take their seats? Thank you.

I will add a DOE Headquarters welcome to everyone and then turn it over to you, General, or Congressman Hamilton?

General Scowcroft. Thank you, sir.

CHAIR SCOWCROFT: Oh, you're done?

MR. FRAZIER: Yes.

CHAIR SCOWCROFT: Good afternoon and thank you, all, for coming to this meeting of the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future.

This Commission was formed by the Secretary of Energy at the direction of the President. The purpose of the Commission is to conduct a comprehensive review of policies for managing the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle, and recommend a new plan. That's what we're working to do.

There are, of course, matters related to the back end of the fuel cycle that are currently pending before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and the DC Circuit Court of Appeals. These matters relate to the administration's decision to withdraw the application for the proposed nuclear waste repository at Yucca Mountain in Nevada.

Obviously, these proceedings are important. But we cannot know at this time how or when they will be resolved. It would be inappropriate for the Commission to inject itself into these pending proceedings, which may continue well after the Commission concludes its work.

Our task is to proceed with our mandate and to make recommendations to the Secretary of Energy. The scope of the Commission's review will not change unless the Secretary directs it to do so.

We would like to remind those with us today that we are not a siting commission.

We should also point out that our Commission's charter does not include the details of the on-site cleanup activities at Hanford, although we certainly recognize the importance of this federal responsibility.

In keeping with the Commission Charter, we decided to visit the Hanford site because we believe we must hear from communities with a substantial interest in solving the waste problem as we conduct our work.

We also knew that touring the site would give us a valuable opportunity to see firsthand a variety of facilities involved in the treatment, packaging, and storage of used fuel and high-level waste.

We will spend this afternoon and part of tomorrow morning hearing from tribal and local government officials, community groups, and others about their views on the matters before the Commission.

Tomorrow morning we will also hear

from the Governor of Washington and representatives of Washington's congressional delegation and Attorney General.

We recognize there are many other individuals and organizations in this region and across the country who care deeply about the issues before this Commission. We, of course, cannot hear from them during our visit.

We look forward to hearing from more people and groups going forward, and we encourage anyone with an interest in our work to submit written input to the Commission now or at any point in the process. Your comments will be posted on the Commission Web site and will be made available to the full Commission.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Okay. Thank you, Brent.

Good afternoon to everyone.

First, a word about our speakers. We remind the speakers that they are to keep to their formal presentation of 10 minutes or

less, and that the remainder of the allotted time will be used for questions and discussion with the Commission. Because of the full schedule we have this afternoon, the Chairs will be fairly strict in enforcing those time limits.

We appreciate very much the time and effort the speakers have put into their presentations. We've received summaries, of course, of those statements and the statements themselves, and we look forward to their comments this afternoon.

Secondly, with regard to webcasting, we are webcasting this meeting as we've done for all of our meetings. We want people who aren't able to get to our meeting locations to be able to follow our proceedings. The video and transcript from this and all Commission meetings will be posted on the Commission website.

Next, a word about the subcommittees. Those of you who have been

following the work of the Commission know that we formed three subcommittees to aid in completing the work of the Commission: the Reactor and Fuel Cycle Technology Subcommittee, headed by Pete Domenici and Per Peterson; a Transportation and Storage Subcommittee, headed by Richard Meserve and Phil Sharp; and a Disposal Subcommittee headed by Chuck Hagel and Jonathan Lash.

After tomorrow's remarks by Governor Gregoire, we will ask the Co-Chairs of each of the three subcommittees to provide a brief update on their work to date.

Next, a word about public comment. At the end of tomorrow's session, not today's, we will hear from any member of the audience who wishes to speak. We've allowed for an extended public comment period at the end of tomorrow's meeting, in recognition of the number of people who have commented at our prior meetings.

A sign-up sheet for the public

comment period will be available tomorrow morning, starting at 8:00 a.m. and closing at 10:00 a.m. The amount of time allocated to each speaker will depend, of course, on the number of people who wish to speak.

Finally, let me just observe that we are very pleased to have added two members to the Commission staff since our last meeting. Mary Woollen will serve as our government and community liaison person. Natalia Saraeva will serve as staff liaison to the disposal subcommittee. This completes, we believe, at this point the hiring of our core staff.

With those administrative matters aside, I'll open the floor up now for the Commissioners to see if they have any statements or comments that they wish to make before we proceed with the afternoon program.

Are there any such comments?

If not, then we welcome to the microphone Dave Brockman, who is the

Department of Energy, Richland manager.

Dave, thank you very much for hosting our tour this morning. We appreciated that greatly. We're pleased to hear from you now.

MR. BROCKMAN: Thank you.

Mr. Co-Chairmen and the Commission, I want to formally welcome you on behalf of myself, Shirley Oringer, and the rest of the Department of Energy here at Hanford. We're pleased to have you here.

We were honored to be able to show you a portion of the site this morning, particularly as it involves the high-level waste at the site, to give you firsthand knowledge of the situation we're facing on the site. We're pleased that you decided to visit the site and give us a chance to have a very good dialogue.

I was impressed with the questions. I'll say I was stumped by some and I have some look-ups. That's a positive

thing.

Finally, in the welcoming, I just want to compliment you on the transparency and the openness of your Commission. We offered up 80 bus seats and they were gone in a very short period of time. As you can see, the room is filling up. It makes our job easy when you're this open with everybody. We really appreciate that.

Welcome again. Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Dave, thank you very much.

We will begin now with our speakers for the afternoon. The first will be Warren Spencer, Yakama Nation Tribal Council.

Mr. Spencer, would you please come forward?

May I point out to you that we have a light system here? The green light will come on when you begin. When you have 1 minute left from the 10 minutes, the yellow light will appear. When that light appears,

we ask you to begin to wrap up your comments so we can turn to questions.

Thank you very much for coming, Mr. Spencer. We're pleased to have you. You may begin.

MR. SPENCER: Thank you.

Good afternoon. Welcome, everybody. I'm Warren Spencer Jr. with the Yakama Nation Tribal Council. I serve as a secretary of the Radioactive Hazardous Waste Committee. I come before the Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future of the United States Department of Energy on behalf of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation.

I wish to thank the Commission for the opportunity to make this presentation regarding the management and disposal of high-level radioactive waste and other hazardous nuclear materials.

The purpose of my comments is to address two main issues: the treaty rights of

the Yakama people with respect to the United States Department of Energy's Hanford site; and also, the trust responsibilities that the Energy Department and this Commission have federally recognized tribal governments, in compliance with the treaties between Indian tribes and the United States government.

Mr. Russell Jim, manager of the Yakama Nation's Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Program, will subsequently address specific issues of concern to the tribe in tomorrow's session regarding the protection of the cultural resources and of the environment, safety, and health of the Yakama people.

On April 9, 2010 on behalf of Yakama Nation, our own chairman, Harry Smiskin, wrote President Obama and the Energy Secretary Chu, issuing a formal request for government to government consultation regarding the decision of Council in the United States Department of Energy's proposed

Yucca Mountain high-level radioactive waste repository in Nevada.

This decision is a great concern of the Yakama Nation in light of the growing interest in expanding nuclear power, and the toxic legacy of nuclear weapons production affecting the health and safety of the Yakama people and its cultural resources.

Specifically, the Yakama Nation's treaty resources are impacted by the radioactive waste generated by the Columbia Generating Station nuclear power plant on the Department of Energy's Hanford site from profound contamination and enormous amounts of high-level radioactive waste created by the production of plutonium.

As President Obama noted in his November 5, 2009 memorandum for the heads of executive departments and the heads of federal agencies, "History has shown the failure to include the voices of tribal officials, and formulating policies affecting their

communities has too often led to undesirable, and at times, devastating and tragic results. Consultation is a critical ingredient of a sound and productive federal-tribal government relationship."

Unfortunately, we have yet to receive a response from President Obama and the Secretary Chu to our request.

The Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakama Nation retain perpetual rights on its reservation in the ceded lands of the usual and custom places, pursuant to the treaty of 1855 with the United States, 12 Stat. 957, done and dated June 9, 1855. The Yakama Nation also reserves rights not enumerated in the treaty and not divested by the United States.

The Hanford Nuclear Reservation is the most contaminated site in the United States. It is located on the Yakama Nation federally ceded lands.

The Yakama people have exercised

their indigenous rights on the Hanford land from time immemorial, and continue to exercise their rights as guaranteed by the treaty of 1855 until 1943, when the federal Manhattan Project excluded Yakama Nation members from approximately 580 acres of their ancestral lands.

The Yakama Nation Reservation is located approximately 13 miles from the Hanford site.

Hanford is of extraordinary significance to the Yakama Nation. Hanford was a Yakama Nation wintering ground from time immemorial, and contains cultural resources and trust resources of an unestimated value to future generations of the Yakama members. Hanford has and will affect treaty resources beyond the site's boundaries.

Yakama government policies states that the Hanford site must be restored into a condition which permits full exercise of Yakama Nation treaty rights, while ensuring

protection for the health and safety of Yakama members.

Pursuant to their sovereign interests, Yakama Nation has enacted a number of tribal directives to protect its rights and interests in respect to the Hanford activities.

These include: establishing an agreement with the Department of Energy to ensure treaty compliance to protect the Yakama people and the natural resources; initiate a comprehensive, independent assessment of natural resources affected by Hanford; conduct an assessment of unique risks to tribal members and their culture; and measures necessary for special protection of the resources and the Native American peoples.

Also, to develop in consultation with Interior and Energy Departments a mutually agreeable process to permit co-management of the treaty-defined resources. And most recently, establishing a

comprehensive effort for the removal of the buried plutonium contaminated waste for proper disposal in a geological repository.

The Yakama Nation was one of two tribal governments in the United States requested to participate in initially implanting process in 1989, in recognition of the extraordinary impacts to the Yakama Nation from past federal government activities and in anticipation of continued impacts during remedial actions and restoration activities.

Since that time, the Department of Energy has recognized other tribal governments which are affected by its weapons complex activities.

As Hanford cleanup approaches completion, or is terminated at specific waste sites or operable units, ensuring that treaty compliance is intended becomes a critical intergovernmental concern.

In order to implement its government-to-government relationship with the

tribal sovereigns, the Department of Energy has developed an American Indian and Alaskan Native Tribal Government Policy. This policy is based on the United States Constitution, treaties, Supreme Court decisions, Executive Orders, statutes, existing federal policies, tribal laws, and the dynamic political relationship between Indian nations and the federal government.

The most important doctrine derived from this relationship is the trust responsibility of the United States to protect tribal sovereignty and its self-determination, tribal lands, assets, resources, and the treaty under the federally recognized reserved rights.

This concludes my statement. Once again, I'd like to thank the Blue Ribbon Commission for allowing the Yakama Nation this time to provide testimony. Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Spencer. We thank you for your

testimony.

Are there questions for Mr. Spencer?

If not, thank you kindly, sir.

MR. SPENCER: Thank you again.

CHAIR HAMILTON: The next witness is Brooklyn Baptiste. He's from the Nez Perce Tribe.

Mr. Baptiste, I understand you're the Vice Chairman, is that right?

MR. BAPTISTE: Yes.

CHAIR HAMILTON: We thank you very much for your appearance this afternoon. You may proceed.

MR. BAPTISTE: Okay. Thank you.

First of all, I'd like to thank the Department of Energy and the Blue Ribbon Commission this morning for requesting the tour. I think any tour that you can take out there in any capacity is definitely beneficial to everyone.

We had a little time in between

the bus rides to chat a little bit and get some more information from each other and some other views outside a technical but political format, which is helpful from all angles.

I think the tribal view that we'll express here today kind of goes along those lines. It's really hard to quantify the dynamics. It's not an academic position most of the time from the tribes, although the tribes do have the capacity. We have hydrologists, geologists, engineers, and scientists that work for the tribe at that same technical level.

But the things that we'll talk about that the tribe would like to express come directly from a culturally-based point of view that are protected in the treaty of 1855, as the gentleman before me, Mr. Spencer, has spoken about.

Those are tribal customs guaranteed protected by the treaty of 1855, which is also mentioned in the Constitution in

the United States as supreme law of the land. That's where we come from, predominately.

I'd like to begin by reading some of the comments that were formulated by the tribe.

But we also formulated an end-state vision by the Nez Perce Tribe which was adopted in January 2009. That's how we as the tribe see our relationship based on that trust foundation between the government and the Department of Energy, and how we think we would like to see this and be involved with this.

