



STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

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December 14, 2005

Mr. Norm Buske, Director
The Radioactivist Campaign (TRAC)
7312 N.E. North Shore Road
Belfair, Washington 98528

Re: Hanford State of the Site Meeting Comments, Uranium-233

Dear Mr. Buske:

Thank you for your comments at the State of the Site (SOS) meeting in Seattle and your follow-up email regarding Hanford Reach riverbed issues. I looked into your information requests and determined that all the documentation you requested has been provided. My staff indicates that they provided all data and documents from the sampling that was completed. Copies of all the laboratory reports from both of the laboratories, including the ICP-MS data, were provided in March 2005 by Jerry Yokel from our Nuclear Waste Program. A final report on our findings was also sent on to you on May 19, 2005.

During your SOS comments, you indicated that you had made a public records request for data. Our records indicate the only public information request received regarding this work was from Lisa Stiffler, a reporter for the *Seattle PI*. The complete information was sent to Ms. Stiffler in accordance with her request.

Regarding the detection limit, staff agreed to have our contract laboratories run the samples at the lowest detection limit for which they are quality assured/quality controlled. We sent the samples to two separate certified laboratories, Paragon Analytical and Southwest Research Institute (SWRI). Because SWRI has the ICP-MS capability that our standard lab, Paragon, does not, we were able to get more finite and lower detection limit results. The detection limit provided by the laboratory in the data given to you was the lowest value available. We apologize if there was confusion about the detection limit you desired and the detection limit that our laboratory could provide.

The alpha spectrometry done as part of this investigation was reported as a combination of U-233/U-234. To more conclusively answer the U-233 question, we had another certified laboratory do the ICP-MS analysis for U-233 alone. In that analysis, no U-233 was detected in the area of concern.

I understand that Ecology is one of the few (if not only) agencies that have conducted ICP-MS analysis on river sediments. In order to provide additional understanding of the laboratory



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processes and the analysis of the results, we asked our certified laboratory to undertake a special study from the alpha spectrometry. This will show the "peaks" for U-233 in a spiked sample and compare that to the peaks in the U-234, U-235, and U-238, so there will be a clear understanding of how the laboratory is able to determine that U-233 is not present. We anticipate this study will be completed in 2006 and would be happy to share it with interested parties.

Ecology remains concerned about the impacts to the river environment of past and present Hanford contamination. We will continue to work closely with the Washington State Department of Health in their oversight of the United States Department of Energy site-wide surveillance monitoring.

As part of CERCLA cleanup actions, a risk assessment is being done on the Columbia River and the near shore/riparian zones to look at effects on the ecological environment. Stakeholder input on the sampling plans for those efforts are underway, and we encourage you to get involved and share your concerns and recommendations. If you would like to become involved, you can contact John Sands, with the United States Department of Energy, at (509) 372-2282 or email John_P_Sands@rl.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay J. Manning". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Jay J. Manning
Director