

# Fluor Hanford

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## HANFORD MOVES ADDITIONAL SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL

*Continues Work to Protect Columbia River*

**Richland, Wash., February 1, 2001** -- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and contractor Fluor Hanford, Inc. (FHI) today successfully completed the second shipment of spent nuclear fuel from the K-West Reactor Basin to the nearby Cold Vacuum Drying Facility (CVDF), where it will be dried and prepared for long-term safe storage. After drying, the fuel is transported nine miles away from the Columbia River to Hanford's Central Plateau, where it can remain in safe interim storage for many years. The first fuel movement occurred on December 7, 2000.

"We've now shifted into a steady, operating mode as we continue to remove spent nuclear fuel from wet storage near the Columbia River," stated FHI Executive Vice President Dave Van Leuven. "The first shipment was a key cleanup achievement. Today, we're demonstrating that we can proceed safely and consistently until the K West and K East basins are empty." Over the next four years about 2,300 tons of fuel will be moved out of the K Basins -- two water-filled and leak-prone pools located about 400 yards from the Columbia River. The spent nuclear fuel in the K Basins is one of the greatest threats Hanford poses to the environment. Each container of fuel that leaves the K Basins holds about 300 of the 105,000 fuel assemblies that were in basin water when the Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) Project began. Each container also removes about 150,000 curies of radioactivity from the river corridor.

Jim Wicks, SNF Project Director, is proud of today's accomplishment: "With the movement of the second container of SNF out of the K-West Basin, we have shown that we can keep up the momentum and get this job done safely. I congratulate the Project workers, and thank them for their professional work." FHI oversaw the construction of two, new, one-of-a-kind facilities to support the project, and is also in charge of the multi-contractor team entrusted with moving the spent nuclear fuel.

The SNF Project implements a unique process in which each irradiated fuel assembly is washed, separated into inner and outer components, sorted, re-packaged in sturdy steel containers, and lifted out of the K-Basins water inside a large shipping cask. After transport to the CVDF, the fuel is dried inside the containers, and then surrounded by a blanket of inert helium gas to prevent chemical reactions during long-term storage.

After being dried, each container is transported to dry storage in steel tubes below a new facility in Hanford's interior. The fuel eventually will be moved to a national spent fuel repository.

Moving Hanford's spent fuel away from the Columbia River is a key component of DOE's work to restore the Columbia River corridor by 2012. After removal of the spent fuel, sludge, water and debris, both basins will be turned over to the Environmental Restoration project for disposition along with Hanford's other reactors.

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