In setting that statute approved by the tribal government is one of those vehicles that we would like to utilize to continue our relationship in that manner.

I'll begin by introducing myself again. Brooklyn Baptiste; I serve as the Vice Chairman for the Nez Perce Tribe Executive Committee. I also serve as the Natural Resource Subcommittee Chair for my tribe, as

well.

I work a lot with our Environmental Waste and Restoration Management Office. We have a great staff. They're always on site.

I think that the DOE tries to do their best to accommodate the tribe's needs as technology grows, as relationship grows. I think that things are evolving to where we would like to see the relationship further ourselves.

That directly involves the situation here as far as EM, the Hanford nuclear site, and the waste and disposal of that waste. That's what we'll begin with today.

I'll go ahead and read what I have here. Then if there's any questions, feel free to ask after that. Thank you.

The Nez Perce Tribe is a federally recognized sovereign government whose aboriginal territories encompass over 13

million acres in what are now Idaho, Washington, Oregon, and Montana, by virtue of the treaty of 1855 with the United States, 12 Stat. 957.

Among other guarantees, the tribe has reserved rights to take fish at all usual and custom places, as well as hunt, gather, and pasture animals on open and unclaimed land. The reserved rights extend to areas known as the Hanford reservation, here, as well the Hanford reach of the Columbia river, collectively Hanford.

In addition to the Nez Perce Tribe's treaty-reserved rights, the tribe has also identified, since time immemorial, various lands within Hanford as sacred and culturally significant to the tribe and our people. The tribe's access to these lands for ceremonial purpose also remains a vital component to the Nez Perce tribe and the way of life that we've grown accustomed to.

As the fiduciary, the United

States and all agencies have a trust responsibility to the Nez Perce Tribe and other federally recognized tribes.

The trust obligation includes a substantive duty to consult with the tribe in decision making to avoid adverse impacts on treaty resources, and a duty to protect treaty-reserved rights, as well.

Agency actions seeking to change or reinterpret existing law shall not abrogate the treaty rights for the Nez Perce Tribe.

The Nez Perce tribe believes that the ultimate goal of any nuclear waste disposal plan must be to protect the air, soil, groundwater, and surface water in such a manner that allows unrestricted tribal access to the affected areas.

Tribal members' ecological resources and cultural resources should not be exposed to any potential adverse risks, above that which has always existed prior to the establishment of federal projects facilities

designed to store or dispose of nuclear waste.

The Nez Perce Tribe opposes the disposal of any Greater-Than-Class-C or Greater-Than-Class-C-like waste at Hanford.

The tribe also views the disposal of high-level waste at TRU waste at Hanford as unacceptable, recognizing that cleanup or disposal of technology for some contaminants may not currently be available. The Nez Perce tribe will work with the United States to further reduce the levels of any residual contamination until technology becomes available.

Interim action must provide the greatest degree of human and ecological health protection if physical or institutional controls are selected as an option for safe storage. The recovery curves must be calculated so that negative impacts to treaty rights can be avoided.

It's the recognition of the Nez Perce Tribe to the Blue Ribbon Commission on

America's Nuclear Future that all high-level radioactive waste must be disposed in a deep geologic repository and in a tectonically-stable portion of the North American craton.

Decisions should be made in a scientifically sound manner, taking into account known risk factors and acknowledging that we do not know future population dynamics, future technologies, or potential access to buried material and future needs for that material.

Based on those comments, of course, the last portion of that is technical in nature. But I would like to stress to you, the Blue Ribbon Commission, that I understand you guys have been burdened with the task of a long, arduous travel to try to find out the best way to do it.

I know that you all come to the table with splendid credentials and a view that, we're hoping, you might find the path not only for the United States but for Native

Americans as well, for our tribes. Not only because they are protected by law, because there's things that are guaranteed in these treaties that might not have always been kept. But we hope that you now have the ability to make that change for us.

I've had the opportunity to speak in front of a lot of federal and state agencies on concerns of the tribe, and have always tried to implore that you think of our children, that you think of the future generations of the families here that live and roam. And that once we utilized this land without restrictions, and now it's tough.

The elder Russell -- we were kind of joking around. But when we have to access land now that we were using -- when you have in the Hanford reach one of the best spawning grounds in the Columbia River. We have to wear a visitor's tag to visit it now because of the contamination, because of what's on the landscape now.

It's hard. It's hard to accept. But we do it because we understand the laws, we understand exactly what's trying to be reached out there.

We also want to make sure that nuclear waste, you know -- that this isn't its effect. When they explained today that it's being stored there -- hopefully it's not forever. Hopefully, there will come a time where we would like to dispose of it in a permanent manner. But not here, on the Hanford reserve.

I think so much damage has already been done, so much has already been saturated into the land itself that it's going to be really hard to repair that and turn it back into the pristine nature that it was before. And that's what we're hoping, that's what we hope lies within your decisions for the future of our homeland here, but also for the United States as well, and for the future of nuclear energy for the United States.

With that, I'm honored to be able to offer a few comments here to you. Like I said, it was a good field trip today. I hope that we all learned something.

Feel free to contact us. We've sent you the information, our end-state vision. But also I've sent some of the letters and comments that the tribe feels are imperative for us. So if you have any questions after this, feel free to contact the tribe in any fashion. The tribe is here for any questions that you might need to -- and hopefully we'll be able to facilitate that.

I appreciate the time that you've given us to get up here and speak. Hopefully, the words that we say will stay with you. And hopefully you now have an opportunity to bring back some of -- I think DOE is trying to do a good job of bringing back that integrity that these promises were founded on, that these laws were based on, in our treaty.

You guys now have the opportunity

to bring back that integrity to it, keep those promises to us, make sure that these things are disposed of, and that the energy is created in the most safe and best manner that it can be.

I thank you very much -- in our language, Qe'ci'yew'yew' -- for allowing me to speak today.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Mr. Baptiste, we thank you for your statement. I especially appreciated the long-term perspective which you brought to this problem, and the responsibilities that you place on us to deal with it in such a way that we are mindful that future generations will be dealing with this problem as well.

What that says to me is that we need a good bit of flexibility and adaptability in whatever we do, and a lot of transparency, of course, in the process. But your statement with regard to the longer term perspective and our obligation to those who

follow us is very meaningful.

Are there questions from the Commissioners?

Per?

MEMBER PETERSON: I would like to thank you for --

CHAIR HAMILTON: You'll have to speak right up into that microphone.

MEMBER PETERSON: I understand.

I'd like to thank you for the very useful comments that you've made, as well as the written materials that we received and I had an opportunity to review.

They are, I think, very helpful to us both because they point to the importance of recognizing that there are wastes that have been generated that should not be left in shallow land disposal in tanks and other things here at Hanford. That means that we need to find some place, some way to deal with those that will protect human health and the environment into the long term.

I appreciate pointing towards deep geologic disposal as being an appropriate solution. And moreover, to providing some criteria for identifying how one might identify appropriate deep geologic disposal sites for that purpose.

So of course we need to consider, then, a process to develop this type of disposal capability. And wherever it is, it's likely to again impact Native Americans.

My question actually relates to the relationship with DOE and your thoughts on, from the perspective of developing repositories, is DOE the proper agency to do that? And what would you recommend in terms of the best approaches for these necessary interactions with and in communication with Native Americans?

MR. BAPTISTE: Thank you for your comments and your question. I guess I'll do my best to try to provide you an answer.

I think that's what DOE

specializes in and I think that's exactly what they're supposed to do. They're supposed to provide you with their best recommendations with us for finding that repository.

I think they have the ability to do that more so than anyone else does. I think they should, and I think they would be that resource. I think they provide a lot to the tribe's view, and I think they do their best to try to facilitate that trust obligation. I think it can grow as technology grows.

I think as a tribal government, as we grew, so did our need for them to communicate back and forth. As we strengthened in our government system, we realized there's a lot of things that we weren't getting because we didn't ask for it.

I think that's what's happening now between the governments of the tribes as sovereigns, as federal trust agents. I think those things are happening now. I think that

it can be stronger. We want to be included, even though by law we should be and in policies they state to involve the tribes. I think it can grow and I think that's where it's going.

This is a testament to that relationship, having us here testifying in front of the Blue Ribbon Commission on exactly where we want to go. I think that the tribe's relationship with the Department of Energy can only grow stronger. I expect it to.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Jonathan Lash?

MEMBER LASH: One of the impressions that is very striking after spending even a morning on the Hanford site is, first of all, how long it takes to clean up problems that didn't take so long to create, and how much money it's taking.

Also, that we were looking at disposal technologies that may have seemed reasonable even 50 or 60 years ago and now seem unreasonable to us. And that knowledge

has advanced and surely will continue to advance quite quickly.

I'm wondering, you strongly recommended the creation of a deep geologic repository. It seems likely that, at the pace our country has been moving to do that, it will be decades again before such a repository is created. We'll again learn a great deal.

Are you comfortable with the idea that in the interim, until a repository is created, the cleanup process and the vitrification process are satisfactory, and that the wastes can remain at that site until a repository is available?

MR. BAPTISTE: I think the best way to answer that is, I think that's the best possible way to do it at this time with what technology allows us to operate under. So I think, of course, yes. We are comfortable because there's other technologies that we're seeing as not the best methodology to go about it. So I would think so.

I think that when politics plays with science, science always seems to be trumped by politics in the end. That's why it's pretty tough to find those solutions to the deep geologic repository.

But I think in the end, this is probably the best way to take care of it all. We wouldn't advocate for above ground. But we think that it will do until we can get something a lot better, and that's what we advocate for.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Are there further questions?

Mr. Baptiste, thank you very, very much.

MR. BAPTISTE: Thank you very much.

CHAIR HAMILTON: I think your predecessor, Warren Spencer, got off easy because he didn't have any questions at all. The Commissioners were just getting wound up, I believe.

MR. BAPTISTE: Well, I feel bad for the next tribal leader who's behind me here. You guys are warmed up.

Again, Qe'ci'yew'yew' for everything that you do. I want to leave you with this, that it's not just the tribe that we're worried about. It's our neighbors here, as well. It's the fish we consume, the levels of contamination that are consumed.

We talked about drinking water being at certain levels. Well, the water itself is way below that and the salmon that we eat are at that level. That's the contamination that we deal with, as well.

That's how much our involvement means to us; it's not just us. It's the community members and it's the Northwest itself. We sit in the same boat and we're all together in this one.

Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Baptiste. The next speaker will be

Stuart Harris, Director of Department of Science and Engineering, speaking on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

Mr. Harris?

Is he here?

Yes, please. Thank you very much for appearing, Mr. Harris. You may proceed.

MR. HARRIS: I'm trying to see who's talking. Who's talking? I didn't see you talking.

CHAIR HAMILTON: You'll want to speak right into that microphone. It's a sensitive microphone but you have to talk right into it.

MR. HARRIS: I'll do my best.

CHAIR HAMILTON: I know you will.

MR. HARRIS: Thank you for the opportunity. I appreciate you guys traveling all over and doing this.

(Non-English language spoken.)

My name is Stuart Harris. I'm the

Director of the Department of Science and Engineering for the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

I'd like to welcome you to the homelands of my people. The boundary of our ancestral lands goes up from the confluence of the Columbia and the Snake to the western bank, all the way to Priest Rapids, and then south to Lalique to Prosser, thus encompassing all of the Hanford lands.

Thus, our leaders have expressed to me that when I'm here to talk to you in the most strongest of terms that they are very concerned about the high-level nuclear waste be consolidated and immobilized via vitrification and isolated in some deep geologic repository until the material is rendered neutral.

Any waste that remains at Hanford must be completely characterized and isolated from the environment as much as possible.

I would like to ask you a

question. Is it high-level waste no matter where it is located, whether it is in a tank or in the soil beneath the tank?

America made it and you are charged with investigating solutions. I challenge you to take full responsibility for your decisions, for your outcomes here because countless generations will be living with the consequences.

Many people won't remember your names in 1,000 years, but they will know what you have decided. In my oral tradition, people do remember names. They remember names for a very long time.

We've lived here for 10,000 years or longer. We've paid for, in blood, the right to retain our treaty-reserved rights throughout our homeland, including these Hanford lands.

The CTUIR oral teachings have accumulated the wisdom to sustain themselves through flood, famine, and strife. My

ancestors left me the legacy of a rich language, art and exquisite environmental knowledge that has become stable and rational.

