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## **Department of Energy and Washington State Reach Agreement on Management of Mixed Waste at Hanford Site**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – The U.S. Department of Energy announced today it has reached an agreement with the State of Washington on the retrieval, storage and processing of mixed waste at the Department's Hanford Site. This agreement comes after several months of negotiations between the parties.

The agreement would make significant changes to the M-91 milestone series of the Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Compliance Agreement (HFFACO), also known as the Tri-Party Agreement. The agreement will not become final until the parties consult with area Tribes and the Hanford Advisory Board, and consider comments from the public.

These changes would require DOE to exhume and classify buried waste that was placed in retrievable storage between 1970 and 1988. DOE would be required to treat the mixed low-level waste that is retrieved as well as that which is already in storage or generated in the future. Retrieved transuranic waste would be classified and placed in appropriate storage facilities pending its eventual shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in southeastern New Mexico

The agreement would replace the Washington State Department of Ecology Director's Determination for the dispute regarding the M-91 milestone series issued in March 2002. In addition, the agreement requires withdrawal of the Washington Department of Ecology's Administrative Order of April 2003, and dismissal of DOE's challenges to those actions.

The agreement also calls for the parties to seek an expedited judicial resolution of their dispute regarding whether the State can require treatment of mixed transuranic waste destined for WIPP. Should the State prevail, a set of milestones requiring treatment or certification of this waste for shipment to WIPP would go into effect.

"We are pleased to come to resolution with the State on this important matter," said DOE Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management Jessie Roberson. "We are anxious to continue cleaning up and reducing risk at Hanford, which has been our priority all along. Despite this dispute, the cleanup of these wastes at Hanford continues to accelerate. Since March, we have treated approximately 750 cubic meters of mixed low-level waste, sent 37 shipments of mixed and non-mixed transuranic waste to WIPP, and have already begun to retrieve and classify buried waste."

"This settlement was a significant coming together of all parties involved to accelerate cleanup of this hazardous material," said Tom Sansonetti, Assistant Attorney General for the Justice Department's Environment and Natural Resources Division. "This is clearly the best outcome for the environment and the Hanford Site."

The agreement, once final, would require DOE to:

- Complete retrieval of contact-handled low-level and transuranic waste by 2010
- Complete retrieval of remote-handled low-level and transuranic waste by 2018
- Complete treatment by December 2009 of contact-handled mixed low-level waste currently in above-ground storage and that which has been retrieved as of June 2009.
- Classify and treat newly generated mixed low-level waste.

"This agreement signals a return to a more cooperative and collaborative approach to the challenges presented by the cleanup of this complex site," said Keith A. Klein, Manager of DOE's Richland Operations Office. "We have already demonstrated our ability to address these difficult cleanup issues, and I am looking forward to working with the State and EPA to find ways to accelerate it."

During the next 30 days, the parties will consult with Tribes and the Hanford Advisory Board, followed by a public comment period. The complete agreement package will be available on the Hanford website, at [www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov).

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