



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
HANFORD

www.hanford.gov

For Immediate Release:

December 5, 2017

Media Contacts:

Kris Holmes, DOE, (509) 376-5803, Kristen.L.Holmes@rl.doe.gov



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Richland Operations
Office

U.S. Department of Energy Announces Plans to Stabilize Second PUREX Waste Storage Tunnel

RICHLAND, Wash. – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will stabilize a second waste storage tunnel on the Hanford Site, known as Plutonium Uranium Extraction Plant (PUREX) Tunnel 2, with engineered grout.

Today's announcement follows the safe and successful placement of engineered grout stabilizing PUREX Tunnel 1; workers began placing grout in Tunnel 1 Oct. 3 and finished placing grout in that tunnel Nov. 11.

As with Tunnel 1, the use of engineered grout will stabilize Tunnel 2, which was built in the early 1960s; reduce risk to workers and the environment; and allow future disposition of the equipment and materials in the tunnel.

"DOE is committed to the safety of its workforce, the public, and the environment. Grouting safely and efficiently reduces near term risk by providing interim stabilization while DOE and Ecology

evaluate future closure options,” said Doug Shoop, manager of the DOE Richland Operations Office.

The placement of engineered grout is the alternative recommended by an independent panel of experts who evaluated options for stabilizing Tunnel 2. The panel considered several stabilization options and assessed them based on safety, ease, cost of implementation, and whether the alternative allows for future disposition of the equipment in the tunnels. The panel noted in its report that grout stabilization provides maximum protection of workers, the public, and the environment while not precluding future options for disposition. The panel noted DOE’s successful use across the complex of grout to immobilize contamination.

“I want to thank those who provided their input on this important recovery action,” Shoop said. “It is vital to have considered every option.”

Tunnel 2 has been under continual surveillance. Tunnel 2 is considerably larger than Tunnel 1. It is nearly 1,700 feet long, is constructed of steel and concrete, was used between 1964 and 1996, and contains 28 rail cars containing radiologically contaminated plutonium processing equipment. Placement of grout is expected to begin before the end of the current fiscal year (which ends in September 2018), allowing time for incorporation of lessons learned from Tunnel 1, development of work controls and design, and consideration of seasonal conditions for grout placement.

Copies of DOE letters notifying the Washington State Department of Ecology of plans to stabilize Tunnel 2, as well as a copy of the report by the independent panel of experts, have been placed on the Hanford Site website at <http://www.hanford.gov/page.cfm/PUREXTunnelsInformation>.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is responsible for the federal government’s cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of plutonium production at the Hanford Site near Richland, Wash. Except for a tank waste mission managed by the DOE Office of River Protection, the DOE Richland Operations Office is responsible for all remaining Hanford cleanup and is currently focused on cleaning out and demolishing the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and waste, treating contaminated groundwater, moving radioactive sludge out of the K West Basin and away from the Columbia River, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future. The office oversees Hanford Site work that is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,000 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov.



Questions? [Contact Us](#)

STAY CONNECTED:



SUBSCRIBER SERVICES:

[Manage Preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) | [Help](#)