Yet unless in one generation, Hanford has become so contaminated that my people will be living with the contaminated consequences for the next 10,000 years or longer, Hanford and its legacy will be added to the CTUIR storehouse of environmental teachings.

I can only hope that the teachings don't evolve into a warning to stay away forever due to contamination. And I can only hope that the rich aquatic life in the river and the salmon upon which we depend do not become mere memories.

I personally, with my work that I've been working on, don't want to be blamed for making the mistake of not cleaning up this site. Our people remember things like that.

The CTUIR is also a natural resource trustee of all the Hanford natural

resources. My ancestors managed the natural resources responsibly for that long and I intend to pass that responsibility on to my children.

The CTUIR's policy and end-state vision for Hanford is that Hanford should be cleaned, closed and fully restored. This means that all the resources should be clean enough to safely use for traditional activities and life-ways, restored to baseline conditions to support our rights and resources, protected from most development and accessible to tribal members for traditional uses.

I understand, after working in this nuclear field since 1993, that the United States urgently needs one, or probably more, deep geologic repositories for high-level radioactive waste, TRU waste, both defense and civilian.

The reclassification of salt cake as low-activity waste and the blending of

different levels to dilute radioactivity doesn't change the origin of the waste. It is still classified as high-level waste and it requires geologic disposal. It cannot be left at Hanford.

DOE is legally required to retrieve tank waste, whether it is in or out of the tanks, and remediate the entire site. Enforceable milestones have set the schedule and NRC requirements mandate that high-level waste will be disposed of in deep geologic repositories. There are no waivers or shortcuts on either aspect.

Without Yucca Mountain or a suitable alternative that is ready fairly soon, DOE will not be able to meet its legal obligations.

Interim safe storage is an option that may be required but it entails additional mitigation obligations to account for the continued disproportionate burden that my people bear as long as they can't access their

natural resources safely or effectively, or allowing the CTUIR to build and manage the storage sheds and have some economic opportunity as well as everybody else.

The continued storage of commercial reactor fuel in pools is not a good idea for several reasons that include degradation of the cladding and fuel rod assemblies, as what happened in the K-basins; the cost of the continued security; the lack of -- this is an important part, I thought -- the lack of a nationally standardized infrastructure, which leads to widely different cost estimates; and, at Hanford, proximity of the storage pools to the Columbia River.

The nation has invested a lot -- and it's a boat-load of money -- in the mining, processing, and fabrication of fuel rods.

In Europe they are reprocessed without generating large amounts of liquid

waste, and 92 percent of each fuel rod assembly is reused. The liquid waste is all vitrified and stored above ground as high-level waste in dry cask storage. The cladding is crushed or minimized and stored in low-level vaults.

I'm going to go to capping. Capping high-level waste in tanks or in the ground is illegal and wrong. The nation and our future cannot preclude the option of digging up and soil-washing the Earth.

If the current waste inventory is left as it is, a huge amount will reach the river. According to DOE's own estimates, the dissolved nuclear fuel contaminants from the BBXBY leak alone are moving at a quarter-mile a year and they're only 5 miles from the river.

The nuclear and chemical hazard will last for tens of thousands of years. Pump-and-treat remediation, chemical stabilization, biologic treatments -- they're

only short-sighted. The only true and permanent solution is to dig up the waste and immobilize it using vitrification and then isolating it in a deep geologic repository.

The current vitrification plans, we believe, are not sufficient for all of the high-level waste at Hanford.

The entire country benefited from the Manhattan Project. Don't impose eternal burdens on our tribal government.

There must be equity between the cost of building the nuclear industry and the people who have born and will bear the burden of being exposed to products of the nuclear genie -- both on the front end, mining, and the back end, the perpetual legacy of management and stewardship -- when we're not the decision makers.

Tribes are not only distinct governments. Our lifestyles are so tightly intertwined with the environment and all the natural resources, that any residual

contamination at Hanford has a greater impact on our health and culture than on any other local community.

We use the resources for food, medicines and materials. We use the groundwater for drinking and in our sweat lodges.

Our entire natural law includes aspects of the landscape, the air, the light, and the water. Our law teaches our people how to talk, how to dress and respect each other, take care of the Earth, and manage our daily affairs. Thus, we're always affected to a greater degree by exposure to contamination and by loss of access to our lands and resources.

Because my people are the ones who will bear the disproportionate impacts of any residual materials, the CTUIR should be afforded the opportunity to be a significant part of the solution, including having a seat on this Blue Ribbon panel.

True life-cycle costs of leaving waste at Hanford have not been evaluated. As I have explained, the impacts will be affecting my offspring for many, many generations. These costs must be included in the life-cycle risk profile. Don't overestimate or overstate the benefits of jobs. Don't underestimate the cost.

I'd like to remind the Blue Ribbon panel that Hanford was rejected as a viable geologic repository during the Basalt Waste Isolation Project, or BWIP.

I've been asked to address some specific questions. How should the US go about developing one or more disposal sites? First and foremost --

CHAIR HAMILTON: Mr. Harris, I'll have to ask you to begin to wrap up your statement, if you would, please.

MR. HARRIS: I'm right there. I'm with you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: I'm sorry?

MR. HARRIS: I'm right there with you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. HARRIS: Would you like me to finish?

CHAIR HAMILTON: If you want to make a further sentence or two.

MR. HARRIS: Sure. I'd love to.

The site for a deep geologic repository has to be crystalline basement rock. Any siting needs to be in the representation of the people. The local governments have to be included. The organization that manages it has to be government.

We'd like to be a partner to the solution. Our people are businessmen and we'd like to be a partner to any business that comes about building a repository or building an interim safe storage place. As we're going to be the stewards of this land, we'd like to

be there in the future for the cleanup as a solution.

CHAIR HAMILTON: All right. Thank you very, very much, Mr. Harris. Thank you for reminding this Commission of its responsibility in a very eloquent way.

I appreciated your statement of the end-state vision, as well as the emphasis you put upon the burden that your own people will bear if this problem is not resolved.

Are there questions from the Commissioners?

Richard?

MEMBER MESERVE: Mr. Harris, thank you very much for your statement.

In the course of your comments, you indicated that you had concerns about the adequacy of the vitrification processes that are now underway at Hanford. I'm curious as to what specifically you are concerned about.

MR. HARRIS: Specifically, I've visited other vitrification sites in

Sellafield and in Georgia. Typically, the problems occur with the change-out of the melters and the secondary waste that goes with that. There's always more waste than you calculate and here doesn't seem to be enough redundancy built into the system in case it fails. It's a nice system. We could use two.

CHAIR HAMILTON: All right. Further questions?

Ernie?

MEMBER MONIZ: Yes. Mr. Harris, thank you. As you said, you're Director of the Department of Science and Engineering. I think we've had a lot of discussion about the technologies of cleanup, vitrification, et cetera.

But I'm indebted to the tribes here since when I came here in 1998, when I was with the Department of Energy, it was the tribes who were the strongest supporters of a science program that could guide long-term decisions. This is 12 years later.

I'm wondering, how do you evaluate the status of the science program that can understand, for example, transport of radionuclides to the Columbia River; understanding the science in ways that can really guide long-term decisions for really complete cleanup?

MR. HARRIS: I appreciate the question. The science that we've observed is sound. It seems to be well thought out. It's the management of the science information that seems to be the problem.

We have compartmentalized management systems that take the science and decide they want to replicate it and try something from their own shop. Integration of the management systems that deal with the science of the movement, migration or characterization of the waste seems to be the problem.

It's very -- I appreciate the work that the people are doing here. We're very

supportive of it. It's the management or like the previous speaker had said, Brooklyn, it's the politics that get involved with it.

Money shouldn't be an issue. We have some of the greatest minds in the whole world working on this.

My people, they look to what we do and they appreciate it because it's very complicated and very difficult. But one thing that they do know is that, after all these years we've been working on it, and we've got the easy stuff cleaned up, the really hard decisions are coming right now, the really, really hard ones. And people are going to have to make those decisions.

I believe the Department of Energy has done a very good job in promoting good science here at the site. Like I said, though, it's the management of the information.

MEMBER MONIZ: Okay. Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Any other

questions?

Thank you very much, Mr. Harris, for your contribution to the Commission. We appreciate it.

MR. HARRIS: Well, I appreciate it. Say hello to your boss when you get back.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Okay. The next speaker will be Alyssa Buck, the leader of the Wanapum tribe.

Is she here, please?

Thank you very much for joining us this afternoon. We appreciate it. You may proceed.

MS. BUCK: Okay. Hello. My name is Alyssa Buck and I represent the Wanapum.

I'd like to welcome each and every one of you and welcome the Blue Ribbon Commission here to our homelands. On behalf of the Wanapum elder and the Wanapum community, we welcome each of you.

We are an American Indian community maintaining and exercising our

aboriginal rights. We understand the need for renewable energy.

Before the Columbia, there was Che Wana. Wanapum, which means river people are part of the river and the land through which it flows. We are part of the people who lived here and those who continue to live along the river's shores.

The Columbia is the river of life. The Priest Rapids Wanapum people have been supported by the river's bounties for thousands of years.

Teachings of the Wanapum tell all who will listen to be responsible to the land, to the creatures that live within the water and on the land, to the ancestors that are buried in the land and to those who have not yet been born. The Wanapum are the caretakers responsible for the land and passing on the teachings of the natural world to the next generation.

The Priest Rapids Wanapum live on

the Columbia River. It has been our home from time immemorial. As Indian people, we were put here to protect and preserve the land and river for ourselves, our children and those not yet born.

As spiritual people, the Priest Rapids Wanapum continue to practice our religion in friendly understanding and respect for all people and things.

Through strenuous and prudent efforts, the Wanapum have successfully built relationships with federal, state and local agencies, including Department of Energy. The respect, trust and mutual understanding that results from these relationships allow the Wanapum to actively participate in decision-making processes that affect our responsibilities to care for all things put here by the Creator.

The Wanapum have made their home along the Columbia River in an area known as Hanford. It became a central location for us

because the land and river provided everything needed to live life.

The Priest Rapids Wanapum experience various impositions on their land. The construction of the Hanford plutonium plant and the US Army training center took nearly 1,000 square miles of Wanapum land, but we continue to maintain and exercise our aboriginal rights.

We assume that all Hanford will eventually be restored and protected. With that, we do understand the need for renewable energy.

That's it.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Thank you very much. And thank you for the emphasis you placed on a fair process as we deliberate on the management of waste disposal. You've opened our eyes to that as a very important part of our deliberation. We thank you for that.

Are there other questions from the

Commissioners?

MEMBER SHARP: Mr. Chairman?

CHAIR HAMILTON: Phil?

MEMBER SHARP: Yes. I just wanted to say, if anything comes through strongly, both from the testimony now and what we saw today in our interaction with the representatives of the tribes, it's how much this country would have benefited if we had had their engagement and their values in the management of these systems in the early years.

It's quite understandable that, for World War II purposes, quick decisions were made. What is not so understandable and many of us have difficulty with is, after the war and 20 years later, why actions were not taken in a more timely fashion, or at least, a mind-set seemed to be in place that did not recognize the burden that we were placing on the land, the water, the air and the people of the area.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Thank you very much. Any further questions?

Thank you, Ms. Buck. We appreciate it.

MS. BUCK: Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: We're scheduled for a break now but we've been moving along at a good pace. If it's all right with the Commissioners, I'll go ahead and call the Oregon Department of Energy if they're here, Mr. Ken Niles, and we'll take that in before the break.

Is Mr. Niles here?

Thank you very much, Mr. Niles.

He represents the Oregon Department of Energy. He is with us this morning. We're delighted to have you here, sir. You may proceed.

MR. NILES: Thank you very much, Chairman Hamilton, Chairman Scowcroft, distinguished members of the Commission. Good afternoon and welcome to the Pacific

Northwest. Thank you for the opportunity to present the state of Oregon's perspectives on several issues which involve the work of the Commission.

Again, I'm Ken Niles. I'm the Nuclear Safety Division Administrator for the Oregon Department of Energy. I'm here on behalf of Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski. Oregon is very much impacted by nuclear waste generation, storage, transportation and disposal, so your deliberations and your work are important to us.

I'm sure your tour of the Hanford site this morning was illuminating. The extent and complexity of the generation of waste that occurred at Hanford is overwhelming.

Although a major cleanup effort is underway, as you are well aware, to try and address Hanford's waste, that waste and the risk it presents are a legacy that Oregon and all other Pacific Northwest residents will

face for many generations to come.

