



# Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, M.D., Governor



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October 5, 2011

Mr. Matt McCormick, Manager  
U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office  
PO Box 550, A7-50  
Richland, WA, 99352

Dear Matt:

With the beginning of the new federal fiscal year, and the completion of most Hanford work funded through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), it provides an appropriate opportunity to comment on the U.S. Department of Energy's Richland Office's (DOE-RL) use of the \$1.6 billion in ARRA funding that was received.

We believe that DOE-RL and its contractors deserve considerable credit for quickly identifying important work that fit the criteria of "shovel-ready." Overall, we are greatly impressed with the substantial cleanup progress that was made at Hanford with ARRA funding. From the retrieval of suspect transuranic waste and the resumption of transuranic waste shipments, to the extensive excavation of contaminated soils and building demolition, DOE-RL and its contractors demonstrated they can make considerable progress when they have sufficient funds. We are especially pleased with the progress towards demolishing the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) and the focus on expanding the groundwater treatment capacity at the site.

PFP has long been recognized as one of the greatest hazards at Hanford – not only to the workforce, but also to the public and the environment. In addition, maintaining the facility in a safe manner diverts tens of millions of dollars each year from other cleanup activities. We are pleased that even with the end of ARRA funding, DOE-RL continues to prioritize funds for demolition and cleanup work for this facility.

As you are aware, groundwater protection has been one of Oregon's highest priorities throughout the entire Hanford cleanup. Groundwater is the most likely pathway by which Oregon and its residents could potentially be impacted by Hanford contaminants. As a result, we were greatly pleased to see a large portion of the ARRA funds dedicated to groundwater protection projects.

The 200 West Groundwater Treatment facility, once completed, will be the largest groundwater treatment facility at Hanford. And, unlike most of the existing pump-and-treat facilities on site, the 200 West facility will remove eight contaminants of concern from the groundwater. This

facility, along with new and expanded facilities to treat chromium in the River Corridor, will significantly expand the site's ability to treat groundwater and protect the Columbia River.

As it appears that budgets may be increasingly tight for at least the short-term, we encourage you to try and ensure that groundwater treatment facilities and activities are fully funded so that these new facilities can operate at their full capacity.

Congratulations on these many important accomplishments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ken Niles". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ken" being more prominent than the last name "Niles".

Ken Niles  
Nuclear Safety Division Administrator

c.c. Jane Hedges, Washington Department of Ecology  
Dennis Faulk, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Stuart Harris, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
Russell Jim, Yakama Nation  
Gabriel Bohnee, Nez Perce Tribe  
Max Power, Chair, Oregon Hanford Cleanup Board  
Susan Leckband, Chair, Hanford Advisory Board