TLG-0004 (contd); TLG-0005

I'm hard pressed to see how that can give an accurate picture of what's actually leaching through the ground and into the environment.

3

Because as we know, much of this waste has a lifespan that extends many, even hundreds, of generations from today. And we have to look at this from a really long-term perspective that we don't have to examine some of our other concerns. Thank you.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Sandra Roth.

TLG-0005 MS. SANDRA ROTH: Sandra Roth. I'm going to keep it real short. I haven't had a chance at all to see the EIS.

Shelley and I work together every day. And I've heard tons of information about it, so I'm here to speak.

1

I just want to let you know, Hanford has enough. It's got so much stuff up there and we can't deal with what we have. And why are we adding more?

And after hearing this on a day-to-day saga, I can tell you that we need to deal with what we have.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Owen Kenton.

TLG-0006

TLG-0006 MR. OWEN KENTON: Hi. My name is Owen Kenton. And I'm Sandy's son. And I found out about this meeting tonight at dinner time and I felt that I needed to come and voice my opinion on this.

And there was a few things that I felt I needed to hit on. Which was, first, is that we need to deal with the problem that we have already, before we start adding to this problem, because it's just going to build up and build up until our next generations are going to be forced to deal with our problems that we can deal with now by starting to learn. **1**

The second is that La Grande has two of the worst passes in the country right next to us. And that we're going to be shipping these trucks over it. **2**

And even though there's a low accident rate, if an accident occurs around people and a truck breaks open, there's going to be harm from it. There's no stopping it.

The last thing that I'd like to point out is that we need to find different methods of storing this nuclear waste at the facility, because it's sitting on a patch of **3**

TLG-0006 (contd); TLG-0007

columnar basalt, which most of you know.

3 And that columnar basalt does not stop nuclear waste from going straight down in the groundwater, which it's continuing to do, if we bring in more nuclear wastes. Thank you.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Richard Kenton.

TLG-0007 MR. RICHARD KENTON: My name is Richard Kenton. The last of the clan to speak tonight. The first comment is the notice for this meeting was extremely short and left a lot of people unprepared, especially myself, so I'm going to ramble.

Today in Seattle, they spend about $16 million on a drill, a drill, folks, dealing with a simulated dirty bomb.

A dirty bomb is where you take -- put your nuclear waste, and you blast it into the atmosphere.

Quickly jump from there to La Grande. Let's talk about the weather conditions here. Let's talk about how the atmosphere moves through this valley in the winter months, when -- that's the time you're most likely to have an accident here.

TLG-0007 (contd)

1

The passes are horrible. The driving conditions are horrible. Things change at a moments notice, leaving truckers quite unprepared to deal with the situation.

We have truckers that are driving around with, well, possibly diminished mental faculties. But definitely not the knowledge that those of us that live here have of the conditions and the potential for icing, et cetera, on the road.

Let me collect my thoughts here real quick. We have situations here in the valley where the wind blows hard enough to blow a railroad freight train and blow cars off of a freight train, off the tracks. Blow them completely off the tracks.

It's a documented fact here in the valley that that has occurred. Trucks frequently flip over, blow over, slide off the road on ice.

I spend a lot of time on I-84. I've watched the way people drive. I watch the way truckers drive. 1984, '85, I was coming through Ladd Canyon in a blinding snowstorm, and was going down through there with a large

TLG-0007 (contd)

semitruck, large cask of some sort, highly reinforced with a radioactive placard.

I was driving a four-wheel drive vehicle, studs all the way around. The vehicle that was next to me was driving slick, no chains.

And the truck slid toward me on the highway. I was able to make it around, off the shoulder, back on to the highway. If I had been trapped under that, I would have gotten a nice lethal dose I'm sure. 1

I don't like radiation. It's a part of life, but I don't need added radiation added to my life.

Right now the speed limit is 55. Truckdrivers on this highway drive, you know, a little bit more than that, 60 to 75 miles an hour.

In Salem right now, this part isn't in the EIS, in Salem right now they're talking about bumping up the speed limit. They bump up the speed limit to 70 miles an hour, what are the truckers going to drive then?

The numbers have been crunched, accident levels are shown, low risk, but

TLG-0007 (contd); TLG-0008

there's always Murphy out there.

And Murphy says that, you know, he's the worst possible time, worst possible things can happen. Rollover, Ladd Canyon, high winds, you have basically a dirty bomb going off. Thank you.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Norm Cimon.

TLG-0008 MR. NORM CIMON: Thank you. My name is Norm Cimon, and I live here in La Grande. I'm going to sort of echo some of the comments I've heard already.

