



September 20, 2024

The Honorable David Turk
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor
State of Washington
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

Mr. Casey Sixkiller
Regional Administrator, Region 10
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Sixth Ave, Suite 155
Seattle, WA 98102

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
U.S. Representative (WA-05)
2188 Rayburn House Office Building
45 Independence Ave SW
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Governor Inslee, Representative McMorris Rodgers, Deputy Secretary Turk and Regional Administrator Sixkiller:

The undersigned members of the Spokane City Council write to express both support and concern for the “Holistic Negotiations Agreement” (hereafter “Draft Agreement”) modifying the Hanford Nuclear Waste Site Tri-Party Agreement and Consent Decree. The Spokane City Council supports the proposal insofar as it sets forth significant risk reductions. However, the Council is concerned about the limited, to non-existent, public information campaign surrounding the Draft Agreement’s plan to transport liquid Nuclear Waste through the City of Spokane. This lack of information, and the implied lack of consideration for the health and well-being of citizens of Spokane, is alarming and risks undermining the important work to reduce the environmental impacts of the Hanford Site itself. As detailed further in this letter, Spokane City Council supports the solidification of Hanford Site waste *prior* to transport through the City of Spokane unless a completed Environmental Impact Statement makes a determination of non-significance with respect to the transport of liquid nuclear waste.

After four years of confidential negotiations between the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington Department of Ecology, the Draft Agreement has been released for review and comment in anticipation of completing final terms in late fall. Terms of the Draft Agreement appear to leave out issues important to this Council and afford little opportunity for formal comment from the general public, Tribes, or the City of Spokane. These issues are as follows:

1. Treatment of Waste Prior to Transport. Terms of the current Draft Agreement leave open the question whether liquid tank waste will be solidified into a “cake” form prior to transport to a final disposal site in Texas or Utah, or if that solidification process will occur after transport. Our understanding is that the U.S. Department of Energy will be studying this issue and reaching a determination later this year without any obligation for further input or concurrence. The City of Spokane has significant concerns about the inherent and obvious risk of the transport of liquid waste, and the Council encourages the parties commit now to an open and transparent process when making this critical decision for implementing that does not materially alter the contemplated timelines. Frankly, at this time it is the position of this Council that liquid waste is not a suitable option for this endeavor.
2. Means of Transport. The Spokane City Council also encourages you to seriously consider the potential ramifications of transporting liquid nuclear waste via Interstate 90 through highly populated and traveled regions of our state and city. The Department of Energy has not outlined a process for public comment or consultation with local partners, which is alarming for a plan of this scale and magnitude. We find this lack of process wholly unacceptable regardless of the final form of the waste. While this Council understands and agrees with the approach of the Draft Agreement to provide time for further study and refinement of the transportation elements of this proposal, there needs to be quality consideration for all options, particularly regarding the inherent risk of liquid spills and associated health impacts to the residents of Spokane, the local ecology, and the groundwater aquifer that supports our drinking water.
3. Spokane Municipal Code. As of December 21, 2022, it is the stated position of the City of Spokane, as expressed in Spokane Municipal Code Chapter 18.09, to disallow the development and production of nuclear weapons and, more important, to limit the exposure of our residents to high-level nuclear waste within City limits. It is our obligation to ensure that this ordinance of the City of Spokane is taken into account when planning for the transport of nuclear waste from the Hanford Site.
4. NEPA/SEPA. It is the understanding of this Council that there has been little to no updating of the Environmental Impact Statement for this endeavor. If this is

correct, we object and encourage you to change course to consider the full impacts of processing and transporting this waste, especially given the change in scientific understanding about radioactive exposure, particularly to women and children, since the last Environmental Impact Assessment was completed during the transport of waste *to the Hanford Site*.

One final note about this endeavor: City Council understands that there is a reasonably cost-effective opportunity to use unionized labor within Washington State in pursuing a solidification plan, which we would also support.

In closing, While the City Council has concerns about the Draft Agreement, as a body we are grateful for the important work you have done so far, and we assure you that the City of Spokane is ready to partner with you to ensure our communities benefit from an open, transparent, and meaningful process for finalizing the Draft Agreement. We look forward to future discussions on this topic.

Sincerely,

Betsy Wilkerson, Council President

Kitty Klitzke, Council Member, Dist. 3

Paul Dillon, Council Member, Dist. 2

Michael Cathcart, Council Member, Dist. 1

Lili Navarrete, Council Member, Dist. 2

Zack Zappone, Council Member, Dist. 3

Jonathan Bingle, Council Member, Dist. 1