



# Oregon

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TO: House Committee on Energy and Environment

FROM: Ken Niles, Assistant Director, Nuclear Safety and Emergency Preparedness

SUBJECT: House Joint Memorial 5 with amended language

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Joint Memorial 5. The Oregon Department of Energy supports this measure but has requested an amendment to clarify that the production of plutonium at Hanford Nuclear Site at Richland, Washington created both radioactive and chemical waste; and, that not keeping pace with needed actions creates risk for the long-term protection of the Columbia River.

The Hanford Nuclear Site is an incredibly unique place. It is home to the world's largest environmental cleanup. Cleanup began nearly 28 years ago, and will continue for another 40 or 50 or 60 years.

And while much has been accomplished, and much has been done to reduce the risk to Oregon and to the Columbia River, there is plenty more that needs to be done.

Congress has provided an incredible amount of money for the Hanford cleanup – about \$40 billion so far. And remarkably, it hasn't been enough. There is a great need for additional funding so that important cleanup programs can move forward.

In the past decade or so, we have seen considerable progress in dealing with the contaminated groundwater at Hanford. From Oregon's perspective, contaminated groundwater reaching the Columbia River is the most likely pathway by which Oregon could see impacts in the future. In part because of Oregon's insistence, groundwater cleanup has moved up quite a ways on the priority list, and the groundwater plumes have been reduced in size, and in many cases, have been stopped from entering the Columbia River. But there are a number of groundwater contaminant plumes and specific contaminants that have yet to be treated. Expansion of these treatment systems is needed, and for that to happen in a timely manner, Congress will need to provide additional funding for the Hanford cleanup.

There are many other needs at Hanford as well. Just last week we provided comments on a draft interim cleanup plan that laid out \$180 million worth of work at one of Hanford's five chemical processing facilities. And that's just to put the facility in a somewhat safe condition for the next few decades until it can eventually be torn down.

Over the past 25 years, the Oregon Legislature has passed a number of Memorials and Resolutions related to Hanford cleanup and Hanford funding. In each case, it has clearly signaled Oregon's continuing commitment towards what is one of the most significant environmental challenges facing our state.

Thank you for your consideration of this memorial. Please support HJM 5.