



March 2, 2018

Mr. Gerry Pollet, J.D.
Executive Director
Heart of America Northwest Research Center
444 NE Ravenna Boulevard #406
Seattle, Washington 98115

Re: Letter Regarding Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) Demolition Contamination Spread Events

References: See page 3

Dear Mr. Pollet:

Thank you for your recent letter to the United States Department of Energy - Richland Operations Office (USDOE), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Washington State Departments of Health (Health) and Ecology (reference 1).

The three regulatory agencies (EPA, Health, and Ecology) are providing this joint response to your letter. We appreciate Heart of America Northwest's interest in the contamination events related to Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) demolition activities and the regulatory agencies' response to those events. By way of background, we think it is important to first reiterate each of the regulatory agencies' roles and authorities regarding work at PFP.

As you know, Article XXIV of the Hanford Federal Facility and Consent Order (HFFACO) gives Ecology and EPA joint authority to determine the lead regulatory agency and regulatory process for specific portions of the Hanford Site that are being cleaned up under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA).

Ecology has been chosen as the lead regulatory agency for PFP. However, by statute, USDOE is the lead agency for implementation of CERCLA removal actions. Here, the PFP demolition is being conducted as a removal action, which means USDOE is responsible for development and implementation of the PFP Removal Action Work Plan (reference 2).

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As stated in the HFFACO, Health is not part of the Tri-Party Agreement (DOE, EPA, and Ecology) and, therefore, does not have authority over CERCLA actions, including this PFP removal action. However, as Health is the state radiation control agency (RCW 70.98.050), Ecology asks Health to provide reviews and recommendations on radiological issues, as is allowed by the HFFACO.

The Applicable or Relevant and Appropriate Requirements (ARARS) in the PFP Removal Action Work Plan include the 10 mrem/yr exposure standard via 40 CFR 61.92. WAC 246-247-040 *General Standards* (3) *BARCT* and (4) *ALARACT* and WAC 246-247-075 *Monitoring, testing & quality assurance* are also called out in the ARARS.

The ARARS give Health the authority to provide oversight of USDOE's work, to conduct sampling to ensure that emissions of radionuclides to the ambient air do not exceed amounts that would cause any member of the public to receive in any year an effective dose equivalent of 10 mrem/yr, and to ensure that best practices are being conducted.

All three regulatory agencies are concerned about the recent spread of contamination at PFP. On January 9, 2018, Ecology and EPA, with the support of Health, issued a stop work letter to USDOE regarding work activities at the PFP (reference 3). The letter communicated to USDOE the agencies' determination that the recent contamination events at the PFP are creating a danger to the health or welfare of the people on the Hanford Site and to the environment, within the meaning of Article XXXII of the HFFACO ("Creation of Danger"). The letter ordered USDOE to stop all work at the PFP until Ecology and EPA determine that USDOE has taken sufficient actions to allow the remaining work to continue in a safe manner.

Regarding the Public Records Act request submitted to Ecology and Health on December 31, 2017 (reference 4), each agency will provide responsive records as appropriate, in accordance with their respective rules and procedures established pursuant to RCW Chapter 42.56. USDOE has also placed a number of records regarding the spread of contamination incident on their website at http://www.hanford.gov/page.cfm/Updates_on_Plutonium_Finishing_Plant.

Regarding your request that a public meeting be held on this event and the Plutonium Uranium Extraction (PUREX) Tunnels, Ecology did commit to hold another public meeting on the PUREX Tunnels. A second public meeting to discuss the Tunnels will be held in conjunction with the public comment period for the class 3 permit modification request USDOE submitted to address stabilization of the Tunnels. We anticipate that public meeting will be held in March 2018.

For specific discussions on PFP, Ecology would recommend that Heart of America Northwest request PFP be added as a topic for the Hanford Advisory Board Meeting or River and Plateau Subcommittee agendas.

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If you have additional questions about these issues, please contact Emy Laija, Remedial Project Manager for EPA, at (202) 564-2724 or laija.emerald@epa.gov; Stephanie Schleif, Facility Transition Project Manager for Ecology, at (509) 372-7929 or stephanie.schleif@ecy.wa.gov; or Crystal Mathey, Radiation Health Physicist for Health, at (509) 943-5216 or crystal.mathey@doh.wa.gov.

Sincerely,



Alexandra K. Smith
Program Manager
Nuclear Waste Program
Washington State Department of Ecology



Dave Einan
Manager
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United States Environmental Protection Agency



Mikel J. Elsen
Director
Office of Radiation Protection
Washington State Department of Health

References:

1. Letter dated December 31, 2017, from Gerry Pollet, Heart of America Northwest, "Information regarding Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) demolition contamination spread events; and, how will USDOE, EPA, Ecology and WA DoH change plans to respond to, and prevent, worker and public exposure, and environmental contamination for demolition activities?"
2. *Removal Action Work Plan for the Deactivation, Decontamination, Decommissioning, and Demolition of the Plutonium Finishing Plant Complex*, DOE/RL-2011-03 Rev. 1, March 2016
3. Letter dated January 9, 2018, from Ecology and EPA to USDOE, "Re: Creation of Danger Pursuant to Article XXXII Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (HFFACO)"
4. Public Records request dated December 31, 2017, from Heart of America Northwest to Department of Health and Ecology Public Records Officers, "RE: Public Records request pursuant to RCA Chapter 42.56 regarding Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) demolition contamination spread events; and, plans to respond to, and prevent, worker and public exposure, and environmental contamination for demolition activities"

cc: See page 4

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cc electronic:

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Tom Teynor, USDOE
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cc: NWP Central Files