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BuzzFeed News  
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Washington, DC 20009

DOE's Richland Operations Office and Office of River Protection  
FOIA Request Service Center  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW

August 8, 2018

FOIA Requested. Fee Waiver Requested.

Dear FOIA Officer,

I am requesting under the federal Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 for access to and copies of all communication among Department of Energy staff, including but not limited to Doug Shoop and Anne White, relating and/or referring to the report titled: "Plutonium Particle Examination by Scanning Electron Microscopy Analysis of Plutonium Finishing Plant Air Filters and Tech Smears."

Per this report ([LAB-RPT-18-00003](#)), which was prepared for the U.S. Department of Energy Assistant Secretary for Emergency Management by Washington River Protection Solutions and published on March 2018, three of the 15 samples taken from PFP had alpha levels over 10,000 dpm and plutonium particles were detected.

The date range for this request is December 18, 2017, when a demolition work stop was announced at the Hanford Site's Plutonium Finishing Plant following the discovery of radioactive contamination outside the radiological buffer zone, and the date the search for responsive requests is processed.

The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 amended the FOIA as follows (5 USC 552(a)(8)):

- (A) An agency shall—
  - (i) withhold information under this section only if—
    - (I) the agency reasonably foresees that disclosure would harm an interest protected by an exemption described in subsection (b); or
    - (II) disclosure is prohibited by law; and
  - (ii) (I) consider whether partial disclosure of information is possible whenever the agency determines that a full disclosure of a requested record is not possible; and
  - (II) take reasonable steps necessary to segregate and release nonexempt information.

The Department of Energy should not fail to meet the requirements of Section 552(a)(8) when processing my request and release responsive records to me in full or at least in part, and on a rolling basis as the records become available.

I am making this request as a journalist and intend to use the information in order to write and publish articles for public dissemination. BuzzFeed News employs over 100 reporters who cover a wide range of news topics. Therefore, I request that the EPA recognize BuzzFeed's News media status and waive any fees associated with responding, including research and

duplication. I am willing to pay up to \$25 and ask that I be contacted if the response to this request will cost more.

I also request an expedited processing of this request for records. Bioassay test results show that 11 Hanford workers were contaminated with plutonium during the release of radioactive particles from the Plutonium Finishing Plant demolition site on the DOE-run Hanford site last December. After halting work there for more than eight months, Energy Department officials are looking to resume work. I obtained a copy of this plutonium analysis report, which I wrote about for BuzzFeed News [here](#) and made publicly available [here](#). Officials had described the report to me as a response to questions about whether high-fired oxides were found at the PFP demolition zone. But this report does not clarify whether high-fired oxides were present, suggesting the analysis needed to make this decision wasn't done or not included in this report. High-fired oxides pose a larger health threat to worker, and it remains an open question whether they are present at PFP as talks about resuming demolition push forward.

I also request that the records be provided in electronic form, to the extent that this is possible, and that any questions about this request are provided by phone or email. My contact information is

Sincerely,  
Zahra Hirji  
Reporter, BuzzFeed News