



A Citizen's Guide

Scoping the Tank Closure & Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) is preparing a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to evaluate options for managing and disposing of waste, selecting supplemental treatments, closing tanks, and closing the Fast Flux Test Facility (FFTF) at Hanford. USDOE seeks comments on the scope for the new EIS.

Background

A January 9, 2006, legal settlement requires USDOE to prepare the *Tank Closure and Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement for the Hanford Site, Richland, Washington*. USDOE intends for the EIS to provide a comprehensive and integrated look at near-term waste management and tank waste cleanup actions at Hanford.

What are the key points of the settlement?

- Expand the existing Tank Closure EIS, which was in development, and incorporate solid waste management decisions into the new EIS.
- Create a single integrated groundwater analysis that addresses cumulative impacts and waste types in the Hanford Solid Waste EIS.
- Use the Hanford Solid Waste EIS for limited decision making until the new EIS is complete.
- Continues Ecology's designation as a cooperating agency in preparing the new EIS.
- Prohibit importation of offsite waste except as permitted in existing stipulations.

What are USDOE's and Ecology's roles in the new EIS?

For this EIS, USDOE is the Federal Lead Agency and Ecology is a Cooperating Agency. As the Lead Agency, the USDOE has the primary responsibility for preparing the EIS and the Record of Decision. The Lead Agency is responsible for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This entails conducting scoping, seeking technical expertise from other agencies, preparing or contracting preparation of the draft EIS, collecting comments, publishing the Final EIS and publishing the Record of Decision.

As a Cooperating Agency, Ecology participates closely with USDOE to provide advice and assistance, particularly in matters like requirements in the

State's Environmental Policy Act and regulatory impacts and requirements. Ecology may offer advice and assistance in other parts of the process, as agreed to by the USDOE. The specific roles and responsibilities of each agency are spelled out in the Memorandum of Understanding between USDOE and Ecology, which is available at <http://tinyurl.com/dody4>.

What is scoping?

The purpose of scoping is to

- Identify concerns of the affected public and agencies.
- Refine the issues and alternatives the EIS should examine in detail.
- Ensure that the draft EIS addresses the right issues.

Scoping addresses the range of cleanup actions, their environmental impacts, and which alternatives to include or rule out. Sometimes the scoping process identifies issues in a proposal, which EIS preparers can address.



Double-shell tanks under construction in 1975

What does the new EIS cover?

The EIS will form the basis for making important decisions about Hanford's cleanup, including:

- the final condition of the 177 underground tanks that hold high-level nuclear waste
- the final treatment and disposal of those wastes
- the final decommissioning of the FFTF
- on-site disposal alternatives for Hanford's low-level waste (LLW) and mixed low-level waste (MLLW) and LLW and MLLW from other USDOE sites

The EIS will reanalyze groundwater impacts. It will include a cumulative analysis of sitewide environmental impacts. The new EIS will include a reanalysis of onsite disposal alternatives for low-level and mixed low-level radioactive waste from Hanford and other USDOE sites. (Mixed waste contains both radioactive and dangerous waste components.)

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We want you to help us evaluate options for managing and disposing of waste, selecting supplemental treatments, closing tanks, and closing the Fast Flux Test Facility at Hanford.

Attend a Public Meeting

City	Date	Place
Seattle	Tuesday, March 21, 2006	Seattle Center Northwest Building, Lopez Room
Portland	Wednesday, March 22, 2006	Red Lion - Convention Center 1021 NE Grand Ave
Hood River	Thursday, March 23, 2006	Columbia Gorge Hotel 4000 Westcliff Ave.
Pasco	Tuesday, March 28, 2006	TRAC 6600 Burden Blvd.

Registration and information at 6 p.m., hearings begin at 7 p.m.

Public Involvement Process

Planning Activity	Dates	Public Involvement Opportunities
Develop preliminary alternatives: Identify a range of reasonable alternatives.	March - April 2006	Comment on the initial alternatives. Attend public meetings. Mail, email, phone, or give comments orally at the public meetings.
Prepare and publish draft Environmental Impact Statement: Prepare a draft describing alternatives and their impacts. Distribute draft for public comment.	Spring 2007	Comment on the alternatives and impacts in the draft EIS. Attend public meetings, mail, email, phone, or give comments orally at the meetings.
Revise and publish final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision: Analyze comments, revise draft, distribute final EIS and Record of Decision.	Fall 2008	The analyses in the EIS will be the basis for permitting decisions and cleanup actions mandated by the Tri-Party Agreement. The public can review and comment on these cleanup decisions.



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