Oregon is only a few miles downriver from the Columbia River and potentially impacted by contaminants that get into the Columbia River.

Our involvement in Hanford began back in the 1980s, in large part because at that time, the federal government was examining Hanford as a potential high-level nuclear waste repository.

By the time that project was canceled, details of the extent of the contamination to the soil and groundwater were finally public knowledge and we moved to an active oversight role of the Hanford cleanup.

While our primary focus is the Hanford site itself, Oregon has additional concerns regarding nuclear waste. The state of Oregon provides the primary transportation corridor to and from the Hanford site.

Waste shipments traveling to and from Hanford typically travel over 200 miles

of Oregon interstate, much of which is subject to unpredictable and severe winter weather conditions. Through the years, we've gained extensive experience and insight into safe management of radioactive waste shipments traveling through our state.

Also, Oregon is home to the former Trojan Nuclear Power Plant, where 791 irradiated fuel assemblies are being indefinitely stored in 34 dry storage containers. As you well know, that spent fuel is currently stranded with no place to go.

With all that in mind, there's three points I wish to raise with the Commission. First and foremost is that the Hanford site is not an appropriate location to take on any additional waste storage, waste disposal, or waste generation missions. We're more than 20 years into a cleanup that now looks as though it's going to stretch to 65 or 70 years by the time it's all complete.

Cleanup at Hanford is already

difficult enough without adding additional complexity of storing spent fuel from commercial nuclear reactors or high-level waste or spent fuel of other US Department of Energy sites.

A Draft Environmental Impact Statement was released late last year by the US Department of Energy and it indicated that the planned cleanup will not be sufficient to eliminate long-term risks.

Risks from existing waste in the soil are expected to recontaminate the groundwater over and over again for a period of thousands of years, resulting in unacceptable human and environmental risks at the Columbia River shoreline for several thousand years.

The focus at Hanford needs to remain fully on completing this cleanup. We do not need the added distractions of a new mission of storage or reprocessing or any other distraction that we've had to face off

and on, at least proposed to us, over the past 20 years.

Proposals have drawn very strong opposition from throughout the region. We understand there is support for consolidated storage as an intermediate-term solution and it may well be a good idea to pursue, but Hanford is not an appropriate location to host such a storage facility.

My second point is that any solution to our high-level waste problem must take into consideration the transportation implications.

The state of Oregon long ago accepted as policy that radioactive materials, even highly radioactive ones such as spent fuel, can be transported safely. But to help ensure that safety and to garner public acceptance, the development of a transportation program of this scale has to closely involve the states along the transportation routes and needs to incorporate

above-regulatory standards to minimize the likelihood and severity of an accident.

Oregon has worked closely with other western states and with the US Department of Energy to develop and implement a comprehensive transportation safety program for the shipment of transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant. That program has been highly successful and generally well received by the public.

It has succeeded in large part for a couple of reasons. One, because the federal government recognized that it needed the states as partners and it needed to adopt a number of common-sense elements that go well beyond the regulatory requirements. We would need something on that same manner for any transportation of spent fuel on a wide-scale basis.

The WIPP program has seen an 11-year record: more than 8,000 shipments, more than 10 million miles of safe transportation

and only a handful of very minor incidents.

One of the issues we learned when working with the US Department of Energy and other western states, as well as other states around the nation, for the past 25 years on transportation planning, is that a major radioactive material transportation safety program cannot be successfully developed and implemented over a short period of time. It will take years to develop a national transportation program that can support consolidation, storage, disposal or reprocessing.

The Western Governors Association has passed a number of policy resolutions over the years to deal with high-level waste storage, disposal and transportation.

The WGA Policy Resolution 08-6, which focuses on transportation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level waste, states that analysis by an experience of western states show that adequate preparations to accommodate

large-scale shipments require at least 3 years following the designation of routes and shipping modes, which can be a lengthy process on its own and a process which the Department of Energy never fulfilled for Yucca Mountain. So please, don't underestimate the amount of time that will be necessary with the transportation planning process and all that it encompasses.

Our third point is a request for the Commission to look for ways in which to deal with the waste that's out there in perhaps more manageable pieces, to look at it in smaller chunks, if you will.

We know, for instance, there's already been a mention by the US Department of Energy and others that defense high-level waste should be dealt with separately from commercial spent nuclear fuel.

Clearly, the vitrified high-level waste that we hoped to see at Hanford in a decade or more has no value and no purpose,

for example, as new fuel. The discussion and the examination of reprocessing is not something that encompasses the Department of Energy's waste. Some type of permanent geologic disposal will be necessary for at least that portion of the waste stream that's already out there.

Another piece of the pie that you might look at separately could be the commercial spent fuel that resides at shut-down and decommissioned reactors throughout the nation right now. If consolidated, interim storage is something that's worth looking at, perhaps these shut-down reactors do offer a limited known quantity of waste. Perhaps that could be the amount of waste that could be brought to try out that process.

Removing it from the reactor sites would eliminate those sites as potential safety or security risks and would also allow reuse of those sites.

The Western Governors also weighed

in on this issue of interim storage, approached it from the standpoint of state and local buy-in.

Policy Resolution No. 09-5 states that in the event that centralized interim storage, either private or federal, is deemed necessary, no such facility, whether publicly or privately owned, shall be located within the geographic boundaries of a western state without the written consent of the governor. That's the Western Governors' position on that issue.

That concludes my formal comments. Thank you, again, for coming to the Pacific Northwest to hear a variety of different local and regional perspectives.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Mr. Niles, we thank you very much for your very concise and precise presentation. The Commission would certainly want to extend our thanks to the Governor of Oregon for your participation this afternoon.

We have certainly noted your emphasis on the transportation policy and likewise, not wanting to add any additional waste to Hanford. So thank you for your testimony.

Do we have questions?

Phil?

MEMBER SHARP: Yes, Mr. Chairman.

I particularly appreciate your focus on the transportation. I just wanted to follow up. Your point about good planning and the success of WIPP are very useful.

I wonder, given the experience in Oregon with the transportation through there, whether there or anywhere else, we have had accidents? And more importantly, have we had accidents in which radionuclides were released into the environment?

I got from you a high confidence level in doing transportation as long as you do it well planned and do it right. Am I correct in that?

MR. NILES: We do have confidence in the transportation safety program. There's certainly a lot of safety inherent within the shipping containers themselves. The way in which radioactive materials are transported is the level of hazard subsequently determines the amount of shipping robustness of the containers.

We have seen, certainly with radioactive materials, shipments around the nation over many years, we have had some fairly severe accidents, but not with a release of highly radioactive materials. The releases that have occurred have been because the hazard of those materials was such that it did not require robust packaging.

What we've seen with the WIPP transportation program is that the accidents have been caused by mistakes by other drivers. We've had a couple of drunk drivers who have rear-ended the WIPP transportation vehicle. We've had cars coming off the entrance ramps

and sideswiping them.

But it really is based upon some very common-sense principles that I think are sometimes overlooked when you look at the whole WIPP transportation program. A common-sense way to reduce the likelihood of an accident is to have very good drivers driving very well maintained trucks, and not putting them in a bad situation of bad weather and road conditions.

Those are very common-sense things. And those are built into the WIPP transportation program with very strict requirements for the drivers, for the carriers, for the inspections and protocols to keep them off the road.

We're proud of the program that's been developed. From a state perspective, we certainly expect the same or more for any high-level waste shipping campaign to come.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Chuck?

MEMBER HAGEL: Thank you.

Mr. Niles, thank you. I appreciated your comments this morning on the bus, as well.

I want to address the disposal issue. Last week, the Disposal Subcommittee heard from the Western Governors Association, among other individuals and associations who shared their view, about the disposal issue.

If I understood what you said on that issue, and if I could ask you to maybe go a little deeper into the disposal repository issue -- if I got it right, you were suggesting that, in your opinion, our country would require a permanent disposal repository. If that's true or not true, I'd like you to go down a little deeper on that point.

And then, share with this Commission your thoughts based on your experience and knowledge, especially of the Hanford situation, what should be the requirements that we are looking at, recognizing that we're not a siting

commission, but we do have some significant responsibilities to address that issue. And obviously, in the end it's a rather significant part of the equation and whatever decisions that are eventually made, not just regarding Hanford but the nuclear cycle.

Thank you.

MR. NILES: Sure. To the first part of that, in terms of Oregon's decision on geologic disposal, quite frankly it is an issue that as a state, we have not weighed heavily in one way or another beyond the support of and approval of Western Governors Association resolutions over the years which had advocated for deep geologic disposal.

So from the perspective of signing on to these resolutions, Oregon has supported and does continue to support deep geologic disposal.

In terms of looking at the waste, and at Hanford especially, it's a very complicated situation as some of you probably

for the first time today at Hanford began to realize what's going on there.

The focus at Hanford has had to be and continues to be stabilizing the waste to get it into a form where it would be safe for deep geologic disposal, if that's what were to happen.

It took more than 10 years just to stabilize the spent nuclear fuel that was stored a quarter-mile from the Columbia River. When cleanup began in 1989, it was envisioned that at that time we were 10 years away from vitrification. Well, we're 20 years later and we're still 10 years away from vitrification.

The focus here, I think, needs to remain on those next steps of stabilizing those wastes.

At the same time, it does cause issues in terms of if they're -- as you heard on the tour this morning, if you're going to vitrify the waste at Hanford you have to make some assumptions into what type of performance

it may need to meet in a geologic repository. So there are decisions that are having to be made now without necessarily knowing the end game.

Likewise are issues related to storage of the vitrified canisters once the vitrification plant begins to produce those. You saw the canister storage building which has some limited room for canisters. What's the next step if there are additional canisters and still no place to take them?

The eventual disposal issues, I think, at Hanford are very important. But from our perspective, those more near-term priorities are much more important for us: getting the waste out of the tanks, getting it vitrified. That is our -- I won't say full focus, but it overrides issues in terms of trying to figure out where that will go eventually from Hanford.

I hope I answered your questions.

MEMBER HAGEL: Do you believe that

a permanent disposal repository is going to be required?

MR. NILES: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Jonathan?

MEMBER LASH: Earlier in your testimony you said that it's the position of the Western Governors that no facility should be located in the state without the written consent of the Governor. That's understandable.

In fact, we are learning that in every country that has moved successfully forward with a siting process, that process has been more the negotiation of a contract between a national need and a community's needs, rather than the imposition of a responsibility.

I'm interested whether you have thoughts about how the relationship would work between a state negotiating whether it was willing to have a facility, communities

stepping forward and saying whether they were willing to have a facility, and the federal government. How should that work; should the state have the full responsibility; should both the community and the state be engaged?

MR. NILES: Well, I think if I had the real answer that would resolve it we'd take a giant leap forward, because I don't have that. We've certainly not had a great experience in voluntary siting here in the United States.

Going back to the days with the Nuclear Waste Negotiator, we had a Native American tribe on the Oregon-Nevada border that was into the first two phases of examination. There was resistance at the state level, as well.

But there was resistance not just because of that idea. When you looked at the site there just was not an easy way to get there. And it just did not make sense as a place to try and move waste from throughout

the nation.

I understand that one of your meetings may in Carlsbad, that you're going to be perhaps talking with the folks in WIPP. I guess I would suggest that I hope those folks there who do have a successfully sited repository, despite some opposition within the state -- I hope they can have some better lessons for you than I can provide to you.

I do think the state needs to be involved, absolutely. But the community is certainly where the impacts would be and needs to have a role, as well.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Okay. Further questions?

Our time is fairly limited. We'll recognize the three Commissioners and ask them to be quite brief. Ernie and then Allison and then Per.

Ernie?

MEMBER MONIZ: I'll just return to the transportation issue. This is a bigger

question than Oregon.

There was a National Academy report a few years ago that suggested that, when it came to the logistics of moving 60,000 tons or more of spent fuel and high-level waste, that perhaps a different organizational structure outside the government should be considered.

Do you have any views on that?

MR. NILES: You know, I would throw out the WIPP transportation program and its development as the model, and the way in which that was done -- which was a very cooperative effort between western states and the US Department of Energy, later signed on by other states throughout the nation -- as really the model that we would like to see happen.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Okay. Allison?

MEMBER MONIZ: With DOE?

MR. NILES: Yes, with DOE.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Thanks. Based

on your considerable experience, I'm interested to know what you think would be the right institution to manage a repository and site a repository.

