



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

July 26, 2024

The Honorable Tina Kotek
Governor of Oregon
254 State Capital
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Governor Kotek:

Thank you for sharing the State of Oregon's (Oregon) perspective on the Hanford holistic agreement and the transportation of treated tank waste for disposal out of the State of Washington (Washington). The Department of Energy (DOE) is committed to safe and effective cleanup of Hanford tank waste – a priority we share with Oregon. I appreciate Oregon's participation in recent public meetings held in Washington and Oregon as part of the 90-day public comment period on the holistic agreement. I also appreciated the opportunity to discuss your concerns personally on July 12, 2024, as I know Deputy Secretary Turk did as well.

As we discussed, DOE has not yet determined where the treated low-activity tank waste retrieved from the 22 tanks identified in the holistic agreement will be grouted (i.e., "alternative treatment" project). Further, the routes that will be used to safely transport the treated waste out of Washington to licensed disposal facilities have not yet been defined. We value your input and commit to public engagement as we conduct the necessary analyses and advance towards these future decisions.

The holistic agreement acknowledges DOE needs to complete applicable regulatory processes, such as those associated with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA requires Federal agencies to assess the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of proposed major Federal actions, prior to making decisions. The Department has initiated but not yet completed the development of a Supplement Analysis, which will be used to determine whether a supplemental or new Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared, pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality and DOE NEPA regulations. The Department intends to complete this NEPA analysis and a business case analysis towards the end of the year. This will inform our path forward. We are available to provide you and your staff more information on our NEPA approach.

With respect to the immobilization of treated tank waste prior to transport, the DOE has not yet but intends to determine whether the treated tank waste associated with the proposed alternative treatment project will be grouted at a facility on the Hanford Site or off-site at a commercial facility. This determination will, in turn, inform future decisions about the facilities, infrastructure and mode of transport necessary to perform the separation, pretreatment, and/or treatment of the tank waste for off-site disposal. As previously stated, the specific details of how and where the waste will be transported for offsite disposal also have not been determined. Additionally, the proposed alternative

treatment project would not commence until at least the 2029 timeframe and will include public engagement. The current priority is to complete ongoing tank waste retrievals in the single shell tank farms A and AX through 2028.

With respect to the means of transport of treated waste, the Department has a long history of safely transporting radioactive materials, including significant quantities of liquid waste. The Department's NEPA analysis associated with these activities will include an analysis of transportation impacts from both normal transportation and accidents and will be made available to the public.

We encourage your staff to submit any additional comments and concerns through the ongoing holistic agreement public comment period (extended to September 1, 2024) so that they can also be considered in the decision-making process. Finally, DOE values public engagement and is committed to providing opportunities during this process. The Department appreciates Oregon's support for the overall agreement and understands your concerns. We want to continue to work with you to increase understanding of the holistic agreement and DOE's decision-making processes now and into the future.

I appreciate your leadership on behalf of Oregon and its citizens and look forward to continuing our discussions as we advance Hanford's tank waste treatment mission. If you have any questions, please contact me or Mr. Spencer Thibodeau, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental Affairs, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 586-5450.

Sincerely,



Candice Trummell Robertson
Senior Advisor for Environmental Management

cc: Governor Jay Inslee, State of Washington
Casey Sixkiller, EPA Region 10