



Release date: October, 2000

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HANFORD COMPLETES SHIPMENTS OF SURPLUS URANIUM

667 Metric Tons of Uranium Trioxide Safely Shipped to Portsmouth Site in Ohio

The final shipment of surplus uranium trioxide from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Hanford Site in southeastern Washington arrived safely at the DOE's Portsmouth Site in Ohio on October 2.

The shipment included 12 T-Hoppers - inverted, funnel shaped containers surrounded by a heavy frame - containing approximately 55 metric tons (one metric ton equals approximately 2200 pounds) of uranium trioxide powder. Uranium trioxide is a low-enriched uranium powder that resembles small fertilizer pellets.

In all, DOE and Fluor Hanford, Inc. (FHI) shipped 184 T-Hoppers containing 667 metric tons of uranium trioxide to the Portsmouth Site in 49 separate shipments. The first shipment left Hanford July 27, 2000. Prior to shipment, the uranium trioxide was stored in the 200 West Area, part of the Hanford Site called the Central Plateau.

In addition to the uranium trioxide, DOE and FHI also plan to ship 235 metric tons of surplus uranium metal billets - currently stored in Hanford's 300 Area - to the Portsmouth Site. Together, these shipments will reduce Hanford's surplus uranium inventory by nearly 900 metric tons.

"This is another example of DOE, its contractors, and the regulators working together to get tangible results at Hanford," said Dave Evans, DOE's Facility Transition Division Director. "Moving uranium out of the 200 and 300 Areas are important steps in DOE's plans to transform Hanford's Central Plateau and restore the Columbia River corridor."

The June 2000 "Environmental Assessment for Disposition of Surplus Hanford Site Uranium" (EA-1319) identified 1,866 metric tons of uranium on the Hanford Site as surplus. In that assessment, DOE determined that 900 metric tons of uranium trioxide and uranium metal billets have market value, and would be shipped to the Uranium Management Center at the Portsmouth Site.

The Environmental Assessment also identified another 135 metric tons of slightly contaminated uranium fuel and five metric tons of scrap that will be dispositioned as waste in Hanford's low-level burial

grounds in the Central Plateau. The remaining 825 metric tons of uranium will continue to be stored, pending a decision on final disposition.

"This project has been a classic example of teamwork between the DOE and contractors at Hanford and Portsmouth," said Singh Bath, FHI's Accelerated Deactivation Project Manager. "Personally, this has been a challenging and very satisfying project."

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RL 00-097

Historical Note: The U.S. Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office manages the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State. Hanford was established during World War II as part of the top secret Manhattan Project to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons. Weapons material production was halted in the late 1980s. The Hanford Site is now engaged in the world's largest cleanup effort to deal with the legacy of radioactive and hazardous wastes that resulted from the plutonium production era. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Washington Department of Ecology regulate Hanford's cleanup program under a long-term compliance contract called the Tri-Party Agreement. This agreement sets the framework and timelines on the cleanup work so that Hanford meets environmental standards. Hanford cleanup is focused on three outcomes: restoring the Columbia River Corridor for other uses, transitioning the Central Plateau to long term waste treatment and storage, and preparing for the future.

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