

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESJM 8023

As Passed House:

March 5, 2002

Brief Description: Requesting full funding for the cleanup of the Hanford Reservation.

Sponsors: By Senators Hale, Fraser, Eide, Regala and Roach.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Agriculture & Ecology: 2/26/02, 2/28/02 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 3/5/02, 97-0.

Brief Summary of Engrossed Bill

- Asks the President of the United States and to the U.S. Congress to fully fund the environmental cleanup at the Hanford Site.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & ECOLOGY

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Linville, Chair; Hunt, Vice Chair; Schoesler, Ranking Minority Member; Chandler, Cooper, Delvin, Dunshee, Grant, Holmquist, Kirby, Quall, Roach and Sump.

Staff: Jason Callahan (786-7117).

Background:

The Hanford Site in Benton County was chosen in 1943 for the Manhattan Project and used to produce plutonium for the world's first nuclear weapons. According to the United States Department of Energy, the focus today at the site is on-site cleanup and environmental restoration, scientific and environmental research, development and application of radioactive waste and hazardous waste management technology, and design, construction, and operation of major energy-related test and development facilities. Currently, 54 million gallons of radioactive waste is stored on-site in 177 underground single and double-walled tanks. The waste includes highly radioactive sludge and less radioactive liquids.

On May 15, 1989, the Department of Energy, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington Department of Ecology signed a comprehensive cleanup and compliance agreement. This agreement is known both as the "Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order," and the "Tri-Party Agreement." This agreement is for achieving compliance with the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), as that law applies to the treatment, storage, and disposal of the hazardous substances located at the Hanford Site.

Specifically, the Tri-Party Agreement defines and ranks CERCLA cleanup commitments, establishes responsibilities, provides a basis for budgeting, and reflects a concerted goal of achieving full regulatory compliance and remediation. The Tri-Party Agreement consists of the actual legal agreement and the action plan— to implement the cleanup.

Summary of Engrossed Bill:

President George W. Bush, the U.S. Senate, and U.S. House of Representatives is asked to fully fund the needs of a sustained environmental cleanup in keeping with the Tri-Party Agreement and providing for the protection of the Columbia River and the citizens of Washington.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Testimony For: Washington contributed mightily to the defense of the United States for over 40 years, and the legacy of these contributions is the largest radioactive and toxic inventory in the world. The nature of federal funding is fickle, so it is important to remind Congress that it needs to live up to the commitment it made to Washington State.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: (In support) Senator Hale, prime sponsor.