The idea of lining the trenches is certainly a big advance, especially from professional scientists. It seems to at least indicate that we've left the primitive stages behind.

It seems to me that given the geology of that part of the world, it really is one of the solutions. So thank you for that.

As I mentioned the first time I gave comment, the first time you came through with the really poor piece of work before, the risk analysis was a huge flaw. And to my mind it still is something that greatly weakens the document as a whole.

TLG-0008 (contd)

I'd echo Gerry's comments here that the whole idea of having a model that is sort of a very sophisticated piece of probabilistic work and then filling it with assumptions that are back of the envelope in terms of the probability distributions themselves just makes no sense. But that is, in fact, what we have here.

At this stage, we can get highway specific rates, accident rates. And I don't understand why those are not factored in.

I also have deepening concerns about the crisis that states' bridges now find themselves in. And while I respect Ken's opinion greatly, it does worry me to no end that we will see some of sort of worst-case scenario where we have these truckloads somehow finding their way into our small towns and some sort of episode that leads to a lot of recriminations and a lot of bitterness.

I know that people will try to do thier best, but I don't see that shipping high-level wastes and transuranics to a place that already has its problems dealing with what we currently have is going to make any of this

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TLG-0008 (contd); TLG-0009

better.

Again, I think the real weak point in the EIS at this point is the probability distributions associated with the risk analysis.

They should be highway specific. They should be specific to the terrain they're going to be going through. And they should also take into account the potential for worst-case scenarios where we actually dump stuff into our rivers.

I have lots of photos I can show you of trucks hanging over rivers in the middle of winter out here. Thank you very much.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Wayne Kinney.

TLG-0009 MR. WAYNE KINNEY: Hi, I'm Wayne Kinney. I work for Senator Wyden. And I live and work here in La Grande.

And I've got a statement from the Senator. It deals with the EIS and also with general Hanford stuff.

"It doesn't matter how many new plans the Energy Department comes up with or what they call them. Oregonians will simply not accept any plan that leaves waste in the

TLG-0009 (contd)

Hanford tanks.

"Oregonians don't want to add to the waste that is already leaking into the Columbia, and Oregonians will not accept a plan that calls waste by another name to enable it to be trucked down Oregon freeways.

"At the scoping hearings held in this Solid Waste Environmental Impact Statement of February, I and other Oregonians urged the Department of Energy to keep working to vitrify all of the wastes in the tanks at Hanford.

"I reminded the DOE that it made a commitment in 1997 to vitrify all of the wastes in the tanks. And I told the Department that keeping that promise was important to Oregonians.

"I also noted that some Hanford officials seemed to be acting as though a decision on the tank waste had already been reached and asked DOE officials to make sure that Oregonians and other residents of the Northwest weren't presented with a fait accompli.

"This hearing process, I wrote in February, should not be a sham exercise

TLG-0009 (contd)

undertaken solely to fulfill the letter of the law.

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"But DOE officials are still acting as though this decision was reached long before the public hearing process was reopened.

"At budget hearings held last month, these officials talked about changes in the plan for the tank wastes and talked about the impact on future budgets.

"That new plan for the vitrification plant was announced last week, just a few days

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before giving the people of Pacific Northwest a chance to comment in these hearings and well before the record of decision is finalized.

"DOE officials also, for the first time since the tri-party agreement was signed,

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refused to grant a very reasonable request to extend the comment deadline.

"During the budget hearings, a DOE official said that one of the biggest problems

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his Department faced was credibility.

"But when the DOE acts as if this decision has already been made, it's bound to have credibility problems.

"When the DOE proposes a plan that

TLG-0009 (contd)

the Washington Department of Ecology believes will leave waste in the tanks, it's bound to have credibility problems.

"When the DOE proposes a plan that renames tank waste so it can be pumped on to trucks, it's bound to have credibility problems.

"When the DOE refuses to extend a routine request to extend the comment deadline, it's bound to have credibility problems.

"When the DOE lets contracts that don't allow Ecology and the EPA to monitor progress on cleanup, it's bound to have credibility problems.

"When the DOE reaches an agreement on transuranic waste shipments and breaks it within months, it's bound to have credibility problems.

"When the DOE takes actions that can be fairly interpreted as attempts to weaken or break the tri-party agreement, it's bound to have credibility problems.

"As I wrote in February, the Department of Energy is spending a great deal of time trying to avoid the commitment it made

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TLG-0009 (contd)

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to us back in 1997.

"Oregonians want the DOE to live up to its commitments and move forward with the task of eliminating the high-level tank -- wastes in the tanks. Vitrification was the best decision then, it's the best decision now.

