

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 18, 2007

The Honorable Clay Sell
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Deputy Secretary Sell:

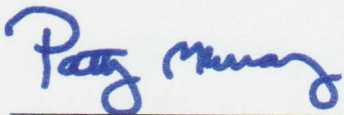
In February of last year, the Secretary announced the Department of Energy (DOE) would compete the contract for management and operation of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL). Since that time there has been no visible progress on the RFP process - not even a draft proposal released for public comment. We have never objected to the decision to compete this contract, but it is inexcusable for the Department to leave the lab, its dedicated scientists and workers, and the local community in limbo over the future of this national asset.

Of particular concern, and the primary motivation for our letter, is the still unresolved matter of PNNL's "Use Permit." We understand the Use Permit concept is unique among DOE laboratories, yet it has been a part of the contractual arrangement between the federal government and the operator of PNNL since its inception in 1964.

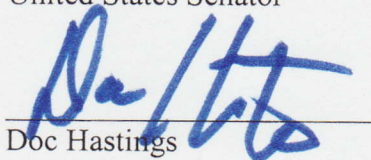
The Use Permit is based on existing statutory authority of the Department and has created substantial synergism among the staff performing research for various sponsors, including the federal government, state governments, industrial research organizations, and international organizations. The Use Permit creates innovation, economic development, jobs, and has been a clear success for the American taxpayer. In addition, there does not appear to be any legal or practical reason why the Department would preclude the continuation of the Use Permit as part of any RFP.

For these reasons, we strongly support the continuation of the "Use Permit" and ask the Department to communicate with us about its intentions. We are prepared to meet and discuss our concerns, though it is certainly our hope that DOE will soon properly resolve the Use Permit matter and act after sixteen months of silence on its announced contract competition.

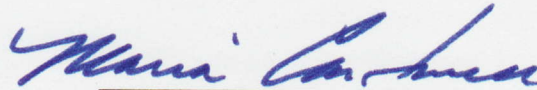
Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Doc Hastings
Congressman



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Norm Dicks
Congressman