



U.S. DEPARTMENT
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Hanford Site

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Hanford Advances Common Sense Improvement to Expedite Tank Waste Mission

RICHLAND, Wash. – The U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) Hanford Field Office in coordination with the Washington State Department of Ecology, announced today it is advancing a permit improvement that could enable the Waste Treatment Plant to process up to 20 percent more tank waste. This effort will reduce costs, increase operational flexibility, and enable continued tank retrievals. By putting innovation and efficiency to work, through initiatives like this, Hanford has the opportunity to expedite remediation and revitalization of the Site.

“Advancing this permit modification reflects our commitment to teamwork, responsible stewardship of taxpayer investments and a practical approach to cleanup,” said Ray Geimer, Hanford Field Office Manager. “By creating a more efficient pathway for managing secondary waste produced as a byproduct of the glass-making process, we can keep treatment operations moving and expedite the cleanup mission.”

For every gallon of Hanford tank waste solidified in glass, between one and three gallons of less hazardous secondary waste is created as a byproduct of the glass-making process.

The permit change will enable a shift from solidifying a portion of the less hazardous secondary material in glass to solidifying it in grout locally and shipping it out of Washington state for commercial disposal. Building on the highly successful 2,000 gallon Test Bed Initiative, this will maximize throughput of the Waste Treatment Plant, improve operational flexibility, and expedite cleanup while maintaining safety and regulatory compliance. This will enable Hanford to avoid operational challenges and keep the Waste Treatment Plant melters focused on their primary mission—turning tank waste into glass.

“This is a common-sense step that supports both efficiency and safety,” Geimer added. “It gives the site additional flexibility while continuing to meet regulatory requirements and protecting workers, the public and the environment.”

The permit modification aligns with the broader cleanup strategy at Hanford which emphasizes safety, efficiency, innovation, and risk reduction. By enabling an additional disposal pathway for secondary waste produced as a byproduct of the glass-making process, Hanford can shorten cleanup timelines, reduce costs to the American taxpayer, and sustain progress on tank waste retrieval and treatment—all while keeping community safety and environmental protection as core priorities.

The public is encouraged to participate in the comment period regarding the proposed permit modification and attend the upcoming public meeting, at 5:30 p.m. on March 24th at the Richland Public Library, where additional information and opportunities for input will be provided.

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The Department of Energy (DOE) is engaged in one of the great public works of this century at the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Responsible for the federal government’s cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of producing plutonium through the 1980s, DOE is transforming the site back into a 24/7 operations mode to treat tank waste from the production era. The DOE Hanford Field Office is responsible for the safe and efficient retrieval, treatment and disposal of the 56 million gallons of chemical and radioactive waste stored in Hanford’s underground tanks. The mission includes building and commissioning the world’s largest radioactive waste treatment plant, which will immobilize the legacy tank waste through vitrification. The DOE Hanford Field Office is also responsible for all remaining Hanford cleanup and is currently focused on stabilizing and demolishing former plutonium production structures, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and waste, treating contaminated groundwater, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future, with an emphasis on supporting the tank waste mission. Hanford Site work is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 13,000 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov for more information about the Hanford Site



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