MR. NILES: I'm afraid I don't have a good answer to give you. As I've mentioned, we have not gotten heavily into the repository aspect of things. Our focus has been primarily on Hanford and on the transportation aspect of it. So I would say I do not have the direct experience to help with that question.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Final question, Per.

MEMBER PETERSON: Yes. Thank you, Mr. Niles. I took extensive notes because there's just a long list of insights in what you had to say to us. I think that that is something that, in general, we've been finding whenever we talk to people who've worked with transport and other issues at the state level. That means, of course, that that knowledge is

very important to us.

I have a question. You noted the idea that perhaps one should start with spent fuel from decommissioned reactor sites so that you learn about transportation at smaller scale before going forward. You also mentioned potentially working on defense high-level waste as being a priority.

I'd like to clarify. Did you mean, have complete independence from the civil or did you mean start with that first to gain experience that you could then use in working with disposal of civil materials?

MR. NILES: It could potentially be both. It could be either starting with it with the intent of moving on to a same facility or a separate facility.

The idea being that there seems to be a pause as we look at the idea of reprocessing, which is obviously the commercial waste stream and we don't have a need to pause on defense high-level waste

because there isn't a use for that in the future.

So if it was addressed separately entirely, with a separate geologic facility, or if that just became the first step, I think either would be something we would like to see happen.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Mr. Niles, we thank you very much for your statement and your response to questions.

The Commission now will take a break of 15 to 20 minutes. When we return we'll have Susan Leckband from the Hanford Advisory Board.

We stand in recess.

(Whereupon, the above-entitled matter went of the record at 2:53 p.m. and resumed at 3:14 p.m.)

CHAIR HAMILTON: The Commission will resume its sitting. We'll hear now from Susan Leckband, who is the Chair of the Hanford Advisory Board.

Ms. Leckband, would you come forward, please? Thank you. We were very pleased to have you this morning on our tour and thank you very much for coming this afternoon.

You may proceed.

MS. LECKBAND: Thank you. And thank you so much for offering me the opportunity to come and speak for the HAB regarding the high-level waste question.

The Hanford Advisory Board is a 31-seat board made up of different interests: local government, the Hanford workforce, the tribes, environmental and economic interest groups and members of the public at large.

We provide advice and recommendations to the tri-party agencies. At this present time -- I didn't bring my calculator -- there are between 500 and 800 years of direct Hanford experience sitting on this volunteer board.

The Hanford site's place in

history is well documented, from the beginnings of the Manhattan Project through the Cold War and now in terms of environmental remediation.

In addition to huge nuclear processing canyon facilities and smaller supporting buildings, there are miles of trenches, ditches, ponds, cribs, plus underground tanks and miles of piping containing nuclear wastes from past operations.

These wastes require remediation actions in many forms from simple demolition to retrieval, treatment and repackaging for final disposal, both on and off the Hanford site.

The waste burden that will be left on the Hanford site when remediation actions are complete is huge. This is a message you have heard before.

Today, we are in the midst of construction. But this time the focus is on

building a waste treatment plant that will convert approximately 50 million gallons of nuclear waste into a more stable form, into glass, so it can be permanently disposed in a national repository. That's the plan, to take the canisters of vitrified high-level waste created by the WTP and dispose of them off the site.

You'll notice I use the collective we when describing what is currently happening at Hanford. The public has become involved, not only as observers, but participants in the cleanup decisions being made.

We, the Hanford Advisory Board, are part of that stakeholder segment of the public who follow Hanford cleanup very closely and provide advice -- to this date, more than 225 pieces of advice -- comments, and recommendations and engage in dialogue with the Department of Energy and the federal and state regulators on a wide spectrum of Hanford cleanup issues and decisions.

We recognize the Hanford cleanup race is not a sprint; it's a marathon.

We are called stakeholders because we have a stake in the outcome. We live here. We breathe the air here. We use the water resources of the Columbia River and future generations of our families will live here. The health and livelihoods of citizens of the Pacific Northwest for generations to come may be impacted if the cleanup is not adequate.

The Hanford Advisory Board is concerned that Hanford will become a de facto high-level waste repository for the vitrified waste that will be the product of the waste treatment plant currently under construction.

I have focused on this one particular item, but please, make no mistake. The Hanford Advisory Board has provided a plethora of advice, ranging from simple retrieval and disposal of on-site waste to worker issues in health and safety. But I particularly wanted to concentrate on the

high-level waste repository because we just recently issued a piece of advice.

Our board operates by consensus. So imagine all of you sitting around the table, plus about 20 more, with varying interests, coming to agreement on a piece of advice. This is no small feat. And it's a real testimony to those people's engagement in Hanford cleanup.

We're concerned that if we become a high-level waste repository in the interim, there will be potential impacts to the vadose-zone, groundwater and the Columbia River, that there will be a financial burden in the need to build short and/or long-term high-level storage capacity. Even interim high-level storage could last for decades. Will that money be taken away from cleanup to construct and maintain these long-term storage or interim storage facilities?

We're also very distressed about the potential for the increased total waste

load for the site with a very, very long radioactive half-life. Over time, the national will, along with funding to remove the high-level waste from Hanford to an off-site repository, may fade. As I said, interim can be a very long time.

Delays in identification of a national high-level repository could drive costly design changes that may be needed to match the vitrified high-level canister specifications to a new or different repository waste acceptance criteria.

These are simply a few of the concerns we have regarding the high-level waste repository.

I'm going to close with one statement. We don't inherit this land; we borrow it from our children. I don't know the author of that statement, but that's very much what the Hanford Advisory Board feels.

Thank you for this opportunity.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Thank you very

much for your statement. Your emphasis on building consensus in the community certainly needs to be commended. We thank you for that.

Are there questions from Commissioners?

Two here. Per and then Jonathan.

MEMBER PETERSON: Thank you for the comments and advice. I appreciate them. In particular, I think that we've learned a very important dimension of the problem, which is this question of waste acceptance criteria.

If I were to summarize, and then if you could tell me if I'm correct, the point is that this has a strong impact on what the composition is of the waste glass that needs to be made.

This needs to be done expeditiously because this is what controls the rate at which we can clean up the tanks, which are at risk of leaking. So it needs to be done expeditiously.

But this does mean that we have to

have some idea about waste acceptance criteria. And with uncertainty about what the geologic repository might be, it makes it difficult for us to come back and understand whether we have the correct waste acceptance criteria.

So if I'm summarizing this correctly, it means that we do need to look very carefully at the question of waste acceptance criteria, and make sure that that would not be an impediment to the future geologic disposal of the materials that will come out of the waste facilities here.

MS. LECKBAND: That's exactly right.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Jonathan?

MEMBER LASH: I liked your description of this process not being a sprint but a marathon. The same could be said about efforts to locate a long-term geologic repository.

I was interested in your

observations about why it takes 20 years to build a vitrification plant when other countries seem to get them in operation more quickly.

MS. LECKBAND: I believe it takes this length of time because there were two false starts in the beginning. There was the proposal to privatize the vitrification facility and that certainly was a failure. That takes a great deal of time.

We also have a very stringent regulatory process here.

I would also point to the fact that with the government funding on a cyclic basis, it makes it difficult to progress.

I can tell you for a fact -- I worked for one of the French companies. When they determined they were going to build a vitrification facility, they did all the designing upfront and then the government gave them all the money at once. There wasn't the constant struggle to make sure you had the

right amount of money and if you were going to get the funding this year or next year.

The politics was removed a bit from it. I think in many cases politics don't necessarily hasten the process.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Are there further questions?

MEMBER LASH: Will all our former members of Congress take that last comment into account; any defense?

MEMBER HAGEL: That's why we're former members.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Any further questions or snide comments?

MEMBER LASH: Touche.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Okay. Thank you, Jonathan.

Thank you very much.

MS. LECKBAND: Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: We appreciate it. Give our appreciation to the Board, as well.

MS. LECKBAND: Thank you very

much.

CHAIR HAMILTON: The next speaker is Carl Adrian, President/CEO of the Tri-City Development Council.

Mr. Adrian, thank you for coming this afternoon. You may proceed.

MR. ADRIAN: Thank you for having me.

Just an observation. My office is across the parking lot here and we have some fleece jackets over there. So if any of the Commission would need a jacket either this afternoon or tomorrow, let me know. We'd be happy to provide it.

Good afternoon. My name is Carl Adrian. As you said, I'm President and CEO of the Tri-City Development Council, also known as TRIDEC. We use a lot of acronyms in the community.

TRIDEC is the lead economic development organization for Benton and Franklin Counties. The organization was

created in 1963 and is designated by the US Department of Energy as the community reuse organization for the bi-county area.

TRIDEC has approximately 375 member companies, and contractual relationships with most of the units of local government in the area.

As a part of our broader economic development programs, TRIDEC has had a long history of interaction with Hanford. During the '60s, '70s, and '80s, TRIDEC advocated for additional missions and supported the construction of new nuclear power reactors, such as Columbia Generating Station which you visited this morning.

More recently, TRIDEC has been a leader in working with the Department of Energy and Congress to ensure adequate funding is available to clean up defense legacy waste at all the weapons-complex sites, and certainly -- especially -- Hanford.

Disposal of defense waste from the

various DOE sites represents a national ecosystem, where individual sites such as Hanford were designated for storage of specific types of waste. This Nuclear Policy Act ecosystem has been under way for 20 years.

So when Yucca Mountain was taken off the table, that certainly wasn't part of the deal, at least in our minds in the community. But it also upsets this entire ecosystem.

If high-level waste doesn't go to Yucca Mountain, then why should New Mexico take low-level and TRU waste, Idaho the nuclear navy waste, or Hanford the mixed waste? These are just three examples of what have turned into what we believe is a political house of cards for waste disposal.

Let me talk about some details with regard to Hanford. For 67 years our community -- along with other weapons-complex communities -- has supported national missions, first with World War II, then the

Cold War, and now with weapons-complex cleanup missions.

Hanford is getting cleaned up. In fact, by 2015 a 586-square-mile site will be focused on the Central Plateau, an area of approximately 75 square miles. So there will be a dramatic reduction in active footprint.

In this community and in some of the other weapons-complex communities, some of this excess land we believe can be turned into energy parks. And in our case, we believe that some of that energy park can be part of -- we hope can be part of -- replacing some of the 45,000 gallons of diesel fuel that would be burned at a waste treatment plant on a daily basis to make steam, and the 70 megawatts of electricity that are projected to be used at that facility.

So we believe we have an effort here to not only help the community but certainly help the nation, and certainly DOE.

The Waste Policy Act of 1982

established the need to identify the nation's waste repositories of high-level, mixed, low-level, and TRU waste.

Congressional amendments to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1987 designated Yucca Mountain as the nation's deep geologic high-level nuclear waste repository. It was supposed to be operational, as I'm sure you know, in 1998. That's been mentioned before.

Hanford is one of the few sites that have both weapons-complex with high-level waste and commercial spent nuclear fuel. This site has something close to 70 percent of the nation's high-level weapons-complex waste.

In addition, at Energy Northwest we have more than 560 tons of spent commercial nuclear fuel. And you heard from Oregon there's another 700 tons within probably 300 miles of here.

Although you will hear from others that Yucca Mountain does not have the capacity to hold all the nuclear waste, it can easily

and safely handle all of the nation's weapons-complex waste, and it should. We believe strongly that it should.

Let's talk about confidence in the process. I think the real challenge for the Blue Ribbon Commission is, how do you assure Tri-Cities residents, or residents of some of the other weapons-complex sites, that any solution you develop -- even if it's adopted and implemented -- will not be susceptible to the same political consequences and shenanigans, frankly, that Yucca Mountain has been subjected to.

Sound science, we believe, is very critical. It's interesting -- one reporter just recently in Seattle stated, or wrote, that the only science currently working relative to Yucca Mountain was political science. Having a degree in political science, I understand that process. But seriously, science and NRC licensing are critical to moving ahead with a solution to

the nuclear waste issue.

We have a situation where politics continues to get in the way of good science. As it's been mentioned, other nations such as France and even Japan have reprocessing and classification programs in place, and they are working.

There are also some national considerations that we believe are important. Any alternative site proposed by the Blue Ribbon Commission or any alternative process other than Yucca Mountain will require extensive study. And will cost at a minimum, probably an amount equal to what was already spent on Yucca, in the neighborhood of $10 billion.

Any alternative to Yucca will also set the final site selection back by years, probably decades. That's even if we decide to keep everything where it is currently.

