TSE-0001

affiliation you have, let us hear that.

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

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

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

See L-0018

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

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

While the progress has been made at

TSE-0001 (contd)

See L-0018

the Hanford Site, principally with respect to the K Basin and cocooning of reactors, there is an enormous amount of work yet to be done, and a lot of uncertainties surrounding the future of the site. For these reasons, I have grave concerns about the plans to import more wastes into the Hanford Site, particularly when those wastes are put in unlined soil trench landfills.

This Draft EIS fails to clarify one major uncertainty, the date at which the Department of Energy will stop the unacceptable practice of dumping radioactive wastes in unlined soil trenches. I'm working with my colleagues in Congress to require the burial of all new radioactive wastes in lined facilities, and I encourage the DOE to implement such a requirement at the earliest possible date.

Lined landfills with leachate collection and monitoring would prevent the leakage and contamination of groundwater that has been documented by Washington State to have occurred at Hanford's low-level burial grounds while they remain open. This is why all other landfills in our state and nation are required

TSE-0001 (contd)

See L-0018

to have liners, leachate collection and monitoring. I believe that the same standard should be met by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Based on press accounts I have seen and statements made by DOE officials, it is my understanding that while the Department recognizes the importance of putting all wastes in lined facilities, this Draft EIS does not contemplate doing so until years into the future. I believe this is unacceptable. In today's day and age, there is no reason we should be dumping radioactive wastes in unlined landfills, particularly at Hanford where history has demonstrated that what we put in the ground often ends up in the Columbia River.

We all recognize the greatest threat to the Columbia River is the Tank Farms, and the stabilizing, pumping, and vitrifying and shipping these wastes must remain our top priority. There is no reason, however, why we cannot build lined landfills for other wastes we are burying. Lined landfills are not rocket science. We require them for the burial of municipal household landfills, and we should require it for radioactive wastes.

TSE-0001 (contd); TSE-0002

See L-0018

In addition to protecting the Columbia River and the public from possible harmful exposure to radiation, insisting on lined facilities will also save taxpayers dollars. There is no question that we will eventually dig up all wastes in unlined soil trenches and transfer them to more stable lined facilities. Making the modest and clearly needed investment now will save taxpayer dollars in the long term.

I would like to thank all of you here tonight for continuing to participate in the Hanford cleanup effort and look forward to working with all of you on this important issue. Sincerely, Jay Inslee.

MR. DEE WILLIS: There is a statement from Congressman McDermott.

TSE-0002 DR. JIM TROMHOLD: I am Dr. Jim Tromhold. This is not my personal comment. I am reading a statement from the Washington, D.C. office. I am reading a statement from Congressman, U.S. Representative Jim McDermott.

See L-0019

Statement by U.S. Representative Jim McDermott on the Revised Draft Hanford Solid Waste Program Environmental Impact Statement,

TSE-0002 (contd)

See L-0019

May 15, 2003.

For more than 60 years our federal government has used our state as the dumping grounds for nuclear waste. For years we were assured there would be little risk of endangerment to human health or the environment. Science, time, and common sense have demonstrated this at best a misrepresentation. At worst, blatant lies. Much of the contamination occurred while the Department of Energy claimed exemption from independent external environmental regulation. Finally, in 1989, the DOE entered into an agreement with our state and the tribal nations and the Environmental Protection Agency to clean up the hazards. This agreement has repeatedly been violated by the Department of Energy.

Less than a year ago I provided comments on an inadequate draft of an Environmental Impact Statement, EIS, to designate Hanford as a national radioactive waste dump. We were being asked to believe that the DOE would correct its neglect in cleaning up the existing toxic conditions, in

TSE-0002 (contd)

See L-0019

exchange for doubling the nuclear waste it would dump at the site. Once again the public was assured of minimal risk of endangerment to human health or the environment.

Tonight we are being asked to comment on the revised draft of last year's EIS. We are being asked to accept the promises, commitments, and projections of an agency backed by a history of years of malfeasance. Further, the revised draft leaves many issues unaddressed. Among the issues left open:

Transportation risks.

Lack of a timeline to cease burial in unlined trenches.

Failure to inventory and classify existing waste.

