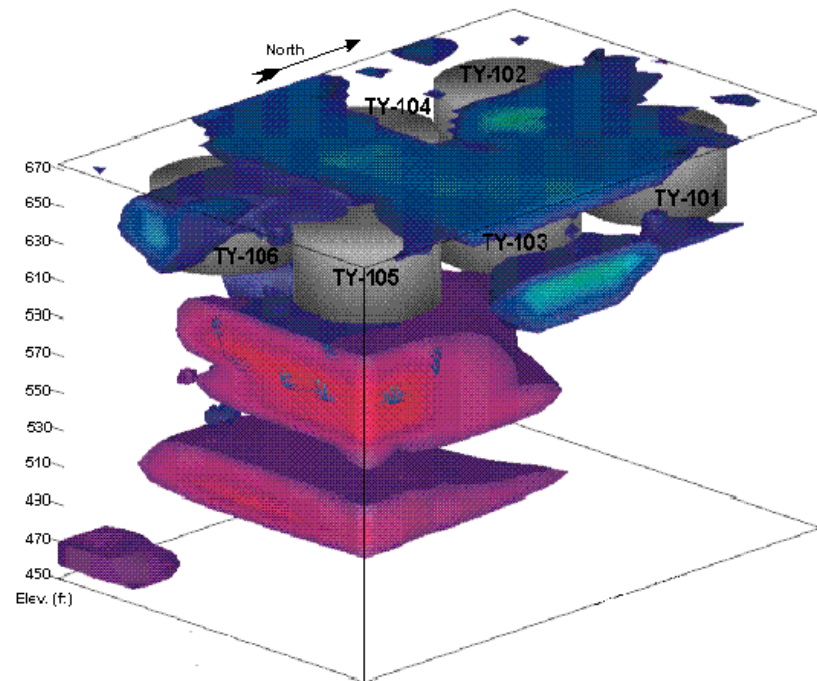


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New Nuclear Waste Leaks Spreading Towards the Columbia River



Graphic: from HOANW's report used by 60 Minutes on April 30th "Lethal and Leaking." Gamma radiation from leaking TY single shell tanks increased 50 times, without being reported. Radioactive contamination goes all the way to groundwater.

Will USDOE Empty High-Level Waste Tanks?

Long-Term Plans: Abandon Waste and Contamination

Our analysis of the US Department of Energy's Hanford Clean-Up long-term budget plans shows that they **do not include:**

- Emptying leaking Single Shell High-Level Nuclear Waste tanks by the 2018 deadline
- Cleanup of the over one million gallons of high-level waste that leaked and is spreading towards the Columbia River
- Retrieving waste and contamination from unlined burial grounds and ditches. Enough Plutonium is in the soil to make dozens of nuclear weapons.
- Cleanup of over 80 square miles of groundwater contaminated above standards – an area equal to the size of Seattle.
- Having an operational vitrification plant before 2018, despite calls by HOANW and Members of Congress to have portions of the plant operational by 2011 (the Clean-up Agreement requirement)

Abandoning 10% (5.4 million gallons) of the High-Level Nuclear Waste in the tanks is called a "reasonable" alternative by USDOE for its upcoming Tank Closure & Waste Management EIS. This is troubling in light of newly discovered tank leaks (see article inside) and since over 99% of waste can be removed. There is no funding in the budget, and no plan in USDOE's "baseline" to clean-up leaked tank waste, past or future.

This comes on the heels of USDOE's Congressional lobbying to rename High-Level Nuclear Waste as "incidental waste." USDOE succeeded with this public relations scheme for waste in South Carolina and Idaho. Due to Senator Maria Cantwell's arguments from the Senate, the renaming legislation does not apply to Hanford.

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USDOE Seeks to Overturn Initiative 297 in Court

After passing with almost 70% of the vote in Washington's 2004 election, and the highest vote total in state history Initiative 297 now called the Cleanup Priority Act (CPA), is being challenged in federal court by the USDOE. On May 23rd, Heart of America Northwest will join with the State in defending the constitutionality of the Cleanup Priority Act in US District Court in Yakima.

I-297 was written by Heart of America Northwest and a coalition of other citizens' groups and experts in order to protect the Northwest from USDOE's efforts to use Hanford as a National Radioactive Mixed Waste Dump. I-297 adopted in state law the common sense principle that USDOE has to clean up its mess before dumping more from other nuclear weapons plants. I-297 is also needed to end the dumping of waste in unlined soil ditches, stop USDOE from abandoning High Level Nuclear Waste in leaking tanks, and improve public involvement.

