

TSE-0034; Panel Discussion (contd)

1

2 Yes, Ma'am. And speak to the mike
3 and give us your name.

4 **TSE-0034** MS. MARY ELLEN SMITH: My name
5 is Mary Ellen Smith.

6 I don't know a whole lot about this
7 whole issue, but as I sit here and listen, it
8 seems to me that with all the scientists we
9 have, we ought to be able to figure out a way
10 to keep the groundwater from becoming more
11 contaminated. That doesn't seem to me like
12 that's rocket science.

13 And it seems to me that it's
14 something that we as members of this state and
15 we as members of the universe have a
16 responsibility to do, we have a responsibility
17 to our grandchildren and our great
18 grandchildren, and all the generations that
19 come after us.

20 So why can't you guys figure it out?
21 MR. GERRY POLLET: I will take
22 that as a comment as well as a question.

23 MR. DEE WILLIS: That is a
24 comment. Does anybody have a response to that?

25 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Well, we
have started some groundwater remediation

Panel Discussion (contd)

1 activities. We do have some what are called
2 pump and treats where we actually take
3 groundwater from a well, treat it.

4 We have what's called a vaper
5 extraction technology where essentially a giant
6 vacuum sucks up solvents that are in the
7 ground. That way, so far we have sucked up
8 77,000 I think it is pounds of carbon
9 tetrachloride. We have taken about four
10 million tons of soil from along the river
11 that's been contaminated out to prevent it from
12 getting into the groundwater. So some
13 activities have started.

14 MR. DEE WILLIS: Panel?
15 Anybody else?

16 MR. GERRY POLLET: The question
17 of not contaminating more is a fundamental
18 political choice. So we have very minor scale
19 pump and treat under way, no commitment to do
20 full scale remediation.

21 The Department of Energy just took
22 comments on a groundwater strategy document
23 that had no strategy for cleanup. No time line
24 for cleanup of groundwater, no strategy for
25 cleanup of groundwater.

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 But look at the unlined burial
2 grounds. If you don't want to contaminate the
3 groundwater, you have to stop putting things in
4 the soil. And you have to have a strategy that
5 says, if we are going to exceed groundwater
6 standards by building a new burial ground, then
7 we can't do it.

8 And these people at the Department
9 of Energy have made the decision to already
10 have the burial grounds, and therefore they
11 have called it, as you saw on the slide I
12 showed earlier, an irreversible and
13 irretrievable commitment of the groundwater
14 resource, and then they find that acceptable.

15 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Just a
16 follow-up to that. A large part of that
17 irretrievable and irreversible impact is
18 because of the contamination that's already in
19 the groundwater. It's that 440 billion gallons
20 of low-level radioactive waste that was put in
21 in the past.

22 MR. DEE WILLIS: Matt or Tom,
23 anything?

24 MR. MATT McCORMICK: One
25 comment. We do have a groundwater management

Panel Discussion (contd)

1 plan, as Gerry was talking about. And it
2 really is a five prong approach that is being
3 implemented in terms of reducing the source
4 term that could harm the groundwater by
5 remediating the high risk waste sites that are
6 in the central plateau, shrinking the
7 contaminated areas to the central plateau, as a
8 priority, and then another major part of it is
9 reducing the recharge of potential water into
10 the vadose zone and driving contaminants that
11 are already there into the groundwater, and
12 that is decommissioning over 500 wells in the
13 next four years. And then capping and
14 isolating unused or damaged fresh water lines
15 in the central plateau. In addition to
16 upgrading the monitoring system of the
17 groundwater in the next two years by installing
18 about 60 wells by the end of '04.

19 MR. DEE WILLIS: Matt, what is
20 the vadose zone?

21 MR. MATT McCORMICK: What is
22 that?

23 MR. DEE WILLIS: What is the
24 vadose zone?

25 MR. MATT McCORMICK: The

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 vadose zone is the area between the surface and
2 the groundwater.

3 MR. GERRY POLLET: How many
4 groundwater wells will you put in around the
5 low-level burial grounds this year and next
6 year?

7 Ecology's Notice of Deficiency said
8 minimum number required will be 120.

9 MR. MATT McCORMICK: I don't
10 have the exact number.

11 MR. GERRY POLLET: I think
12 it's, between now and 2005, you have like 14.
13 But I could be wrong.

14 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I don't
15 know.

16 MR. DEE WILLIS: Let's keep
17 moving here. Let's take another question,
18 somebody who hasn't spoken yet.

19 MS. CLARE GILBERT: Clare
20 Gilbert. I have a question about the ILAW,
21 which is -- Well, I will let Michael Collins
22 explain.

23 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: The
24 immobilized low-activity waste. The plans for
25 the tank farm waste, the 53 million gallons in

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 the 177 tanks is to split it into two
2 fractions. One is a fraction that contains the
3 vast majority of the high-level waste, or the
4 radioactivity --

5 MR. DEE WILLIS: Define high-
6 level.

7 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: Oh.
8 That's what I'm trying to do. Sorry.