Lack of adequate groundwater monitoring.

Full discussion of alternative methods of disposal.

Failure to address options for source reduction by aggressively pursuing nonnuclear alternatives.

To this we add the current

TSE-0002 (contd)

See L-0019

administration's reprioritization of the DOE's budget for increased funding for nuclear programs that will generate more waste, and its proposal to make military use of nuclear energy exempt from environmental regulation. All this in the face of growing federal deficit spending and a skyrocketing national debt that threatens the historically inadequate levels of funding for cleanup of this site.

Until the DOE addresses these issues in good faith, it is disingenuous to ask the residents of this state and the tribal nations to place their health in jeopardy and risk the contamination of their homelands to placate a corporate nuclear industry that has foised the burden of responsibility on to the American taxpayers.

I continue to stand in opposition to this plan to import increased nuclear waste at Hanford. I call for immediate action to clean up the existing contamination and to aggressively pursue source reduction alternatives to our nuclear waste quagmire.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Raging Grannies.

TSE-0003; TSE-0004; TSE-0005; TSE-0006; TSE-0007

TSE-0003, TSE-0004, TSE-0005, TSE-0006, TSE-0007

MS. KAY THODE: Carol McRoberts, Katie Thode, Elaine Birn, Wanda Adams. We Grannies are standing here in terror of what's going to happen to our grandchildren and our great grandchildren. The scenario we heard just makes me afraid that what I have always suspected, namely, that we are not going to be able to keep this stuff from getting into the groundwater. **1**

We have had 55 years of contamination.

Our views on this we will try to sing to you. This one is called Clean Up the Waste.

For years and years
We've come and sung,
Beseeched and testified
For cleanup is what we all want, **2**
And we're not satisfied.

We won't take any
More new waste **3**
'Til what's here is all clean,
We're sick of being
Your waste dump, **4**

TSE-0003 (contd); TSE-0004 (contd); TSE-0005 (contd); TSE-0006 (contd); TSE-0007 (contd)

It really is obscene.

5 Clean up the waste,
It's later than you think,
Clean up the waste,
Before it's in the drink.
The Columbia is really
On the brink,
Clean up the waste,
Clean up the waste,
It's later than you think.
It's later than you think.

The other one is about the leaking waste tank.

6 Empty those high-level waste tanks,
Vitrify 75 percent, don't leave
Leaking active waste tanks here
Despoiling our environment.

7 Uphold the Tri-Party Agreement,
Protect the Columbia fish,
We don't want radioactive salmon,
To be served up to us on our dish.

TSE-0003 (contd); TSE-0004 (contd); TSE-0005 (contd); TSE-0006 (contd); TSE-0007 (contd); TSE-0008

Line all the low-level waste grounds.
Ensure they are safe for all time,
Clean up the spoil and groundwater,
Meet all of the legal deadlines.

Cleanup, cleanup,
Cleanup is job number one,
Cleanup, cleanup,
That is what must be done.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Is there anybody who has pressing obligations elsewhere tonight who needs to leave early and also wants to speak, give comments? If so, raise your hand.

All right. This is not Portland. All right. So, next will be Valerie Shubert. Four minutes.

TSE-0008 MS. VALERIE SHUBERT: I am Valerie Shubert, and I brought this to make a point. You can see the condition this has gotten in. This is just through ordinary usage. The cover fell off after about the third day.

TSE-0008 (contd)

And you can also see that I have got a lot of markers because you have to flip back and forth to find various answers to comments. Comments are in one place, the answers are in another, and the index is in a third place.

I have submitted a written comment, but I wanted to add a few things that I hadn't commented on before. Largely because I forgot, and there was a lot of stuff to do.

One is that the EIS states that only uranium is considered for nonradiological as well as radiological risk.

But I think Strontium also should be included, because Strontium is very near calcium in the tables, in fact it is right above it, it replaces calcium in the bones, and even if it is not radioactive, it is dangerous.

Another thing is I don't think light pollution considerations and smells were addressed at all. I think there is probably incredible amounts of light out there and effects it has on the circadian, circadian cycles of plants and animals, there is very little research on that, from what I can tell.