This Blue Ribbon Commission, all of you, have a tremendous challenge and an

opportunity to move the nation's cleanup program and our nuclear program ahead. Your task becomes a little easier if you separate two decisions: what to do with the nation's weapon complex waste, and how to close the nuclear fuel cycle of the nation's commercial nuclear reactor programs?

First off, TRIDEC recommends we follow the law, and Yucca is the law for high-level waste.

We also feel that the nation needs to reprocess commercial spent nuclear fuel, closing the fuel cycle. Some of that reprocessing could be done at Hanford, although I'm not advocating that here today. But nuclear programs become nearly impossible if there's no solution to the high-level waste issue.

By the way, if nuclear-fuel -- if commercial waste was recycled, Yucca Mountain should be large enough to handle all the weapons-complex waste and the waste remaining

after processing of commercial spent fuel.

Even the energy park located on Hanford that could become available by 2015 becomes questionable if the waste issue is not solved, or at least there's a clear path forward. So we believe we can't move forward without you completing your work.

These last two items, reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel and an energy park, are tremendous economic development opportunities not just for this community but, I think, for the nation. So we really do await the outcome of your deliberations and the path forward that you may recommend. Again, we can't afford to wait another 10, 20, or 30 years to solve this predicament.

I understand that a number of you asked some questions on the tour this morning regarding energy parks. On behalf of TRIDEC, we would be happy, along with some of our partners at the other weapons-complex sites, to come and brief you at some point on the

status of those parks in the various communities. We make that commitment to you at this time.

That concludes my remarks.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Adrian. We thank you for your participation.

Are there questions from Members?

Brent?

CHAIR SCOWCROFT: Thank you very much, Mr. Adrian. I just wonder how your thoughts about future development at Hanford correspond to those of the Indian tribes' that we heard from earlier, who also claim some jurisdiction here.

Are you in agreement with them?

MR. ADRIAN: I don't view the community's thoughts as being radically different than that of the Native Americans.

There is a land use plan that was approved by DOE, I think back in the late '90s. It designates some 60 square miles for

potential industrial use and another 9,000 acres for research and development use.

The community believes, I will say, there are some parts of the site that should be open to public access. And not that they should be disturbed, but should be open for the public to be able to see. The top of Rattlesnake Mountain is one that I think is of much interest in the community, and the views that you can receive from there.

But again, I think the community in fact is beginning an effort later this summer and early fall, in conjunction with DOE, to really look at some of those long-term land use issues. We hope the Native Americans will be part of that discussion.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Any further questions?

Allison?

MEMBER MacFARLANE: One thing you said that I thought was right on was that one of the most important things is figuring out

how to ensure that the solutions we develop won't be subject to, as you called them, political shenanigans.

What's your recommendation?

MR. ADRIAN: I'm not sure what the answer to that is, other than it obviously has to be --

MEMBER MacFARLANE: But you're the political scientist.

(Laughter.)

MR. ADRIAN: Well, I'll go back to real science and say I think it has to be based on very solid science.

There was some discussion earlier about whether the states and the community should be involved and I think -- we believe strongly that wherever this is going to happen -- and we hope it still happens in Nevada -- that the state and the community need to be partners in that, and work together with any other groups, whether it be Native Americans or others, that may be involved in the

outcome.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Further questions?

Mr. Adrian, thank you very much. Please extend our thanks to the Council, as well.

MR. ADRIAN: Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: You are excused. We thank you for your appearance.

The next speaker is Gerald Pollett, the Executive Director of the Heart of America Northwest.

Mr. Pollett, we're very pleased to have you. You may proceed.

MR. POLLETT: Joining me today will be Sarah Minkler, one of seven university and regional law students interning with us this summer.

Could I have our PowerPoint put up?

Thank you, members of the Commission, for touring Hanford. On behalf of

our 16,000 members across the Northwest, thank you for touring and thank you for being here.

You have our detailed testimony. I'm going to present the summary of it and answer your questions. You have graphics, footnotes, etcetera in the background.

If I could go to the next slide?

Here you have what it is we're trying to protect out here in the Northwest, the Columbia River, running through Hanford from left to right for 50 miles.

Next slide?

Flowing through for 50 miles. And as we speak today, you have radioactive strontium-90 entering the river in seeps, measured at the shoreline wells at 1,500 times the drinking water standard.

I'd like to take a minute to have you think about what that means. The drinking water standard is set at a level at which one adult out of every 10,000 die of cancer. Children are three to ten times more

susceptible to cancer from the same dose.

As you've heard eloquently earlier today, there are tribes with treaty rights to live along and fish those 50 miles, and to use the resources, which includes the groundwater. Think about a 15 percent fatal cancer rate if you use that groundwater.

Next slide?

The first lesson that we hope you will take away from Hanford is, the 53 million gallons of liquid high-level nuclear waste sitting in the tanks are the result of reprocessing. Reprocessing equals liquid high-level nuclear waste.

There is no treatment plant that operates and is in-site. It is $8 billion over budget. It is still, and always seems to be, 8 or 10 years away from completion. It has massive challenges to work properly.

The proposals for reprocessing, including the Department of Energy's Draft GNEP EIS issued in December 2008, simply

avoided even calculating what the cost of reprocessing was, or what would happen with the wastes from reprocessing, other than to say shallow land burial. And if there's another lesson from Hanford, it's that shallow land burial is unacceptable.

Next slide, please.

Hanford's contamination from shallow land disposal is far above what anyone can view as acceptable. And the Energy Department -- driven by decisions to minimize the amounts of waste it wants to send to the hypothetical Yucca Mountain repository, and driven by decisions to avoid deep geologic repositories for other wastes -- proposes to leave vast quantities of waste in the ground and even in the bottom of the tanks.

We call the Energy Department's plan to cap 1,700 acres or more of central Hanford a coverup, not a cleanup plan.

Next slide?

This is from the Draft Tank-

Closure Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement released by the Energy Department last October. It shows its projection for uranium-238 in the groundwater 125 years from now, mostly due to the releases from residues from tanks, from discharges from the tank systems that would be capped and not cleaned up, and from the proposed landfills, including the one for the secondary wastes from vitrification and the wastes for where you put the melters, etcetera.

Next slide?

This is uranium in the groundwater in the year 3890. Think about what we are doing for future generations.

Next slide?

This is a chart from the EIS showing that the Energy Department's projection, for instance, for plutonium in the groundwater under the Central Plateau will grow to 160 times the drinking water standard in 1,000 years. And this is without adding

off-site waste.

Next slide?

This is iodine in the groundwater in approximately 2,000 years. The dark red is 50 times the drinking water standard. You see it heading towards the Columbia River as it slowly releases from the landfills and the residues that the Energy Department proposes to simply cap.

Sarah, do you want to talk about some of the implications of this for a moment?

MS. MINKLER: Good afternoon. My name is Sarah Minkler. I am one of several law students who has been working with Heart of America Northwest and Mr. Pollett.

Our main focus has been filing a complaint against DOE regarding one of their 2004 Records of Decision which designates the Hanford area as essentially a radioactive waste dump.

This decision basically says only that additional waste will be transported and

dumped at Hanford. It doesn't give us an opportunity to discuss whether this radioactive waste should even be shipped to Hanford.

I think that for future generations, my generation -- I see a few other younger faces in the crowd -- your children and grandchildren, it seems like a 125 years, several thousand years -- seems like a long time and it's very far out.

But it's our generation who are going to have to clean up Hanford, clean up the contamination. And I think that until we have a firm grip on what we obviously haven't cleaned up yet, before we have a firm grip on that, I don't think that it's responsible to ship additional waste into Hanford.

Thank you. And I'll turn it back over to Mr. Pollett.

MR. POLLETT: Thank you, Sarah.

Bob Apple, one of my board members and Spokane City Council member, asked me to

follow up on that by saying that the Commission might have the idea that storing additional waste or disposing of additional waste at Hanford, at a site with prevailing winds heading towards my city of Spokane, is appropriate. The people of Spokane don't think so.

In 1986, I wrote a statewide referendum for Hanford that stopped Hanford from simply being designated as the other Yucca Mountain finalist. And said, under the Nuclear Waste Policy Act, that any veto by the governor would be exercised by vote of the public.

A question was asked earlier about how you get community consensus. It is vital that the entire state be involved in the question of where you site a deep geologic repository.

And one of the other major take-aways -- if I can have the next slide -- let's go, jump ahead a few slides. Next slide, next

slide.

You need several deep geologic repositories. There is three times more plutonium in the soil at Hanford than the Energy Department has acknowledged. There is 16 times more plutonium and transuranic waste in the soil at Hanford than the Energy Department has -- in the contact plan at TRU -- it is planning to ship to WIPP.

Essentially, we need a repository for additional transuranic waste, Greater-Than-Class-C-Waste, which the Energy Department has another pending EIS proposing shallow landfill disposal of at Hanford or another site.

We need a repository for a significant quantity of the low-activity vitrified waste that cannot be buried in the landfills at Hanford without causing the damage you saw from radioactive iodine, technetium-99, etcetera, to the groundwater. The low-activity waste vitrified also releases

and contaminates our groundwater above standards for 10,000 years.

Long-term storage capacity for the vitrified waste is something that we've always expected to have to need at Hanford. It is not going to contaminate the groundwater. But we need to have a repository program that gets it right. We're not afraid of having the vitrified canisters stored here, but we are afraid of having vitrified low-activity waste buried and contaminating the groundwater.

Thank you very much. I'd be glad to answer your questions, and you have detailed comments distributed.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Thank you very much, Mr. Pollett, for a very thoughtful presentation.

Are there questions from Members?

Pete?

MEMBER DOMENICI: I just have a couple of questions. What is your organization?

MR. POLLETT: Heart of America Northwest. We are the region's oldest, largest public interest group working for the cleanup of Hanford, with 16,000 members across Washington and Oregon.

MEMBER DOMENICI: Are they against the proposals that DOE has for Hanford, or are they in favor of it, your 16,000 people?

MR. POLLETT: Well, we're against using Hanford as a national radioactive waste dump for the 3 million cubic feet of off-site waste that the Energy Department proposes to ship in.

We are against delaying emptying single-shell tanks through the year 2040. We believe it can be done faster.

We are for cleaning up. Our organization led the effort that ended the liquid waste discharges. And we spearheaded the effort to end the Energy Department from using unlined soil trenches at Hanford for disposal.

MEMBER DOMENICI: I know that you're very effective. You win them all.

I was wondering, do you work full-time for this organization?

MR. POLLETT: Yes, I do.

MEMBER DOMENICI: So you're on a salary that they pay you?

MR. POLLETT: That's right.

MEMBER DOMENICI: Is your salary a matter of public record?

MR. POLLETT: Well, I'd be glad --

MEMBER DOMENICI: Is it or not? I'm not going to investigate it.

MR. POLLETT: -- to tell you privately.

MEMBER DOMENICI: I didn't hear you.

MR. POLLETT: I'd be glad to tell you what my salary is without it being broadcast across the country.

MEMBER DOMENICI: You can tell me at the door. I'll be at this door over here.

MR. POLLETT: Let's just say my wife and I drive a 12 or 13-year old beat up station wagon, sir.

MEMBER DOMENICI: I'm just kidding. You don't know me very well.

MR. POLLETT: I earn a fraction of what the Energy Department people get paid.

MEMBER DOMENICI: You don't know me very well, so you interrupt me and things. That really is not nice.

MR. POLLETT: I'm sorry.

MEMBER DOMENICI: You just take your turn and I'll take mine. I'm a slow, easy-going guy.

You're a full-time employee. Would you say that you're charged with seeing to it that what you and your experts think should be the case is the case out at this reservation; is that the way you see your job?

MR. POLLETT: Our job is to use the Energy Department's own analyses and our independent analyses. We have three

hydrogeologists -- some of whom used to work on-site -- on our Board. We use those analyses to try to advocate for a cleanup that protects the Columbia River, protects the health of future generations, and is safe for the workforce.

MEMBER DOMENICI: One last question. Are there witnesses today from the area that have been opposed to permanentizing what we have out there?

We have used the words, "We want to follow good science." Would you say that is your mantra, too, that you want to follow good science?

MR. POLLETT: Well, I believe --

MEMBER DOMENICI: What is it with reference to science? How do you put science into this?

MR. POLLETT: I think good science would have us look for a deep geologic repository located in granite and --

MEMBER DOMENICI: No. No. I

don't want you to give a speech. I want to know whether you support the notion of good science having a big part in the decision making here.

