

Informal Question and Answer Section (contd); Presentation

1 Thanks, Mike.

2 Before we move on, I forgot to ask
3 you, I was supposed to ask you, how many people
4 saw the ads in the P.I. or the Times for this
5 meeting? Raise your hand if you did. Okay.
6 Four or five. Thank you.

7 All right. Chris Gebhardt from the
8 Environmental Protection Agency.

9 (Mr. Gebhardt made presentation).

10 MR. DEE WILLIS: Any questions
11 for Chris?

12 MR. MARTIN FLECK: I am Martin
13 neck. I work with Physicians for Social
14 Responsibility.

15 It sounded to me as though your team
16 did not have a chance to read through the
17 entire document.

18 And I am wondering if you think that
19 the comment period was adequately long.

20 MR. CHRIS GEBHARDT: We have
21 had time to read through the document. We are
22 focusing, though, on certain aspects of the
23 EIS, to try to highlight those main points that
24 we raised in the original Draft EIS.

25 MR. MARTIN FLECK: Do you

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Informal Question and Answer Section (contd); Presentation (contd)

1 think the public comment period is adequate?

2 MR. CHRIS GEBHARDT: The team
3 has to do it. But on the other hand, we have
4 been working with DOE since the release of the
5 first draft, which makes it much easier for us.

6 MR. DEE WILLIS: One more
7 question.

8 All right. Thank you. Gerry
9 Pollet. Where are you, Gerry? Oh. Right
10 there. Heart of America Northwest.

11 MR. GERRY POLLET: I am going
12 to use the overhead projector.

13 What is this Environmental Impact
14 Statement really about, and what is it supposed
15 to be about?

16 This headline from the Spokesman
17 Review says it all, we believe. This EIS is
18 about the Department of Energy and Bush
19 Administration plan to use Hanford as a
20 national radioactive waste dump. It is not
21 about the things it is legally supposed to be
22 about, which is the solid waste already at
23 Hanford.

24 How will it be treated? What are
25 the impacts of leaving waste in the soil? What

Presentation (contd)

1 are the impacts to future generations, the
2 groundwater? And to do new analyses of what
3 are the impacts of adding these wastes in
4 conjunction or on top of the impacts of DOE's
5 current plans to do little or nothing, for
6 instance, to clean up groundwater at Hanford.

7 I am shocked to hear that EPA, who
8 had told us at previous meetings that they had
9 not finished their analysis, is saying that it
10 is adequate, because we are not sure how you
11 could reach that conclusion, given their own
12 statement that you cannot choose between the
13 alternatives at this point in time.

14 Now, the Department of Energy I
15 should point out in terms of public comment
16 period acknowledged that the massive importance
17 of these decisions required a scoping period
18 for this Environmental Impact Statement several
19 years ago of 95 days. That the last comment
20 period for reviewing their woefully inadequate
21 EIS was 90 days.

22 Now you have half that time period,
23 without adequate time for the public to review
24 a 21 pound document, and hearings that would
25 have, someone calculated at a hearing in

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Presentation (contd)

1 Portland, that you had to read 50 to 75 pages a
2 night in order to read the document, much less
3 be able to have read enough to come to the
4 hearings and give comment.

5 So, we have looked at some key
6 portions. The plan calls for doubling the
7 amount of radioactive waste at Hanford in the
8 burial grounds.

9 And despite a commitment made by the
10 Assistant Secretary of Energy in front of the
11 U.S. Senate Energy Committee last summer, this
12 EIS does not commit to ending dumping in
13 unlined burial grounds, does not acknowledge
14 that it's illegal, does not even acknowledge
15 that they are poisoning the groundwater and
16 will continue to do so and tell what you the
17 impacts of that will be.

18 Instead, this focuses on
19 alternatives, six alternatives for new
20 landfills, three of which continue to use
21 unlined burial grounds forever, three of which
22 eventually switch to massive facilities
23 throwing all types of wastes together, and yet
24 there is no deadline for ending the use of
25 unlined burial grounds in it.

