

General

John Young

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Sent: Wednesday, February 04, 2004 11:43 AM
To: john_keiling@nmenv.state.nm.us; john_young@nmenv.state.nm.us;
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Subject: FYI: DOE Plans Continued Use of Unlined Trenches at Hanford

LAWL Order, PMP

> CLEANUP REPORT DETAILS TRENCH USE
> Tri-City (WA) Herald -- February 4, 2004
> by Annette Cary
>
>The final draft of an environmental report on burying radioactive
>waste at Hanford calls for building a large, lined trench in the
>center of the nuclear reservation, according to the Department of
>Energy.
>
>The trench would be used for low-level radioactive wastes and
>similar wastes mixed with chemicals after it's completed and opened
>in 2006.
>
>However, after getting a first look at the final report on solid
>waste, Heart of America Northwest questioned DOE's commitment to
>stop burying radioactive wastes in unlined trenches at Hanford. The
>watchdog group also raised questions on whether more transuranic
>wastes -- typically barrels of highly radioactive contaminated junk
>-- would be brought to Hanford.
>
>DOE rushed to release the report Tuesday ahead of schedule after the
>environmental group released comments on it. Some advance copies of
>the report were given late last week to congressional members.
>
>At the close of business Tuesday, DOE was just starting to post the
>thousands of pages of the report on the Internet, and few people had
>seen it to comment.
>
>Earlier drafts of the study were criticized as being too light on
>information. The final study looks at more alternatives for
>disposing of some treated waste from Hanford's underground tanks and
>expands information on possible effects on ground water, according
>to DOE.
>
>It also includes more information on how wastes would be moved
>through Washington and Oregon.
>
>The study is expected to be published Feb. 13 in the Federal
>Register, then can be adopted in 30 days.
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>A 2000 decision based on a nationwide study identified Hanford and
>Yucca Mountain in Nevada as recipients of the nation's low-level and
>mixed low-level wastes, said Colleen Clark, a DOE spokeswoman in
>Richland.
>
>The study of Hanford released Tuesday looked only at how to manage
>low-level wastes that might be shipped here for burial based on the
>earlier study, she said.
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>Heart of America said the report proposes burial of 70,000
>truckloads of radioactive waste at Hanford.
>
>The organization also was concerned that the report discusses
>transuranic waste shipments from more sites than previously known,



>said Gerald Pollet of Heart of America. DOE's plan has been to treat
>the wastes at Hanford, then ship them to New Mexico for permanent
>storage.

>The report could revive a lawsuit over transuranic wastes that
>resulted in a judge halting shipments in May, Pollet said.

>Heart of America also is concerned that the report released Tuesday
>does not include a plan for closing unlined burial trenches.

>Clark said DOE already has begun to phase out use of unlined
>trenches and has begun planning the lined trench to be built in
>central Hanford.

>It's no surprise that the final study identified lined trenches as
>the best way to bury low-level waste, according to a statement from
>the office of Rep. Doc Hastings, R-Wash.

>"Everyone has the shared goal of moving toward lined trenches and
>today we're one step closer to reaching that goal," said Jessica
>Gleason, a spokeswoman for Hastings.

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