MR. POLLETT: Absolutely. And I believe that everyone who you hear from, whether they agree with me or not, believes that they're advocating for good science.

MEMBER DOMENICI: I don't think you mentioned that in your comments. Did you?

MR. POLLETT: Well, I'm not sure.

MEMBER DOMENICI: You were too busy talking about what we shouldn't do to talk about what we should do, it seems to this Senator.

Having said that, I want to thank you for coming, and in particular thank the young lady for the time she puts in on this. I hope that you will look for all expert opinions on both sides of things, because America has a huge problem.

I will tell you, so you don't get

too worried about what we're going to decide, we don't have the authority to designate the sites for future waste disposals, either temporary or permanent. That's not within our charter.

So, as far as us designating it, you can rest assured that it was your testimony, young lady, that convinced us.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Any further questions?

MEMBER DOMENICI: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

CHAIR HAMILTON: All right. Allison?

MEMBER MacFARLANE: I'm interested in where your figures came from, the maps of the contamination.

MR. POLLETT: All the maps have the citations in our testimony that you should have in front of you or distributed to you. They are from the Draft Tank-Closure Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement --

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Okay. They're DOE?

MR. POLLETT: -- issued by U.S. DOE. Yes.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Okay.

MR. POLLETT: Yes.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: And -- so I understand the iodine-129 comes from the vitrified low-activity waste. Is that the main source?

MR. POLLETT: It is not the only source -- and I hope that the Department of Ecology will be speaking tomorrow about this -- it is not the only source. The off-site waste would contribute tremendously to it, as well.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: The off-site waste?

MR. POLLETT: The proposal to add 3 million cubic feet of mixed and low-level off-site waste.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Okay.

MR. POLLETT: But the impact to groundwater shown in the slide I showed was without the off-site waste added.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Okay.

MR. POLLETT: And the iodine and technetium-99 are very serious hitters for the groundwater.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: I know. What about the plutonium map that you showed, what's the source of the plutonium?

MR. POLLETT: The sources for the plutonium are myriad. We don't have a lot of time. But there is a lot in the tank discharges, a very significant amount in the deliberate -- remember, the tank wastes when they ran out of room they were discharged straight into the soil of --

MEMBER MacFARLANE: So those are the discharges that already happened?

MR. POLLETT: And there are 43 miles of unlined trenches with plutonium. There is the US Ecology site with plutonium.

The list goes on and on.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Okay. Any of it come from the tank heels?

MR. POLLETT: I don't know the extent of the percentage of that contribution from the tank heel. Someone else, perhaps from the U.S. DOE, can answer that. I don't think that it's very high from the tank heel.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Okay. Thanks.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Further questions?

Chuck?

MEMBER HAGEL: Mr. Chairman, thank you.

Thank you both for coming.

I did not read all of the information that you had forwarded to the Commission before we arrived. So the question I'm going to ask may well be answered in that information. But here's the question.

Have you submitted to DOE your organization's recommendations, specific

recommendations on what you believe should be done about Hanford today?

We are where we are. We have a problem. We all recognize that. We're not going to fix the problem without some answers. It's difficult. We have all these different dynamics of interest that are flowing through this issue, which we've heard from some today and we'll hear more tomorrow.

So the question is, have you sent a list of recommendations to the DOE on what you believe they should be doing today about unraveling all these problems?

MR. POLLETT: Extensively. Our comments on the Tank-Closure Waste Management EIS I think were 40-some odd pages.

We are a member of the Hanford Advisory Board, and our Chair spoke earlier about our consensus having issued, I think, 215 pieces of advice. And board members often joke that they can tell which advice I write because it's longer than the others.

So we have very extensively participated. And I have to say, we have enjoyed a very good relationship in terms of having good discussions with site management about those proposals.

MEMBER HAGEL: What has DOE's response been?

MR. POLLETT: Well, the Energy Department has a baseline for capping these discharged sites and the 43 miles of unlined trenches, instead of characterizing what is in them and retrieving as necessary.

I think you'll see that the state of Oregon, Heart of America Northwest, the tribes, and the Advisory Board have repeatedly said it is inappropriate to assume that you can just cap these vast areas at Hanford without examining what is in the trenches, what is in the discharge cribs -- cribs are the liquid waste discharge areas -- and ponds, and deciding after characterization what needs to be dug up and treated.

And a significant portion of it, we believe, needs to go to deep underground repositories.

MEMBER HAGEL: So you have recommended the actual implementation of different processes and procedures and policies in order to address this?

MR. POLLETT: Yes. And on tank wastes we have urged that -- we believe very strongly that we can retrieve single-shell tank wastes faster than 2040, which is the Energy Department's current proposal.

MEMBER HAGEL: May I just take advantage of one other quick question? I'm sorry to interrupt you but I know our time is short.

What did you mean by coverup? You say that the DOE -- it's not cleanup, it's coverup. What are they covering up?

MR. POLLETT: Well, literally, the Energy Department's proposal is not to look at what is in 43 miles -- 43 miles -- of

unlined ditches into which radioactive wastes were disposed 50 feet deep. It's a vast quantity of waste.

In order to examine what is in the liquid waste discharge sites on the Central Plateau along the river corridor, by contrast, under pressure from EPA, the state, and the public, the Energy Department agreed in the '90s to simply retrieve all those waste sites.

For the Central Plateau it is saying, "We are going to cover them, that is it. Without finding out what is under them, we are just going to cap them, cover them, abandon the waste underneath it." And the science is very clear that the waste will continue to move.

MEMBER HAGEL: Are you implying by coverup that they're hiding something, or is what you mean literally covering up?

MR. POLLETT: Literally.

MEMBER HAGEL: You don't mean they're hiding anything?

MR. POLLETT: Literally cover up.

I will say that we have recently had to appeal the RCRA permit sent by the Energy Department to the state where the Energy Department stamped Official Use Only on the maps of those low-level burial grounds, and said, "You can't see where they are," even though they're available online. So there are still problems with secrecy at the Hanford site.

The Energy Department, as you may know from the National Freedom of Information Coalition and journalist groups, has not been rated very highly in terms of meeting the President's openness directive.

Your Commission, I should say, has done a fabulous job in terms of transparency and openness. I appreciate that. Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Mr. Pollett, we thank you very much for your appearance. Thank you also to Sarah for appearing with you. We're very pleased to have you. Thank

you very much.

MR. POLLETT: Thank you all very much.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Our next speaker will be Vic Parrish from Energy Northwest. We learned this morning that Vic Parrish is retiring as of today as the CEO of Energy Northwest.

Vic, we certainly express our very best wishes to you in your retirement. We thank you for the contributions you have made. Thank you also for joining us all morning in our tour. We look forward now to your presentation.

MR. PARRISH: Thank you, Chairman Hamilton.

Chairman Hamilton and Scowcroft and distinguished members of the Commission, I am Vic Parrish. I am the Chief Executive Officer of Energy Northwest until close of business today.

I'd like to thank you for the

invitation to speak with you today on behalf of the commercial nuclear industry about the future of our nation's used nuclear fuel management policies and programs. We appreciate the opportunity to open an ongoing dialogue with the Commission as it carries out its mandate.

Energy Northwest owns and operates Columbia Generating Station nuclear power plant located in nearby Richland. Columbia has operated safely and reliably for more than 25 years. We are currently in the license renewal process with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to extend Columbia's operating license for another 20 years.

Since Columbia began operation in 1984, ratepayers have paid approximately $290 million to the Nuclear Waste Fund. Over $34 billion has been paid by electricity ratepayers nationwide since the fund started in 1982. These funds were for the federal program that was supposed to have begun

removing used fuel from commercial nuclear power plant sites more than 12 years ago.

During your stop at Columbia this morning you saw our used fuel storage area. It was built in 2001 to temporarily store our used fuel because of the delay in opening a national repository.

This fuel is stored in a dry configuration in above-ground stainless steel and concrete cast, and all of it can remain stored in a safe and secure manner for decades.

It will not delay decisions to bring future commercial nuclear plants online. A decade's more delay is not in the best interest of our nation's ratepayers and our independent energy future.

As nuclear power grows to play a larger role in supplying clean power for America's increasing energy needs, we look forward to the vital work of this Commission to recommend policies and programs that will

manage this commercial used fuel as required by the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982.

In all the work that you do as a part of this Commission, public trust and confidence is paramount. This is not my view alone but that of the nuclear industry as a whole.

In running a nuclear power plant we deal day to day with the complex issues of used fuel management. We do all of those activities while protecting public health and safety.

The report you ultimately produce should help citizens see clearly the issues involved regarding safety and security of transportation, safety and security of storage, and what recycling actually means in terms of the use of plutonium as an energy fuel. The industry believes that there are positive answers to these questions that ensure continued public health and security.

As such, we urge that your report

provide actionable recommendations for moving forward with used fuel management in a way that enhances public trust and confidence.

The following key principles are offered to this Commission by the nuclear industry, speaking with one voice to ensure that a stable used nuclear fuel management policy is created.

I know this Commission is familiar with these principles. But for the benefit of those in attendance, I think it is important to state them again so the industry perspective is represented.

Such a policy must be durable, and it must include a plan for the ultimate disposal of the byproducts from commercial nuclear power generation.

Policy makers should recognize that an ideal technical solution is not required to begin implementation of a new policy direction. Advances in technology improvements can be incorporated over time,

without deferring decisions until decades of research are completed.

The policy must be designed and operated to ensure that non-proliferation goals are met.

The successes and failures of the past must be understood to help guide future innovation, and build public trust and confidence in nuclear power generation.

The nuclear energy industry also offered some recommendations to the Commission to help evaluate various policies, technologies, and systems that are available now or might be in the future.

U.S. policy for the management of high-level waste material should recognize that an integrated management system must include both near and long-term programs, must be operated over decades, and cannot be successful if policies regarding used fuel and high-level waste are continually subject to change.

Policies should also be implemented in a manner such that the costs of a long-term management strategy are not an undue burden to commercial and private entities in the industry, or to our society, the beneficiaries of this nuclear technology.

Geologic disposal will be necessary in any used fuel management scenario. The nation's policies must establish a clear and achievable path to disposal. Geologic disposal is required for the multiple waste forms including defense material that already exist and may not be suitable for recycling or other advanced fuel cycle technologies.

Future disposal efforts should endeavor to build broad-based public support, and should consider a stepwise approach that would demonstrate the viability of final disposal and cultivate public confidence.

The licensing process for Yucca Mountain should be completed, even if the

facility is not ultimately used, just to demonstrate the regulatory process and provide lessons for future repository programs.

Centralized interim storage should be considered as a strategic element of used fuel management to provide a safe near-term solution for consolidating used fuel from shutdown commercial reactor sites, and storing used fuel away from current and future operating sites.

The centralized interim storage facility should be licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, take advantage of past projects as warranted, and be deployed in a region where it has broad public and political support.

In addition, centralized interim storage could be used by the federal government to meet its statutory and contractual obligations to accept and remove used nuclear fuel from reactor sites, while reducing or eliminating the liability for

taxpayers.

This interim site could also be a complementary near-term element of disposal, recycling, and other advanced fuel cycle technologies.

Such an interim storage site would likely reduce public concern regarding the accumulation of used nuclear fuel at operating and shutdown reactor sites, and increase public confidence by demonstrating the ability of the federal government to effectively manage commercial used fuel.

America's used fuel program should be transferred to an entity with a management and financing structure that is able to function in the presence of the inevitable political and policy changes that will occur over the coming decades.

The industry recommends that such an entity be empowered to act on behalf of the United States for entering into and administering contracts to provide used

nuclear fuel management and related products and services. And have access to the Nuclear Waste Fund and be held accountable for using those monies for actions that directly support the ability of the government to meet its statutory and contractual obligations.

Both current and advanced recycling and related nuclear fuel technologies will not provide the sole solution for used fuel management, but can be a strategic element for used fuel management under the following conditions.

Consistent, sustained political and policy support is a must. Providing significant value is required to justify the investment in any technology, and this includes enhanced economical nuclear fuel supply and sustainability, and the need to reduce heat, volume, and radiotoxicity of the material to be placed in the disposal facility.

Research, development, and

demonstration of advanced technology should be pursued to improve the benefits from recycling. But real, practical approaches that the private sector would be willing to develop, finance, and that can be successful in the marketplace are needed.

Different technologies can be developed to handle fuels from different types of reactors to gain greater benefit. Systems must be developed and operated in a manner that meet non-proliferation goals.