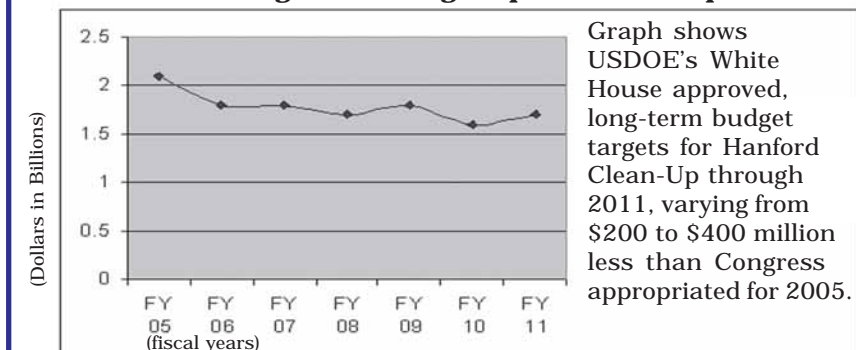
USDOE and Hanford Contractors are suing to overturn and block each of these goals. USDOE claims in its suit that the State has no authority to require that the leaking High-Level Nuclear Mixed Waste tanks are emptied, or require cleanup of the over one million gallons of wastes that have leaked.

USDOE and the contractors admitted in briefs to the Washington Supreme Court that they falsely asserted in federal court that the CPA would stop cleanup work at Hanford and prevent medical isotopes from being produced in the state.

"For the health and safety of the Northwest and protection of the Columbia River," says State Rep. Toby Nixon (R-

45), "we must defeat the challenge to the State's right to require that High-Level Nuclear Waste tanks will be emptied and leaks cleaned up, and whether unlined burial grounds should be closed and cleaned up." Toby is one of the I-297 sponsors who we represent in the court battle.

USDOE's Long-Term Hanford Clean-Up Budgets through 2011: Not Planning on Funding Required Clean-Up Work



Graph shows USDOE's White House approved, long-term budget targets for Hanford Clean-Up through 2011, varying from \$200 to \$400 million less than Congress appropriated for 2005.

High-Level Vitrification Plant \$7 billion over budget, 7 years behind

Hanford's vitrification plant is **\$7 billion** over budget. USDOE proposes opening in 2018, seven years behind schedule. This delay threatens to allow more leaks from Single Shell High-Level Nuclear Waste Tanks, and years of contamination spreading from past leaks without any effort to stop it.

Recent reports by Heart of America Northwest document USDOE and contractor mismanagement, failure to apply contracting recommendations by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and major nuclear safety risks. The NRC found that the risk of a major radioactive catastrophe at the plant to be as high as two percent a year. Yet, there is no independent nuclear safety regulation and oversight of the plant.

Congressional testimony by the GAO and Army Corps of Engineers confirmed Heart of America Northwest's analysis that USDOE and contractor Bechtel ignored safety concerns, and that Bechtel cost estimates for the Vitrification Plant were unreliable.

We have proposed a **"Get Well Plan"** for Hanford's Vitrification Plant, which protects the public, holds USDOE accountable, and saves money.



Vitrification Glass used to stabilize nuclear waste

HOANW's Get Well Plan:

- Stop USDOE and Bechtel from using "design while you build" for the High-Activity and Pre-Treatment portions of the Plant.
- Construct the only portion of the plant that has advanced designs and no safety problems. This Low Activity Waste treatment plant can be online and treating waste by 2011.
- Use iron phosphate glass, a technology that will vitrify waste much faster.
- Independent Nuclear Safety Regulation is needed to ensure that the plant is planned, built, and operated safely.

NEW Leaks found under High Level Waste Tanks

60 Minutes relied on new HOANW research to report that High-Level Nuclear Waste has recently leaked from Single Shell Tanks. The report states that USDOE's monitoring is deliberately designed NOT to find leaks moving towards the Columbia River.

According to HOANW's research there has been a *fifty fold increase* in highly radioactive gamma contamination detected between two of the massive underground tanks, and new contamination found underneath a third tank. USDOE designates this same group of single shell tanks as "clean" and "stable." The Secretary of Energy testified recently to Congress that tanks were "stable" and "monitored" in order to justify delaying the Vitrification Plant and emptying Single Shell Tanks. USDOE told 60 Minutes that leaks are not threatening groundwater and the Columbia River, but HOANW's report shows radiation from leaks reaching all the way to groundwater. Once contamination hits the groundwater, it will only take 25 to 50 years to reach the Columbia River.

USDOE has not included Clean-Up of the leaks in its long term budgets. Meanwhile USDOE is suing to overturn I-297 and its requirements for emptying tanks and cleaning up leaks.

HOANW's report by geologic engineer John Brodeur shows that the tanks are *not monitored*, the *tanks have recently leaked*, and that *contamination is moving* to the groundwater and River far faster than USDOE admits. "Institutional bias, bad science and an apparent determined cover-up of data prevent the USDOE and Hanford contractors from finding and reporting tank leaks and deep contamination," said geologic engineer John Brodeur. Read the full report at www.hoanw.org.



