



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor



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April 28, 2021

Submitted via Email to Tier2EECA@rl.gov

William F. Hamel,
Assistant Manager for the River and Plateau
U.S. Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550
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Dear Mr. Hamel,

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on the Engineering Evaluation and Cost Estimate (EE/CA) for the Non Time-Critical Removal Action (NTCRA) for the 200-West Tier 2 Buildings/Structures (DOE/RL-2020-39, Rev 0). The Oregon Department of Energy continues to support DOE's efforts to reduce risk and maintenance costs, while maintaining a skilled workforce. "Changing the Skyline" is a visual representation of progress and minimizing hotel costs will allow more soil remediation given the current flat budget trend.

While the activities described in the EE/CA preferred alternate seem appropriate, there appears to be a missing step when it comes to waste classification. Throughout the document, wastes are described as potentially trans-uranic (TRU) low-level radioactive (LLW), mixed low-level radioactive (MLLW), hazardous, and nonhazardous, as in the text below:

Waste generated during removal action activities would be characterized and segregated by waste type (e.g., TRU, low-level radioactive, mixed low-level radioactive, hazardous, and nonhazardous). In compliance with WAC 173-303, "Dangerous Waste Regulations," and the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, waste would be dispositioned at appropriate EPA-approved waste disposal facilities.

DOE has stated in the recent past that some wastes generated as a result of reprocessing spent nuclear fuel are managed as HLW until being classified for their final disposition. Yet there are a number of structures addressed in this EE/CA that were directly associated with the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel or concentrating tank wastes (213W, 242S, 242T, 242TB, 292S), and all waste streams are described as LLW, TRU, or MLLW. These include:

- 213W – waste processed by the compactor is described as low-level waste
- 242S – the source of radionuclides is "low level tank waste"
- 242T – the evaporator operated to reduce tank space through a waste concentration process
- 242TB – the vent house is in the footprint of TX tank farm and is potentially impacted by vented emissions from an underlying receiver tank and vault
- 292S – contains approximately seven feet of radiologically contaminated liquid waste from canyon drainage

If DOE has completed an assessment to classify the waste as low level, there should be a reference to that assessment in the EE/CA. Otherwise, it would be appropriate for DOE to continue managing the waste as HLW until otherwise classified and documented as non-HLW. It is worth noting that there is no EPA-approved waste disposal facility for HLW, and disposal of HLW is prohibited in the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF).

Assuming that waste is appropriate for disposal at ERDF following classification and characterization (i.e. the waste is not HLW, TRU, or otherwise outside of the ERDF waste acceptance criteria), there are additional factors that DOE should consider. EPA has recently voiced concern that the ratio of demolition debris to contaminated soil has not been optimized in work plans, and ODOE shares this concern. This results in non-contaminated soil being used for compaction and void-fill in ERDF, which wastes both landfill capacity and material that could potentially be used to backfill excavated waste sites. When scheduling the activities presented in this EE/CA and other NTCRA involving structure removal, DOE should ensure that a commensurate amount of waste-site soil remediation is also undertaken.

Following our comments on the August 2020 EE/CA for B-plant ancillary structures ([Oregon-Comments-on-B-Plant-EECA](#)), DOE-RL management engaged ODOE in an informal discussion. The April 2021 conversation was productive, and we look forward to reviewing the documents detailing DOE's waste evaluation procedures. As we discussed at that meeting and reiterate in this letter, ODOE supports DOE conducting an open, well-documented, and rational decision process related to the classification and ultimate disposal of these wastes. A transparent and documented waste classification process will serve to increase trust and ensure that DOE follows its own defined process in the classification and disposal of Hanford wastes.

Oregon has been and continues to be opposed to any permanent disposal of HLW at the Hanford site. Without a transparent and documented process of assessing how DOE determined that the waste streams covered by this EE/CA are classified as non-HLW waste, Oregon is concerned that DOE may be inadvertently proposing to permanently dispose of waste that may be high level waste at ERDF. We look forward to continuing the discussion. Please contact Tom Sicilia (tom.sicilia@oregon.gov) of my staff with any questions.

Sincerely,



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