As everyone knows, recycling has been carried out safely on an industrial scale in European facilities for decades without any diversion of plutonium for unauthorized use. That said, international nuclear fuel supplies and used fuel take-back programs should be explored.

Our last recommendation is that the approached management and disposal of commercial used nuclear fuel should be integrated to the extent practical with the

management and disposal of used fuel and high-level waste currently stored at Department of Energy sites in South Carolina, Idaho, Washington, and elsewhere.

In closing, I will be retiring tomorrow after more than 14 years as CEO of Energy Northwest. That's 44 years after I did my first reactor start-up. I've had a lot of time to reflect, and it's sort of natural that you do that.

In looking back over my entire career, the greatest lesson I've learned was very early on as a nuclear naval officer.

Our nation's greatest achievements started with a singular vision. President Kennedy captivated the world when he announced we would put a man on the moon within a decade. President Reagan's vision of a unified and free Europe brought down what seemed to be once an immovable wall.

That same singular vision from Admiral Rickover built our nation's nuclear

navy, which revolutionized naval strategy; a game-changer that allowed submarines and surface ships to travel farther and be at sea longer without refueling.

None of these efforts were easy and all required vision, persistence, and solid leadership. They were hard challenges we were willing to accept because they provided immeasurable benefits to society.

In that same fashion, this Commission can set the vision for our nation's used fuel management policies and programs by developing a program that will endure.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today and look forward to your questions. At this point I conclude my remarks.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Mr. Parrish, we thank you for your statement and especially for your detailed recommendations.

I wanted to ask you about your statement recommendation up there about quasi-

independent program management. Can you spell that out?

I gather from that you don't want the DOE to do it and you don't want a government entity. You want some kind of a public/private combination that manages the process?

MR. PARRISH: That's correct. That's the recommendation.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Okay. Very good.

Further questions?

Jonathan and then Al.

MEMBER LASH: I want to thank you again for the tour this morning. I appreciated the clear answers and the openness in response to a deluge of questions.

I particularly appreciated your very succinct summary of what you see as the crucial considerations, criteria, principles as we look at how to site a long-term disposal solution.

I was curious, and I may have

misunderstood -- as you were summarizing, you mentioned the importance of durability. You mentioned that we need to be adaptive to new knowledge but we couldn't stop to wait for research and the importance of guarding against proliferation, and public confidence.

I didn't see any specific principle on the kind of environmental standard the solution should meet or how we achieve fairness, both fairness among regions of the country and fairness among generations. I'm interested in your thoughts on both of those.

MR. PARRISH: There were some comments earlier in some of the presentations talking about our grandchildren. I think, and this is my personal belief, that we have a significant responsibility to have our decisions based today on the impact in the future.

One of the things that needs to be considered very clearly and is the tough part

of that is really getting something happening, have some actions and some steps taken. If it's not necessary to talk about it, it's best to be moving.

I use the example with my employers that the car has to be moving before you can drive it. There has to be some mobility and you plan to check-adjust as you go through. But there needs to be some definite action taken and some movement taking place to start dealing with the issues of how we're going to handle the fuel.

CHAIR HAMILTON: I have Al, then Allison, then Per.

Al?

MEMBER CARNESALE: I have a few but maybe they can be very brief.

Just to follow up on the quasi-independent program management, can you give us an example of an agency or entity you know of that does something well that's a public-private partnership?

MR. PARRISH: A public-private agency that does something well? I can tell you that I think Energy Northwest is an example of a public-private organization that --

MEMBER CARNESALE: I mean involving the United States government.

MR. PARRISH: You gave me a chance and I had to get that in.

MEMBER CARNESALE: Okay. Well, I was just wondering because it's hard to do.

MR. PARRISH: I think that if you look at how we handle our U.S. Enrichment Corporation and things like that, that's a good starting point for it. It's obviously a complicated environment. But that would be one example I would look for.

MEMBER CARNESALE: I'll just stick with two. On the proliferation piece you spoke to in Europe, I presume nobody is worried that the United States is going to divert plutonium from its civilian program to

its weapons program?

MR. PARRISH: Right.

MEMBER CARNESALE: That doesn't seem to be the problem. What we do worry about is the example it might set for other nations that we would rather not see have reprocessing plants.

The other thing we would worry about within the United States is that the material might be stolen and sold to others, whether they be terrorists or others.

Could you spin out just a little bit more for me what you meant by it being done well elsewhere?

MR. PARRISH: Well, obviously you need controls. When you're doing a reprocessing and recycling you need to have controls to inventory and maintain your material.

In reality, my position and my thinking is that really, the true way to prevent proliferation is to gain control of

the material that's already out there, and burn it in nuclear reactors to get rid of it. It's clear that globally, as you allow people or countries start to reprocess, there needs to be provisions like IAEA to maintain and monitor what's happening there to prevent that diversion.

I agree with you. I don't think the US, Canada, France, or any of them would.

MEMBER CARNESALE: Thank you.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Allison?

MEMBER MacFARLANE: I'm interested in a couple of things. Who should pay for this reprocessing program?

MR. PARRISH: That's a discussion that I was having earlier.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Right.

MR. PARRISH: To my mind, it's a model where you have to look at what it costs. It's a matter of finances. If there's a desire to do that then you have to look at what is the cheapest, most efficient way of

putting a construct together to finance and do that. I think a good example is --

MEMBER MacFARLANE: The industry should pay?

MR. PARRISH: No. I think the industry and government.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: The utilities should pay; taxpayers should pay?

MR. PARRISH: Right. Taxpayers, ratepayers, whatever. If the goal is to recycle fuel and the goal is to burn plutonium, as an example, in mixed oxide fueling reactors, then we have to come up with a model that works for everyone to be able to finance and make that happen.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Would you recommend the French kind of program using PUREX?

MR. PARRISH: I'm sorry. I couldn't understand.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: Would you recommend the French type of reprocessing

using the PUREX method?

MR. PARRISH: I was looking specifically at the French program. I will tell you the reason the French continue to do it is because they started a long time ago. As a government they decided, "This is the way we're going to do business. We're going to recycle our fuel." They put it in place.

If you did the economics on it right now, you can't make the economics work in building a facility to do it.

MEMBER MacFARLANE: That's right.

MR. PARRISH: But they had a reason to make it work. And I think if as a nation we decide we want to look 100 years into the future, then one has to make a decision now to start moving in that direction and put the things in place to do it.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Per?

MEMBER PETERSON: Following up on Allison's question, our Commission has also been tasked with the job of examining the

current state of nuclear reactor and fuel cycle technologies. In particular, the potential to make substantive advances with respect to economics, security, safety, non-proliferation, and so on.

In looking at that problem, we have been examining technologies. I'd appreciate having your perspective as a utility CEO.

It appears currently that perhaps the nearest-term innovative new technologies for reactors will be small modular reactors. Here in the Northwest, of course, there has been some interest at least in terms of developing these technologies.

Have you been looking at these technologies; what would you say is the potential and what would we need to do in order to perhaps better facilitate the development of better reactor and fuel cycle technologies?

MR. PARRISH: As far as the small

modular, at Energy Northwest that is an active effort on our part, looking at the technologies that are out there as far as small modular.

I think obviously there are a number of reasons to drive whether you would build a large reactor or a small reactor. I think there are needs and reasons to build both, depending on where the location is and the energy demand.

For us here in the Pacific Northwest, we're looking literally from a low generation point of view at probably 4,000 megawatts long. In other words, resources that we won't need for 4, 8, maybe even 10 years.

Secondly, we don't create big hunks of energy demand up here. At least, typically not. It comes in smaller bites. So we have a tendency to look at the small reactors because they more fit the way our load growth is going to be. That's why we're

looking at them as a potential option.

Now, the design of the small reactors from a safety perspective and from an operational perspective are much better than what we have in the current generation of reactors, for obvious reasons. We've learned a lot of things over the last 40 or 50 years.

There are reasons for both. I think as you develop the technology and you look at the small modular, there are obviously things you can do with the fuel and the fuel configuration to optimize performance; and in looking ahead to the future to how you would manage the fuel in some circumstances.

CHAIR HAMILTON: All right. Pete?

MEMBER DOMENICI: I wanted to personally thank you, not just for your testimony but for the years you've served. It would appear to me that as a business executive, you have learned all sides and everybody's side to this problem. I think that's what we need and I commend you for

that.

Now that you're retired, I guess tomorrow you don't have anything to do. You could probably help us. So if you don't mind, I would feel free in writing you and asking you for answers to some of our questions. If you don't think that would be inappropriate I would do that.

What is your thinking about that?

MR. PARRISH: I am very inclined to do that. I remind people just because I'm retiring it doesn't mean I'm going to be silent. I've been writing letters to the editor that will all of a sudden come out of my word processor here tomorrow.

MEMBER DOMENICI: Also, I was going to follow up with a question that the Chairman asked about quasi-independent management. Because I think we have a problem that might end up with us looking for that, in that we may have a solution for the first time through and for temporary storage that comes

from that.

But we have to convince the public that, later on, the next steps will take place. It would appear to me that we need more than the statement that that's going to be the case. We need something innovative and different.

In that context, it might be that your suggestion is the right one. I would say for the Commission it may be one example. I'm not sure.

But the Tennessee Valley Authority might be one, Mr. Chairman. It might be more independent than you would need but it clearly is close to a quasi-independent agency.

I thank you for your testimony again.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Mr. Parrish, I think the Commission is mighty impressed with the fact that you'd spend the last day on the job with us. We appreciate that and thank you for the recommendations you have made.

I guess we have additional questions.

I'm sorry I missed you, John.

MEMBER ROWE: Just one question, Vic. One of our earlier speakers today commented on the amount spent on Yucca Mountain, and then said the search for a new site might cost another $8 billion.

Do you think the industry can afford to do it that way?

MR. PARRISH: No, sir.

MEMBER ROWE: Me neither.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Okay. Thank you very, very much, Mr. Parrish. We appreciate your recommendations and your contribution to the Commission.

The final item will be a statement from the Office of the Senator Jeff Merkley of the United States Senate. I think Elizabeth Scheeler is here to make that statement and we welcome her here.

This will conclude the work of the

afternoon after her statement.

Thank you very much for appearing.

I might say to members of the Commission that several other congressional offices will be appearing tomorrow morning. This is from Senator Merkley's Office.

Thank you.

MS. SCHEELER: Thank you very much for letting me read his statement this afternoon. We do appreciate it.

Mr. Co-Chairs, I ask to submit the following statement into your meeting record.

I am pleased that the President's Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future has taken the opportunity to visit the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Eastern Washington.

For over 60 years the Pacific Northwest has had the opportunity to witness Hanford's operations, keenly aware that our security, environmental future, and economic opportunities were tied closely to its

management of nuclear waste.

The people of the Pacific Northwest have also had the opportunity to witness the complications of politics and bureaucracy in dealing with nuclear waste and the problems that are created when waste is poorly handled. This region will be dealing with the reality of Hanford's nuclear waste legacy for decades as we work to protect our communities and environment.

I cannot stress enough the importance of the cleanup effort that is necessary for the region and how it affects the entire Pacific Northwest. This cleanup effort continues to be a priority for me and for the area.

The news that even more plutonium has been stored underground at the Hanford site than previously reported will make the cleanup challenge even more difficult. Our efforts must be redoubled.

I understand the complex and tough

policy decisions that are in front of your Blue Ribbon Commission. However, please recognize how important the nuclear waste disposal and subsequent cleanup efforts are for the nation, and especially the regions affected.

Hanford is a prime example of how the cleanup efforts must be at the forefront of your minds as you develop policies for America's new nuclear developments.

Again, I understand there are no easy answers when it comes to dealing with our nuclear past or deciding our nuclear future. But please, understand the importance of the cleanup of the Hanford site. The environmental health of the Pacific Northwest and the Columbia River are closely linked to the nuclear waste at Hanford. I look forward to a toxic-free Hanford future.

Thank you for your commitment to the future of our region. I applaud the study you are doing and wish you well in your work.

Thank you, again, for letting me read this this afternoon.

CHAIR HAMILTON: Ms. Scheeler, we are very pleased to have you. Express our appreciation to the Senator for your appearance. Your statement, of course, will be part of the record of the Commission.

There's no further business that the Chair is aware of for the afternoon.

We will assemble tomorrow morning at 8:30 in this room and proceed throughout the morning, aiming for an adjournment around 1:00 p.m.

We are adjourned. Thank you.

(Whereupon, at 4:26 p.m. the meeting was adjourned)