

DOC HASTINGS

4TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

March 19, 2008

The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David L. Hobson
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Hobson:

We are writing to request a programmatic increase for the Department of Energy Environmental Management program's Hanford site in Washington state. Nuclear waste cleanup at Hanford has a significant impact on the Pacific Northwest and we are united in our support for a funding level that will enable the federal government to meet its legal and contractual cleanup obligations.

As you know, the President's budget request for Hanford cleanup is inadequate and would risk stalling or halting critical cleanup projects. As you develop the Fiscal Year 2009 Energy and Water Appropriations bill, we urge you to reject these proposed cuts and restore funding for the Hanford site to a responsible level of \$2.014 billion. This will enable cleanup progress to continue in a safe manner, reduce the risks posed to our communities and to the environment, allow a highly skilled workforce to stay on the job, and reduce long-term cleanup costs to American taxpayers.

We hope that you will consider the following funding levels that we believe will appropriately maintain cleanup progress at Hanford:

Richland Operations Office (RL)

Fiscal Year 2009 Request: \$997,939,000

First, we are encouraged that the President's budget request will allow for all plutonium to be shipped out of Hanford and Washington state by the end of next year, and that the budget also proposes an historic amount for groundwater remediation activities.

However, if funding for the Richland Operations Office remains at the President's requested level, seven Tri-Party Agreement milestones will be missed in Fiscal Year 2009 due to budgetary reasons.

Our request for the Richland Operations Office includes a \$77 million increase over the President's proposed budget that is needed to keep the River Corridor Closure project on schedule. This project is responsible for eliminating risks nearest to the Columbia River and shrinking Hanford from 586 to 75 square miles. It involves demolition and decommissioning work that is a critical tool to achieving groundwater cleanup and protecting the River. Our request would bring funding for the River Corridor Closure project up to \$242 million, which meets the amount set in the contract agreement and is reflective of the high priority we place on enabling this project to continue. We are concerned that without the requested increase that Tri-Party Agreement milestones will be missed and hundred of jobs could be eliminated.

Our request also includes an increase of \$69 million over the President's proposed budget request for solid waste stabilization and disposition. This funding is required to meet the Department of Energy's transuranic (TRU) waste retrieval and shipment obligations, and is equal to the Fiscal Year 2008 funding level. Level funding represents the minimum amount required to meet legal TRU waste commitments.

Office of River Protection (ORP)
Fiscal Year 2009 Request: \$1,015,972

We support the \$690 million requested by the President to continue construction of the Waste Treatment Plant. We appreciate your continued interest in and commitment to this key project. Now that previous delays and seismic issues have been resolved, we believe it's important to keep this project moving forward at the full funding level of \$690 million.

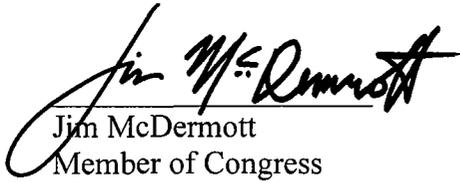
Our requested funding level for the Office of River Protection also includes a \$37 million increase for additional tank waste retrieval work, bulk vitrification activities and determining a disposal pathway for the remaining 50 percent of low-activity tank wastes that will not be treated by the Waste Treatment Plant. In order to maintain the integrity of the cleanup program and progress towards future milestones, the Department of Energy must put forward a plan for dealing with these wastes efficiently and in a timely manner.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request. We are committed to working with you to ensure adequate funding for cleanup activities at the Hanford site.

Sincerely,

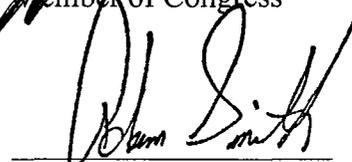

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Member of Congress


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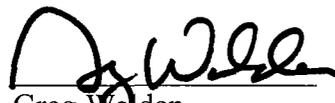

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