Hanford nestled in the Columbia River

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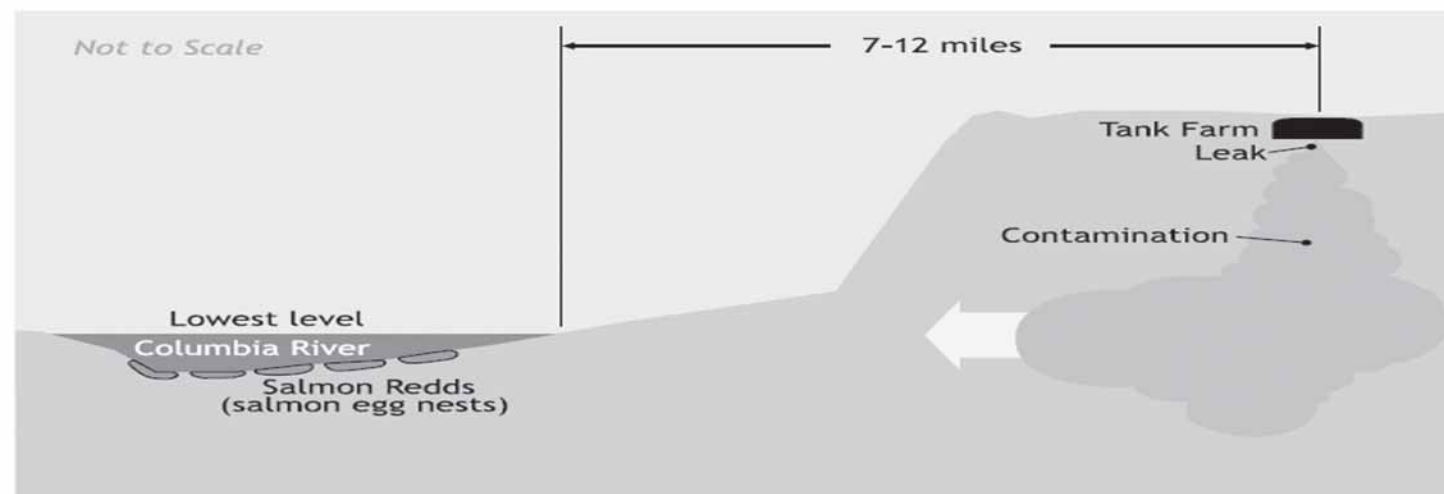
Heart of America Northwest continues to work with Senator Cantwell and Washington State to fight any efforts to abandon waste. Public meetings on Hanford Clean-Up priorities and budget will be held May 9th in Seattle and June 5th in Spokane—see notice below.

Hanford Public Meetings Derailed

This year, USDOE, WA Ecology, and EPA were unwilling to jointly hold and appear at regional public meetings on Hanford Clean-Up budget priorities. Previously held meetings in Portland and Hood River were eliminated, and only one agency will attend and discuss priorities with the public in Seattle and Richland. We are hosting the Spokane meeting on June 5th, which Ecology will attend, after the other agencies turned down our request to host a Spokane meeting.

"It's the USDOE's budget, and if Ecology and EPA believe it is legally inadequate, the public deserves to be able discuss it with all the agencies," said Helen Wheatley, chair of HOANW's Board and vice-chair of the regional Hanford Advisory Board Public Involvement Committee.

Groundwater Contamination at Hanford



Restart Potential for FFTF Reactor

After years of efforts to shutdown the FFTF Nuclear Reactor, the sodium coolant is being drained from the reactor core. However, a group of boosters and corporate interests want the reactor to restart as part of the Bush Administration's Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP) that envisions the use of breeder reactors and reprocessing of Spent Nuclear Fuel (creating more liquid High-Level N-Waste). They have urged that the funding for



shutdown and decommissioning be stopped. Once Ecology and EPA were told that FFTF couldn't be restarted, they sent USDOE a letter suggesting that the funding for further deactivation be reduced, saying there were higher priority cleanup needs. Heart of America Northwest will continue to press for full funding for decommissioning and dismantlement to restore the site.

Hanford Budget Priority Public Meetings

Seattle

Tuesday, May 9th, 7pm
Pre-meet 6pm, Talaris Conference Center 4000 NE 41st St.
Near the UW in Laurelhurst
Official TPA Meeting

WA Ecology will be the only TPA agency hosting this meeting



Spokane

Monday, June 5th, 7pm
Spokane Community Building
35 W. Main St.

Hosted By Heart of America

For more information, visit www.hoanw.org or call 206-382-1014

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