Presentation (contd)

1 This is what we're talking about.
2 This is the 1970s era, picture of unlined
3 burial grounds at Hanford. We know that the
4 drums do not last 20 years. We know that they
5 spread contamination. And we know that the
6 Department of Energy doesn't know what's in the
7 drums in the burial grounds.

8 And yet we blithely keep on
9 importing wastes and adding more to our
10 problem.

11 In the year 2000 the Department of
12 Energy imported from other weapons plants
13 200,000 cubic feet of radioactive waste and
14 dumped it in unlined burial grounds, enough to
15 cover a football field 13 feet deep in
16 radioactive waste.

17 They want to add transuranic wastes
18 to the burial grounds.

19 This is a picture of, quote,
20 retrievably stored transuranic waste in an
21 unlined burial ground. And we know that in the
22 trench immediately next to this one, the poison
23 and carcinogen carbon tetrachloride was
24 measured in the vapor space between the barrels
25 at nearly double the level that's fatal to

Presentation (contd)

1 humans, 176 times the level that OSHA regulates
2 it as a permissible exposure level to workers,
3 and DOE says, "We'll send workers in to
4 retrieve these drums."

5 And you won't find any mention of
6 this hazard in this EIS.

7 Now, the Department of Ecology has
8 formally concluded that transuranic waste
9 containers are designed to vent and there are
10 known inventories of organic materials which
11 spread the contamination, which DOE has ignored
12 in here. You won't find any mention of this in
13 this EIS.

14 But Ecology provided them with that
15 information in January. Considerable evidence
16 shows waste constituents releases from
17 low-level waste management area 4, which was
18 the burial ground next to the Plutonium
19 Finishing Plant.

20 On April 30th, the Department of
21 Ecology issued an order at long last for the
22 Department of Energy to start digging up the
23 transuranic wastes and finding out what's in
24 them and said, quoting DOE's own documents,
25 that the containers are releasing waste and we

Presentation (contd)

1 don't know what's in it, and the Department of
2 Energy plans to import more of this transuranic
3 waste and store it in burial grounds for up to
4 20 and possibly 30 years, and yet we know that
5 within 20 years the barrels of waste they have
6 in the burial grounds have deteriorated and
7 released wastes.

8 We are not talking ancient practices
9 either. I will flip ahead. I think you get
10 the point here that these burial grounds are an
11 atrocity. This is the smallest of the burial
12 ground trenches. Many of them are more than
13 three football fields long, over a thousand
14 feet long.

15 This is a picture taken by Tom
16 Carpenter, the Government Accountability
17 Project, who is here tonight, two years ago, of
18 a trench. You can see there is no way to trace
19 which waste went where in the trench, if
20 there's a release. You can see that the drum,
21 great care was taken not to penetrate a drum.
22 You can see the care with which they were
23 placed there. And you can see, can't you, the
24 burial groundwater monitoring wells at the edge
25 of the facility.

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1 Those would be marked by metal caps
2 and risers here. Oh. I guess they are
3 missing.

4 Now, half of the burial ground
5 groundwater monitoring wells do not reach
6 groundwater. More of them are expected to go
7 dry in the next couple of years. It is
8 expected that over a hundred new groundwater
9 monitoring wells are needed, and there is no
10 mention of that in this EIS, and no commitment
11 to do it, and that is what this EIS is supposed
12 to be about.

13 Instead here is what Mr. Keith
14 Klein, the manager of the Hanford Site, told
15 the Spokesman Review a week ago. "We aren't
16 seeing evidence of releases from the modern
17 practices of the last 20 years, including the
18 low-level burial grounds."

19 Where has he been? Again, this is
20 what Mr. Klein is referring to as modern waste
21 disposal practices. You can't dump your
22 kitchen garbage in an unlined ditch like this.
23 The city of Seattle can't dump its garbage in
24 unlined ditches.