And the last thing was that I don't

TSE-0008 (contd); TSE-0009; TSE-0010

1 think that there's, I didn't see any comment at
2 all about the effect of the groundwater
3 contamination on micro-organisms in the air. I
4 think that should be dealt with, too.
5 And that's basically what I had to
6 say.
7 MR. DEE WILLIS: Taisa
8 Welhasch. Did I butcher that?
9 **TSE-0009** MS. TAISA WELHASCH: That's
10 fine. Taisa Welhasch.
11 I stand in opposition to this plan
12 to bring in 70,000 truckloads of waste to
13 Hanford.
14 I request that you withdraw this EIS
15 and that you shut down the unlined soil
16 trenches, stop dumping in unlined trenches,
17 period. And first analyze the cumulative risk
18 from the wastes that are already at Hanford.
19 And of course to implement the
20 legally adequate groundwater monitoring system
21 that has been discussed earlier this evening.
22 Thanks.
23 MR. DEE WILLIS: Heather St.
24 John.
25 **TSE-0010** MS. HEATHER ST. JOHN: My name

TSE-0010 (contd)

is Heather St. John.

The first Solid Waste Environmental Impact Statement was strongly criticized for not offering an alternative, focused only on disposal and cleanup of on-site waste at Hanford, not adding more off-site waste to Hanford.

1 This Draft Solid Waste Environmental Impact Statement does include an alternative, to stop off-site waste import to Hanford. But only as part of an alternative that stops all cleanup work at Hanford.

This stop work alternative is not realistic. It's not a realistic alternative at all.

The U.S. Department of Energy does admit this. They do admit that it's also noncompliant with the law. But it is included.

2 This Environmental Impact Statement should be withdrawn. We want -- I want the U.S. Department of Energy to have a realistic alternative of no new off-site waste import. This should be analyzed.

Hanford already has 60 percent of the Department of Energy's defense high-level

TSE-0010 (contd)

nuclear waste, 61 percent of the Department of Energy's transuranic waste, and 80 percent of the Department of Energy's highly radioactive reactor fuel.

3 Hanford Site manager, Keith Klein, he insists that the new waste imports will not add environmental risks.

I disagree. Groundwater under Hanford is polluted with about 440 billion gallons of liquids over the past 50 years of the plutonium production. This groundwater pollution already covers 200 square miles beneath the site. And about a billion of those balances came from the high-level tanks, and about a third of them have confirmed to be leaking.

4 We already have a lot of waste there that needs to be focused on, and that's what the alternatives should have focused on in this Revised Environmental Impact Statement, and it did not do that.

So, yes, right now the Department of Energy is moving contaminated soil away from the Columbia River. But if more waste is brought in at the massive levels that the

TSE-0010 (contd)

Department of Energy is obviously supporting in their EIS document and their overall plan for Hanford, this effectively will have canceled out any positive strides that have been made, because we will have a lot more.

5 Should the Department of Energy truck in more transuranic waste? Not if we want to clean it up or continue to move forward.

So, I say, with this comment, effectively Hanford cannot be a destination for more transuranic waste. The unlined soil ditches cannot be a destination for radioactive

6 waste.

Real leachate collection must be in

7 place now. Effective groundwater monitoring also must be put in place now.

The DOE has a lot of power right

8 now. They can stop dumping radioactive waste in unlined trenches. They can do it this year. That's also part of my comment.

And they can also stop their plans for new waste to come in. And that should be analyzed, and is part of my comment.

And they can clean up the dangerous

TSE-0010 (contd); TSE-0011

waste that's already there, not add to it. Thanks.

MR. DEE WILLIS: Charles Weems.

TSE-0011 DR. CHARLES WEEMS: Thank you. I am Charles Weems. I am a member of the Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility.

I notice that there has been a significant tone of the discussion, alteration in the last few months, and it seems to me that we get the impression that the administration

1 is moving by fiat.

This seems to be that this fiat is on the fallacy of the accelerated plan, which is to use a whole lot less money and do things quicker.

Now, the impression is also that of a certain amount of arrogance, and I think that

2 these recent activities, such as not allowing an adequate amount of time for the analysis of this EIS, is part of it.

And there have been a number of things that would suggest that there is an arrogant stand on the part of the Department of