

DOC HASTINGS

4TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

March 14, 2007

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW, Room 7256
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

As you and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation consider recommendations for the National Historic Landmark designation, I write with strong support for a National Historic Landmark designation for the Hanford site's historic B Reactor.

The B Reactor – the world's first full scale plutonium production reactor – is a treasure not just to the local community in my district, but also to the entire nation. The B Reactor embodies the will of the American people during the early days of the Manhattan Project. It represents one of many firsts that our nation has achieved in the field of science and nuclear energy. It stands as a technical marvel that helped America end World War II and win the Cold War.

Built as part of World War II's Manhattan Project, B Reactor was completed in eleven months – and in September of 1944 it proved that large scale controlled nuclear fission was possible. It produced the plutonium for the world's first nuclear test at the Trinity site, and produced the tritium needed for the world's first thermonuclear explosion. As the first full scale reactor of its kind, its design influenced the design of nuclear reactors for generations to come.

The National Park Service's own Special Resource Study on the Manhattan Project Sites states that the B Reactor and its surrounding facilities are "modern marvels of engineering" and that the B Reactor itself "retains a high degree of integrity." According to the B Reactor's registration form for the National Register of Historic Places, "Nuclear production of electricity... became possible after scientists worked out early problems with the Hanford B Reactor."

I wholeheartedly believe that B Reactor deserves the highest consideration from the federal government for historic recognition and preservation, and appreciate your consideration of this letter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Doc Hastings".

Doc Hastings
Member of Congress

cc: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Mary A. Bomar, National Park Service