



May 18, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Rick Perry
U.S. Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20585

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Director, White House Office of Management & Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear President Trump, Secretary Perry & Director Mulvaney:

As Governors of Washington and Oregon, we write to urge that your final federal budget proposal for federal fiscal year 2018 (FFY18) include sufficient funding to accelerate the safe and efficient cleanup of nuclear waste at Hanford. This U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) site is the largest and most contaminated waste site in the United States. New legal requirements require, and recent developments at the site have emphasized, the need for robust resources to ensure the federal government continues to make progress in cleanup.

Established in 1943, the Hanford site was home to the production of the plutonium used in our nation's first nuclear weapons. The last reactor ceased operations in 1987, leaving behind more than 40 years' worth of highly dangerous solid and liquid nuclear waste. This legacy waste continues to pose a threat to local communities and to much of the Pacific Northwest, given the site's immediate proximity to the Columbia River – the dividing line between the states of Washington and Oregon.

Today, cleanup efforts are needed for the over 50 million gallons of radioactive and chemical waste stored in 177 tanks, more than 60 square miles remaining of groundwater contamination, and thousands of still contaminated buildings and waste sites.

Since 1989, USDOE has been a party to legally binding agreements, with the Washington State Department of Ecology and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which require it to treat or remove the nuclear waste that the federal government's activities have generated and caused to be stored at this site. Though not a regulator at Hanford, the State of Oregon is downwind and downriver from the site and is very much at risk in the event of an accident or if the cleanup is not done correctly. For this reason, the State of Oregon has also played an active role in participating in the process to consider options for cleanup and monitoring cleanup activity.

In 2016, a federal judge agreed with Washington State and mandated specific new cleanup deadlines that USDOE must meet, including completion and startup of operations at facilities designed to treat the site's low and high-level waste.

In order to ensure that the federal government remains on track to meet these new legal requirements, we urge your administration to request from Congress sufficient funding for both USDOE offices involved in Hanford cleanup – the Office of River Protection (ORP) and the Richland Operations Office (RL). Additionally, recent developments at the Hanford site have underscored the need for the federal

government to dedicate sufficient resources. These resources will ensure that progress continues to be made in cleaning up Hanford and in protecting the workers committed to this task. Just over a week ago on May 9th, site workers discovered the collapse of a tunnel segment connected to the Plutonium Uranium Extraction Plant (PUREX) used to store contaminated radioactive materials. Thankfully, no workers were exposed to these radioactive materials and USDOE took swift action to contain the situation and ensure the safety of the site's workers and the surrounding community. However, the incident temporarily halted nearly all cleanup operations at the site, and has compelled the State of Washington to take subsequent enforcement action against USDOE to determine the cause of the collapse and assess the potential hazards presented by this and other similar storage tunnels.

The May 9th incident should serve as an urgent reminder of the challenges in cleaning up the Hanford site that require a rededication of attention and resources in order to ensure progress continues moving forward. The longer it takes to clean up the facilities and structures that store mixed chemical and radioactive waste, the farther and farther they get past their useful lives – causing degradation and more risk of failing. In particular we are anxious to see the Direct Feed Low Activity Waste facilities completed, the treatment of tank waste started by the consent decree deadline of 2024, the highly contaminated soil beneath the 324 Building get remediated, the cleanups along the River Corridor completed, and the work to treat the groundwater continued.

We were encouraged to see that the White House FFY18 Budget Blueprint released in March included a proposed increase in funding, at \$6.5 billion, for USDOE's Environmental Management Office that is charged with cleanup of the nation's legacy nuclear waste sites across the country. (This is notwithstanding our other significant concerns with that Blueprint, which included reductions to other federal initiatives - such as a proposed 30 percent cut to the EPA Superfund program - that are designed to protect American communities from hazardous waste.) Additionally, we were encouraged to see Congress approve \$2.3 billion (an amount \$100 million above last year's White House budget request) in funding for Hanford cleanup as part of the omnibus FFY17 spending bill that passed both chambers with strong bipartisan support and was signed by President Trump earlier this month.

Our states are eager to work with your administration, and both parties and chambers in Congress, to continue to increase funding for Hanford cleanup and USDOE's Office of Emergency Management. This funding should reach levels that will allow the federal government to meet its legal requirements and moral obligations to clean up Hanford and other nuclear waste sites across the country.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Governor Jay Inslee
State of Washington



Governor Kate Brown
State of Oregon

cc: The Honorable Lamar Alexander, Chairman, U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development
The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chairman, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development
The Honorable Marcy Kaptur, Ranking Member, U.S. House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development
Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation
Members of the Oregon State Congressional Delegation