

The Department of Energy responds

Jessie Roberson, DOE assistant secretary for Environmental Management, commented on Washington State's legal action:

“As we entered our negotiations with the state, we made it clear that the we could not agree to expand the state's regulatory authority. We cannot agree to turn over regulatory authority to the State of Washington, or any other state, by agreeing to legally enforceable commitments regarding the disposition of transuranic waste.

“In the course of our negotiations with the state, DOE offered aggressive and enforceable commitments to retrieve large quantities of buried waste, to determine whether this buried waste and other quantities of waste are mixed waste, and to treat Hanford's anticipated inventory of mixed low-level waste. We also offered target milestones for the certification of transuranic waste so that it can be sent to DOE's disposal facility in New Mexico. However, the state pressed to gain regulatory authority of transuranic waste, which we cannot agree to by law.

“We are extremely disappointed and believe it is very unfortunate that the state has decided to go to court in an attempt to halt the work of the Department of Energy to clean up the legacy of the Cold War. Efforts spent in court would be better spent making progress on the cleanup of the Hanford Site.” ■