

# House bill would give ORP six more years

The fiscal year 2002 Defense Authorization bill, which funds defense-related cleanup activities at Hanford, passed the House of Representatives last Wednesday, Sept. 26. According to Congressman Doc Hastings included is a section authored by him that changes federal law to extend authorization of the Department of Energy Office of River Protection through 2010.

The Office of River Protection oversees Hanford's River Protection Project to manage Hanford's tank waste, as well as the design and construction contract for a Waste Treatment Plant to vitrify the waste. Without the extension, the existing five-year congressional authorization would expire at the end of fiscal year 2004.

"When I worked to create ORP," Hastings said, "it was viewed as a model to focus decision-making authority and accountability at the local level, and was given a five-year authorization to test its effectiveness. ORP has been a clear success, and the House recognized this by officially codifying ORP's role at least through the vitrification plant's construction and initial operation. There is no question that the ORP structure has worked and merits not only continuation, but I believe examination for how it could be applied to the nation's other cleanup challenges."

At this writing, the Senate version of the Defense Authorization bill being debated does not include the ORP extension. ♦