"In a recent statement, Richland operation manager Keith Klein stated the following, and I quote, 'The Department's job is to clean up waste and take the necessary steps to ensure the job is done in a safe and effective manner in accordance to all the applicable laws.' I could not agree more.

"When the Congress appropriates funds for the Department of Energy and the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, it expects those funds to be used for cleanup and not for a lawyer's full employment program.

"It's time for the DOE to stop fudging on its commitments, stop trying to weaken the TPA and start getting back to the job that Oregonians and all Americans are paying them to do. Thank you."

MR. DEE WILLIS: Okay. Does anybody else have any formal comments at this

point? You'll have a chance later. All right.

What I want to do now is move to a different or more informal format, invite -- let's turn some chairs around up here, invite the following people to come up, if you wish, to respond to questions from this audience.

That would be Mike Barry from the Oregon Department of Transportation. Mike, Ken, Gerry, Shelley. Did I miss anybody?

If there are questions for Dennis, he'll answer them, but he's not going to come up.

So here's what I'd like to do: If you have a question for any of those people, raise your hand. I'll recognize you. You ask the question.

And then I want you to let these people discuss the answer among themselves. Let them have a discussion about it, okay. Any questions about this format?

Okay, first question, this gentleman here. And what I'd like to do is for you to speak into the mike and tell us your name.

MR. BILL OBERTEUFFER: Thank you. Bill Oberteuffer from Island City. And

I'd like to ask a question of the gentleman from Heart of America Northwest, and I can't remember your name, I'm sorry.

MR. GERRY POLLET: Gerry Pollet.

MR. BILL OBERTEUFFER: Gerry. What plans do you have, or what plans does your organization have, for keeping more waste out of Hanford?

MR. DEE WILLIS: Would you spell your last name, please?

MR. BILL OBERTEUFFER: You spell it just like it sounds. O-B-E-R-T-E-U-F-F-E-R.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Just like it sounds.

MR. GERRY POLLET: Bill, there is the possibility of endless lawsuits, as those people who are members of ours know, that we urged the state of Washington to sue to stop these transuranic waste shipments, these plutonium waste shipments.

And we, along with three other citizen groups filed suit. In the course of doing that -- and one of the reasons that led

Panel Discussion (contd)

to it is that DOE is not exactly up front about giving you the information you need -- and through the Freedom of Information Act, we discovered things like a document that said we have to keep the stakeholders in the state of Washington from learning about these shipments.

That was December 2001. Documents from senior Hanford officials saying we have to keep plans about these shipments, quote, "in this room," unquote.

And plans to, quote, "make receipt of remote-handled transuranic wastes" at Hanford, quote, "a higher priority," unquote, than Hanford cleanup work.

So going to court is one option. This EIS, it's not adequate and it won't pass muster right now to allow them to start the next round of shipments that they want to ship after August 1st. That's why they don't want to extend the comment period, you see.

They've already announced, and Mike can respond to this if he disagrees with it, but they've announced that they're going to issue a decision by August 1st so that they can start the floodgates opening, and up to a

million cubic feet a year, that's a five-fold increase of waste imports.

So the next step is on the other side of the border in Washington state, we'll be talking about this public hearing in Seattle.

We will be making an announcement about a state-wide ballot initiative that will stop Hanford from becoming a national radioactive waste dump.

I'm also proud to say that Senator Wyden, several members of Congress from Oregon and Washington, have agreed that they will be pushing legislation to stop the dumping of radioactive waste in these unlined burial grounds.

You know, we've talked about it. But you need to see it to believe it. This looks like Iraq from what you were saying earlier.

This is the smallest, I believe, of Hanford's unlined burial grounds. This is how they dump waste today, no liner.

You can't dump your kitchen garbage in an unlined trench. This is a quote from,

Panel Discussion (contd)

I'm borrowing from Senator Wyden, actually, "you can't dump your municipal garbage in unlined ditches, it's against the law."

The Department of Energy is dumping 200,000 cubic feet a year. Enough to cover 13 football fields, a foot deep, of imported radioactive wastes in unlined ditches, poisoning the groundwater and Columbia River.

We know it's spreading contamination. And that's going to continue for untold years. We've just stopped that this year.

And so we're looking at federal legislation and we're looking at state legislation to stop it. And, of course, we'll probably have to challenge this EIS.

We will have a court date, a full trial, which looks right now like slam dunk stuff, transuranic waste, if they don't revise this EIS.

MR. DEE WILLIS: I assume that Gerry responded to your question.

MR. BILL OBERTEUFFER: Thank you.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Does anybody