

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2016

The Honorable Mac Thornberry
Chairman
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
Strategic Forces Subcommittee
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Bldg.

The Honorable Jim Cooper
Ranking Member
Strategic Forces Subcommittee
House Armed Services Committee
2216 Rayburn House Office Bldg.

Dear Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, Subcommittee Chairman Rogers and Subcommittee Ranking Member Cooper:

We write regarding nuclear waste at Hanford that was created by our nation's defense programs to help end World War II and the Cold War. Nuclear waste cleanup at Hanford has a significant impact on the Pacific Northwest and we are united in our support for an authorization and funding level that will enable the federal government to meet its legal, moral and contractual cleanup obligations. As you develop the National Defense Authorization Act for next year, we request strong support for both Hanford sites – the Office of River Protection and the Richland Operations Office.

The Administration's Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 budget request includes \$1.4875 billion for the Office of River Protection. We encourage the Committee to authorize the full amount to continue work involving the 56 million gallons of radioactive and chemical wastes in underground tanks. This represents a roughly \$80 million increase for the Office of River Protection when compared to the final appropriated levels in the FY 2016 Omnibus bill. This increase is designed to maintain safe operations for the tank farms; to achieve progress in meeting regulatory commitments; to enable the development and maintenance of infrastructure necessary to enable waste treatment operations; to advance construction work at the Low-Activity Waste Facility, Balance of Facilities, and Analytical Laboratory; to resolve significant technical issues with the Pretreatment and the High-Level Waste Facilities; and to protect workers, the public, and the environment.

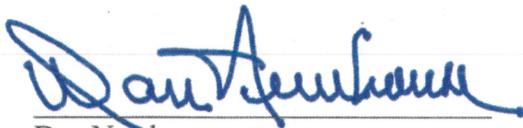
We are concerned about the Administration's proposed cut for the Richland Operations Office and the impacts it would have on cleanup progress along the Columbia River Corridor and

the ability of the Department of Energy to meet deadlines under existing legal cleanup agreements with the State of Washington. We request an authorization of \$936.4 million – a modest funding reduction from the FY 2016 funding level – to continue cleanup work involving highly radioactive sludge 200 yards from the Columbia River, contaminated waste sites and buildings in the River Corridor, treatment of contaminated groundwater plumes, cesium and strontium containers, and more to finish work on the River Corridor Closure Project.

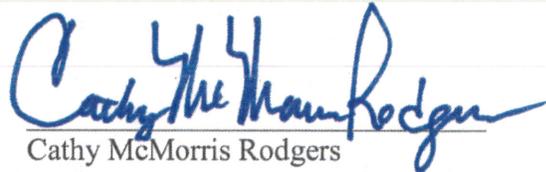
We recognize the many competing priorities under the purview of your Committee. We are hopeful that the Committee will consider not only the needs of current defense programs but also the federal government's responsibility to clean up waste from past defense initiatives including the Manhattan Project. Ensuring a path forward at Hanford that enables the federal government's existing legal cleanup commitments to be kept, builds upon success that has been achieved, avoids cleanup delays that will ultimately cost the taxpayers more and makes the cleanup program a priority is critical to our region and to the nation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Dave Reichert
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Suzan DeBene
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Greg Walden
Member of Congress