Office of River Protection

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
June 12, 2003

HANFORD TANKS CONNECTED TO TREATMENT SITE

The last of the piping between large radioactive waste storage tanks has been connected to the site of a treatment plant under construction at the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Hanford Site in southeast Washington.

Working for the DOE's Office of River Protection, tank cleanup contractor CH2M HILL Hanford Group, Inc. has been working over the last year to install the transfer route in order to feed waste to Hanford's Waste Treatment Plant, where the waste will be turned into glass.

"This is an important step in Hanford cleanup, because the tanks are now connected to the site where the waste will be turned into glass," said Roy Schepens, DOE Office of River Protection Manager. "Treating the waste is key to reducing the risks to the environment, the public, and our Hanford workforce."

Hanford's 177 large underground waste tanks contain approximately 53 million gallons of radioactive and hazardous waste from decades of defense production.

CH2M HILL will now focus its preparations to feed waste to treatment facilities on upgrading ten of Hanford's million-gallon waste tanks. As waste is retrieved from several older tanks across the Hanford site, it will be stored in those newer, safer tanks until the waste is treated. The site's Waste Treatment Plant is expected to be fully operational and treating tank waste in 2011.

"By installing the piping early, we can now focus our cleanup efforts on retrieving waste from the older tanks, making tank upgrades, and closing Hanford's tanks," said Ed Aromi, CH2M HILL Hanford Group president and general manager.

Approximately 10 miles of piping has been installed recently in Hanford's tank farms to connect the tanks and the tanks to the treatment site. In addition, several waste transfer hubs—called "pits"—have been upgraded.

Project managers reduced the cost of installing the piping from the tanks to the Waste Treatment Plant by approximately $20 million by modifying the original piping system concept. The work was completed more than two months ahead of schedule.

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ORP 03-012