25 Why are we dumping some of the most

Presentation (contd)

1 radioactive and deadly material on earth in
2 unlined ditches where we know it is going to
3 contaminate the groundwater and the Columbia
4 River?

5 We are very pleased that tonight,
6 coming up later, there will be a statement from
7 Congressman Jay Inslee who wrote we can and
8 must stop the dumping of radioactive wastes in
9 Hanford's unlined trenches this year. We
10 demand that this EIS be withdrawn, and reissued
11 with an analysis of the benefits of ending
12 dumping in unlined ditches this year. And
13 withdraw it and not reissue it until there is a
14 full investigation of the burial grounds, and
15 we know what is leaking out of them before we
16 talk about building new ones. Only then will
17 this EIS be adequate.

18 As we said, here is, you could just,
19 taken from the Washington Department of Ecology
20 Notice of Deficiency on their application for
21 permit for the burial grounds, and incorporated
22 this information into this EIS, it was issued
23 in January, you had plenty of time to do so,
24 "Ecology has concluded that the low-level
25 burial ground groundwater monitoring networks

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Presentation (contd)

1 and programs are significantly deficient."

2 This EIS is the place to have a
3 sampling and analysis plan, a new model, new
4 characterization data.

5 Information like migration to
6 groundwater could occur in relatively short
7 time is missing from this EIS when it talks
8 about continuing to dump waste in unlined
9 burial grounds.

10 And here is what the EIS says in a
11 blithe statement hidden in the middle of the
12 paragraph about the total impact of
13 groundwater. "After a few hundred years
14 following disposal the vadose zone," that is
15 the soil column, "the vadose zone surrounding
16 disposal areas in groundwater beneath the
17 Hanford Site to which contaminants travel would
18 be irretrievably committed."

19 Now, that is a bureaucratic
20 statement, if I ever heard one, for saying,
21 it's going to be too damn contaminated for
22 anyone to ever use.

23 They are supposed to write this in
24 plain English, by the way.

25 Later in the paragraph, "The slow

Presentation (contd)

1 entry of long lived mobile radionuclides into
2 groundwater might constitute a continuing
3 thousands of years commitment of a water
4 resource. It would be necessary to place some
5 restrictions on groundwater usage."

6 Like how do you try to prevent
7 anyone from drinking it ever?

8 It ignores the fact that federal and
9 state cleanup laws require groundwater to be
10 considered drinkable resource. It is a
11 valuable resource, and growing ever more
12 valuable as we fight over water and are not
13 allowed to withdraw more from the Columbia
14 River.

15 But DOE, preferred alternative,
16 would contaminate the groundwater above
17 standards, making it undrinkable for thousands
18 of years.

19 It's an illegal alternative, and
20 it's an immoral alternative, and what DOE does
21 here is continue a long practice of acting as
22 if it owns the groundwater.

23 I have news for the Department of
24 Energy. You don't own the groundwater
25 underneath the Hanford Site.

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Presentation (contd)

1 The Constitution of the United
2 States guaranties that the people of the state
3 of Washington own the groundwater resource
4 under the state of Washington. It is our
5 groundwater. It is not your dumping site.

6 You cannot contaminate it this way.
7 It is an illegal proposal to do so. It ignores
8 and doesn't discuss the fact that if you
9 contaminate the groundwater and it seeps into
10 the groundwater, the 50 mile shoreline of the
11 Hanford Reach National Monument will have to
12 also be restricted from public use to prevent
13 exposure, and violate the Treaties of 1855 of
14 the Nez Perce, Yakima and Umatilla Nations to
15 live along and fish in usual and accustomed
16 places.

17 And in a thousand years who will be
18 there to enforce that restriction to make sure
19 that your great, great, great grandchildren do
20 not get cancer from this?