9 They plan on having a smaller volume
10 with most of the radionuclides in it, and then
11 they have a larger volume with the minority of
12 the radionuclides. The high number load of
13 radionuclides is the low-activity waste, or
14 will be the low-activity waste when the
15 vitrification plant is done.

16 MS. CLARE GILBERT: So is it
17 my understanding that originally the plan was
18 to vitrify all of this ILAW? Does the revised
19 Solid Waste EIS consider what's going to be
20 buried, the ILAW that's going to be buried in
21 vitrified form, or does it consider it using
22 the alternative technologies?

23 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: This
24 Environmental Impact Statement assumes that it
25 is vitrified. There is a Tank Farm Closure

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 Environmental Impact Statement that will
2 probably be out for public comment in September
3 that will be looking at the alternative
4 technologies.

5 MR. CLARE GILBERT: Okay. So
6 my question for the Panel is, since it is
7 being, since the EIS doesn't address the ILAW
8 in the form that it's probably going to be in
9 the burial grounds, which is grout or other
10 alternative technologies, what kind of impacts
11 will that have, cumulative impacts that haven't
12 been addressed in the EIS?

13 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I guest
14 I don't, Gerry will respond here in a minute, I
15 don't know if we can assume right now that we
16 would go to an alternative technology.

17 I know they are going to be looking
18 at them, though.

19 MR. GERRY POLLET: The
20 Assistant Secretary of Energy has already
21 signed a plan that calls for 75 to 85 percent
22 of your high-level waste tank waste not to be
23 vitrified. She signed it already. It's in
24 your Hanford performance management plan,
25 approved by -- it's stamped approved by the

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 Assistant Secretary of Energy, Jessie Roberson,
2 August, 2002.

3 And I can cite it because it happens
4 to be an exhibit in our lawsuit.

5 And DOE's decided not to vitrify the
6 waste.

7 Vitrification we know has magnitudes
8 of benefit in terms of protecting the
9 groundwater from contamination. And yet even
10 with vitrified waste in these shallow land
11 disposal for 85 percent of it, what you've got
12 in this model, in this EIS, is at a thousand
13 years you have a huge spike in radioactivity in
14 the groundwater, and for instance, the Native
15 American radiation dose I believe is, under the
16 scenarios, is 900 millirem a year.

17 Five millirem a year exceeds our
18 state hazardous waste cleanup standard. 900
19 causes 900 -- I mean, it's about 200 fatal
20 cancers per 10,000 people exposed. So, it's
21 unacceptable. And yet if you switch from
22 glass, we know that the risk to the groundwater
23 and people using the groundwater will go up by
24 more than one magnitude.

25 MR. DEE WILLIS: Panel?

Panel Discussion (contd)

1 Hanford Site, probably in concrete, because
2 that's the cheapest form, and this EIS doesn't
3 analyze it.

4 It is just more partitioning that's
5 going on of the impacts, more just convenience
6 on the part of the government to not deal with
7 the true magnitude of the problem at the
8 Hanford Site.

9 And there's just so much going on in
10 our society right now, and this is just one of
11 them, and I think we ought to be dealing with
12 it.

13 MR. DEE WILLIS: Mike or Matt?

14 Okay. Next person who hasn't spoken
15 yet. All right. We will go to this gentleman
16 here.

17 MR. MARTIN FLECK: I am Martin
18 Fleck. Actually, my question might be for the
19 facilitator. I am not sure. It is a process
20 question. So I will sort of stand over here.

21 So, it seemed to me from the outset
22 that the citizens outnumbered the
23 representatives here from, you know, of the
24 organization that's calling this hearing, which
25 is the Department of Energy, and I'm surprised

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 to find, I must have missed the introduction.
2 Did I miss an introduction of our Department of
3 Energy person here earlier in the meeting?

4 MR. DEE WILLIS: I did
5 introduce him, but not earlier in the meeting.
6 Just a few minutes ago.

7 MR. MARTIN FLECK: That's what
8 I don't understand. I mean, we so vastly
9 outnumber the representatives of the Department
10 of Energy.

11 For future instances, it is like a
12 feedback thing, in the future, I would ask you
13 to at least identify all the Department of
14 Energy representatives who are present, since
15 we are directing our comments to the Department
16 of Energy.

17 I mean, you know, if the Secretary
18 of Energy were here, that's a person way up
19 higher on the food chain, we'd like to know
20 that person is present.

21 So, Matt, what's your last name?

22 MR. MATT McCORMICK: Matt
23 McCormick.

24 MR. MARTIN FLECK: Yeah. Not
25 that Mike was doing any kind of inadequate job,

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 I realize that, but if we had known, so I would
2 direct Dane's question to you, which is, --

3 MR. DEE WILLIS: You are
4 absolutely right. I apologize for not
5 introducing Matt at the top of the program
6 tonight. And I will do that in the future.

