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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6250

December 17, 1997

Honorable Federico Peña
Department of Energy
Forrestal Building
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Peña,

As you know, we have had a long standing interest in the operation of the Hanford reservation, from the safety and environmental hazards at the Tank farms in general, to worker safety issues and whistle blower concerns. In light of our ongoing interest in Hanford and the weapons complex generally, members of our staff met on Thursday, October 30, 1997, with headquarters and field staff from the Department of Energy's Environmental Management and Environment, Safety, and Health programs overseeing the work at the Hanford site. This meeting focused on four areas we are particularly concerned with at the Hanford reservation: the tank farms, vadose zone, the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) explosion, and how management is being handled at Hanford. Pursuant to this meeting we would like to formally request follow-up materials regarding these issues.

- Copies of any and all Secretarial directives and subsequent reviews resulting from the PFP explosion. Also, what actions were taken against DOE and its contractors as a result of this explosion? What fines, if any, have there been? Have there been any other penalties or disciplinary actions related to this accident? If not, why not? What actions have been taken to monitor the health of the workers and the exposed surrounding community;
- Ferrocyanide Tanks. What tanks still have ferrocyanide in them and how much? Are the tanks containing ferrocyanide being monitored for heat? If not, what is DOE's rationale for ignoring this potential problem?;
- Copies of Secretary Peña's directives respecting the Tank Waste Farm safety issues, particularly those respecting 241-Z-361. Please include those that are not explicitly about the tank farm.
- A detailed description of who has responsibility for follow up and implementation respecting the Unreviewed Safety Question, PFP explosion, and chemical vulnerability assessment;

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- Information on current technical capabilities and planned upgrades, what actions for monitoring the vadose zone between 1992 and present. All Secretarial directives on vadose zone monitoring and technical analyses of ground water contamination that have been done or are planned. Any actions taken specifically in response to the 1992 GAO Vadose Zone report;
- A detailed description of the necessary compatibility studies and other research which would need to be done in order to safely continue the transfer of material from Single Shell Tanks to Double Shell Tanks, along with any studies which have been done. An explanation of the technical safety basis;
- A detailed explanation behind Hanford's decision to delay completion of the K Basins project, a decision which would increase the cost by 29 percent (\$238 million), and the possible ramifications this decision could have on other Hanford projects, including high priority projects.
- Any technical or safety studies done respecting criticality issues surrounding the cribs, particularly C-9, but also cribs B and C.
- A formal update on the C-106 Tank which addresses criticality concerns including, but not limited to, the storage configuration during retrieval and upon delivery to the DST. A status report on how DOE is addressing the Chemical Reaction Subpanel's recommendations for C-106.
- An update on the C-103 Tank, specifically addressing what sampling was done to characterize the tank and when;
- Information outlining exactly how much material leaked from the SX-109 Tank, information on other leak discrepancies, an explanation regarding continued discrepancies in how much material leaked, the Agnus report on SX-109, and material on any other tanks which have leaked a significant amount of material; and
- An update of the ongoing Management Review at Hanford along with a copy of the letter from Secretary Wagoner on TWRS Management and Safety review [Rudzinski Review].

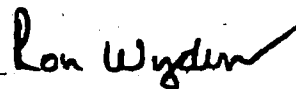
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We would appreciate a prompt and thorough response to the above outlined requests. If there are any questions or concerns, please contact Michael Slater of Senator Glenn's staff (202) 224-2627 or Joshua Sheinkman of Senator Wyden's staff at (202) 224-5244.

Best Regards,



John Glenn
U.S. Senator



Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator

cc:/ Alvin Alm, Peter Brush