21 This is the Department of Energy's
22 own modeling of Hanford Site groundwater. The
23 Columbia River runs for 50 miles along this
24 edge here. From here through here. Here is
25 the central plateau where the Tank Farms are

Presentation (contd)

1 and the burial grounds are. Here is where the
2 reactors are. Here is the 300 Area. This
3 model shows as they now currently expect it to
4 be today. The red area is 100 times the
5 drinking water standard. That means 100 people
6 out of 10,000 adults die of fatal cancer if you
7 drink it.

8 When you look at the model, what you
9 see is that it expands the red area towards the
10 river for hundreds of years. And there is no
11 plan in this EIS for cleaning it up, which it
12 needs to.

13 And then to add insult to injury,
14 the analysis in this EIS has what it calls
15 lines of analysis for groundwater contamination
16 from the new disposal facilities. It ignores
17 the existing cumulative impact and says, a line
18 right here, a line right here, a line right
19 here, a kilometer away from the edge of the
20 fence line is where we will measure the impact
21 to groundwater.

22 And then it says, it's not too bad
23 here, violates some standards. But it's
24 inadequate because you have no idea where at
25 the edge of the actual landfill, if they are

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1 contaminating the groundwater above standards,
2 and they chose these places as you can see not
3 to even model where the maximum contaminant
4 load is in the plume heading to the river.

5 So, it's designed neither to measure
6 the level at the edge of the boundary of the
7 landfill nor the maximum cumulative impact from
8 all the landfills. That's why it was chosen a
9 kilometer away.

10 And as the EPA noted, it's illegal,
11 and I cannot concede of how EPA can call this
12 EIS adequate when you can't determine what the
13 groundwater impact is from any of the
14 alternatives.

15 That concludes our alternative
16 viewpoint with the recognition of the fact that
17 this EIS is essentially backwards. It needs to
18 be withdrawn.

19 And when there is a full MTCA
20 investigation, that's our state SuperFund law,
21 investigation of the burial grounds and
22 existing contamination and a plan for treating
23 and dealing with the wastes, that's when it
24 should be reissued.

25 Thank you all.

Informal Question and Answer Section (contd)

1 MR. DEE WILLIS: I want to go
2 now to the formal public comment phase of
3 tonight's program.

4 This is how I would like to do it.
5 I'm going to call you to come down here and
6 speak in the order that you signed up, and I'm
7 going to make three exceptions to that.

8 One, the Raging Grannies. Two,
9 Congressional representatives. And, three,
10 those of you who have pressing concerns at home
11 and need to get home earlier.

12 Okay. I would appreciate it if you
13 would -- Let me back up.

14 Over 20 people have signed up to
15 comment tonight. So I would really appreciate
16 it if you would limit your comments to four
17 minutes. I will let you know when you have
18 talked for three minutes. And I will let you
19 know when your time's up. No cross-talk, no
20 discussion, no questions and answers. In this
21 part of the program, you will be talking to DOE
22 directly.

23 When you come down here to speak,
24 give us your name, even though I call out your
25 name, state your name, use the mike, any

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1 affiliation you have, let us hear that.

2 So let's get started. Any questions
3 about the format?

4 All right. Kennie Endelman from
5 Congressman Inslee's office.

6 **TSE-0001** MS. KENNIE ENDELMAN: Thank
7 you. I am Kenny Endelman, and I'm
8 Congressman's Jay Inslee's district director
9 here in the state of Washington, and I have a
10 statement from the Congressman.

11 I appreciate the opportunity to
12 comment on the Department of Energy's Revised
13 Draft Hanford Site Solid Waste Program
14 Environmental Impact Statement, and I regret
15 that I could not be here in person.

16 First of all, I would like to thank
17 the Department of Energy for having this
18 hearing in Seattle today, and recognize the
19 decisions we make about managing radioactive
20 wastes at the Hanford Site have statewide
21 implications and draw statewide concerns.
22 Decisions we make in the Environmental Impact
23 Statement will contribute to the legacy that we
24 leave for our children and future generations.

25 While the progress has been made at