7 MR. MARTIN FLECK: Yeah.
8 Thank you. I mean, ou know, this is a public
9 hearing. We are here representing the public
10 to speak to the representatives of the DOE. I
11 think we ought to know who are the
12 representatives of the DOE present. That's
13 all.

14 So, Matt, do you believe that you
15 are doing this for the good of the country?

16 MR. MATT McCORMICK: Yes.

17 MR. MARTIN FLECK: Can you
18 explain that? How can this be for the good of
19 the country?

20 MR. MATT McCORMICK: Well, I'm
21 here, and I have been in this job for two
22 months, to accelerate cleanup and closure of
23 the Hanford Site. And I believe in that
24 personally, and commit my professional life to
25 that. And have been doing that previously at

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 Rocky Flats and then here.

2 It's important work to me to reduce
3 the threat of Hanford to the environment, to
4 the worker, and to the public. And that's what
5 we're doing.

6 MR. RALPH BRADSHAW: How do
7 you define cleanup, per the Tri-Party
8 Agreement? Because that doesn't include
9 concrete.

10 MR. MATT McCORMICK: Cleanup
11 to me is completing the cleanup in accordance
12 with the regulations.

13 MR. RALPH BRADSHAW: What does
14 that mean in regard to the context of the
15 agreement?

16 MR. MATT McCORMICK: In
17 accordance with the Tri-Party Agreement that
18 implements and integrates the Resource
19 Conservation Act, and CERCLA Act, which I can't
20 spell out that acronym.

21 MR. RALPH BRADSHAW: I am
22 sorry. I'm Ralph.

23 MR. DEE WILLIS: Who's next?

24 MR. JOHN PERREAULT: John
25 Perreault. And this is a question for Matt or

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 for Michael. And I realize you haven't be here
2 that long so you might not be able to answer.

3 But how is the decision made to
4 place those groundwater wells that are a
5 kilometer or is it a mile off the end, and not
6 put them directly on the end?

7 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: It's two
8 different issues. We did the analysis of one
9 kilometer, because the sites, the waste sites
10 are so spread out, we wanted a way to compare
11 them, and our decision was to do that at a
12 kilometer away so we could compare the
13 differences.

14 They were never meant to be a spot
15 to determine compliance.

16 The way we have determined where
17 compliance wells go is it is a negotiation
18 between DOE, EPA and the state of Washington,
19 and it is part of the Tri-Party Agreement
20 negotiations.

21 MR. TOM PERREAULT: So is
22 there not then a rule now that I have heard
23 several times mentioned that the compliance
24 wells do need to be there now, or is that rule
25 something that is being negotiated currently?

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Panel Discussion (contd)

1 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I'm not
2 involved in the negotiations, but I believe
3 they are being negotiated right now.

4 MR. GERRY POLLET: He's
5 referring to, if you build new burial grounds,
6 where do you have to measure the contamination
7 in the groundwater from them?

8 And Washington Administrative Code,
9 Chapter 173-303-665 and other portions of 303,
10 specify that you have to have your groundwater
11 monitoring compliant wells at the edge of the
12 facility and you have to attempt to meet the
13 drinking water standard and other standards at
14 the edge of the dumpsite boundary, not a
15 kilometer away.

16 MR. MICHAEL COLLINS: I'm not
17 disagreeing with you, by the way.

18 MR. GERRY POLLET: And what
19 we've got here is a model that shows a
20 kilometer away, not from the individual
21 landfill even, but from the composite.

22 So it might be several kilometers
23 away from where you might have the greatest
24 impact, and it's not where you have the
25 greatest cumulative impact as I shared earlier.

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Panel Discussion (contd); TSE-0035

1 So what you don't know here is if
2 you build the landfill here and you build it in
3 this fashion at this site and you dump all
4 these different types of wastes together in one
5 landfill with just one type of liner, will that
6 exceed the drinking water standards at the edge
7 of the facility, and are there alternatives
8 that you could build new ones where you don't
9 exceed drinking water standards at the edge of
10 the facility?

11 You will never know. You will never
12 know under this schematic, unless we force them
13 to withdraw the EIS and resubmit it after they
14 do that analysis, landfill by landfill.

15 MR. DEE WILLIS: Be succinct.
16 Any more on that question? Okay.

17 **TSE-0035** DR. JIM TROMHOLD: Dr. Jim
18 Tromhold. This is directed to the agency, I am
19 sorry, I didn't get the new name. But you
20 mentioned the name accelerated, and you are
21 committed to acceleration, and no question of
22 your integrity or motivation. This is not a
23 question just to you. It is the whole concept
24 of acceleration.

25 We are a society that, I mean, the