

Theodore R. Kulongoski
Governor



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Governor Kulongoski Announces Hanford Settlement with USDOE and State of Washington

Settlement includes MOA with State of Washington and new oversight and influence over clean up with US Department of Energy

Salem – Governor Ted Kulongoski and Attorney General John Kroger today announced a new settlement with the US Department of Energy (US DOE) through a consent decree and a new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State of Washington that recognizes Oregon’s legal and legitimate interests at Hanford relating to the clean up.

“The agreements announced today mark a critical turning point in our bi-state and federal partnership to clean up the Hanford site,” Governor Ted Kulongsoki said. “I believe this renewed commitment to an aggressive clean up schedule and oversight will finally deliver public health and environmental protection for the citizens on both sides of the Columbia River.”

The Hanford Site is located in Southeastern Washington State and the Columbia River flows through the site. From 1944-1988 the federal government used Hanford to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. The processes used to produce plutonium created huge amounts of radioactive and chemically hazardous wastes. The most radioactive and hazardous of these wastes were stored in underground storage tanks. There are 177 underground storage tanks at Hanford, which contain about 53 million gallons of waste. Most of the tanks are well beyond their design life and 67 are known or believed to have leaked.

Key components of the consent decrees and the MOA with Washington include:

- Oregon agreed to a separate Consent Decree with US DOE. Oregon will receive from USDOE – concurrently with Washington – monthly and semi-annual reports on the status of the tank waste treatment construction and start-

up activities and tank retrieval activities. US DOE will provide Oregon with advance notice if it seeks judicial dispute resolution or if it is in jeopardy of not meeting its schedules.

- A commitment by the Department of Energy to propose a moratorium on new radioactive waste shipments to Hanford pending the plan plant becoming operational. The U.S. Department of Energy's agreement to propose a moratorium on new radioactive waste to Hanford is very significant because it keeps the focus at Hanford on cleanup and will protect hundreds of Northwest cities from the risks trucks carrying radioactive waste passing through their communities.
- Oregon agreed with the State of Washington to amend an existing Memorandum of Agreement between the two parties. Washington has agreed to consult with Oregon prior to seeking judicial enforcement or dispute resolution; prior to any modifications or renegotiation of this agreement; and prior to six-year reviews to determine whether improvements can be made to the schedule.
- These agreements provide Oregon with access to “three-year review meetings,” at which time the requirements of the Consent Decree will be reviewed to determine whether changes or modifications are necessary.
- Oregon retains the right to present its own arguments in court on these matters if necessary.

“This agreement makes clear that Oregon has a direct stake in making sure Hanford cleanup protects the Columbia River and our downstream interests,” says Oregon's Deputy Attorney General Mary Williams. “Hanford poses a significant threat to Oregon's largest river and there is good reason to make sure the cleanup of Hanford is done right.”

In 1989 the US DOE, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the State of Washington signed an agreement to bring the site into compliance with federal environmental laws with the goal of a 30-year clean up process. Oregon was denied participation in agreement and before today’s announcement had no legal role in the clean up of the Hanford site.

“Finally after years of battling the previous administration, we have certainty for the timelines and schedules for this critical clean up to occur,” the Governor continued. “Furthermore, Oregon now has a place at the table to make sure the timelines are met and our public health and our river’s health are protected.”