

Senate Joint Memorial 1

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SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**.

Urges Congress to fund cleanup efforts at Hanford Nuclear Reservation and to expedite cleanup actions in order to safeguard public health and welfare and protect Columbia River.

JOINT MEMORIAL

1
2 To the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress as-
3 sembled:

4 We, your memorialists, the Seventy-fourth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in leg-
5 islative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

6 Whereas the United States Department of Energy's Hanford Nuclear Reservation is the most
7 contaminated site in North America; and

8 Whereas radioactive and chemical wastes stored at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation pose a
9 significant threat to the Columbia River and to the health and welfare of Oregonians; and

10 Whereas many of the storage facilities at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation are beyond their
11 designed lifespan and have failed, or are at imminent risk of failing; and

12 Whereas contaminated ground water, which ultimately flows into the Columbia River, presents
13 a threat to human health and to sensitive species in that river, including endangered salmon; and

14 Whereas the environmental cleanup of the Hanford Nuclear Reservation is a top priority for
15 Oregonians; and

16 Whereas despite considerable progress with some cleanup projects at the Hanford Nuclear
17 Reservation, significant work remains, such as stabilizing tons of plutonium-bearing materials and
18 moving spent nuclear fuel from leak-prone basins near the Columbia River to a more appropriate
19 storage facility; and

20 Whereas the United States Department of Energy is constructing a complex of treatment facili-
21 ties to vitrify the high-level radioactive waste stored at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, a process
22 that puts the waste into a stable form suitable for long-term storage or disposal; and

23 Whereas significant delays with the vitrification program may result in treatment facilities not
24 being available until 2019; and

25 Whereas the risk of further tank leaks will increase because of these delays; and

26 Whereas the delays will also result in difficulties removing waste from the Hanford Nuclear
27 Reservation's oldest tanks; and

28 Whereas delays in moving Hanford's plutonium to off-site, consolidated storage have caused the
29 expenditure of tens of millions of dollars of cleanup funds to be used to safeguard the plutonium;
30 and

NOTE: Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter [*italic and bracketed*] is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 Whereas the State of Oregon is seeking standing under the Hanford Tri-Party Agreement to af-
2 fect decisions by the United States Department of Energy, the United States Environmental Pro-
3 tection Agency and the State of Washington regarding waste management at the Hanford Nuclear
4 Reservation; now, therefore,

5 **Be It Resolved by the Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon:**

6 (1) The Congress of the United States is respectfully urged to:

7 (a) Fully fund the cleanup effort at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, including the construction
8 of vitrification facilities and other existing cleanup and waste management efforts, to ensure the
9 health and safety of Oregonians and the health of the Columbia River;

10 (b) Not artificially limit annual funding provided for construction of the vitrification facilities
11 and instead to seek ways to complete the vitrification facilities before 2019; and

12 (c) Direct the United States Department of Energy to do the following:

13 (A) Examine methods to vitrify some of the tank waste stored at the Hanford Nuclear Reserva-
14 tion prior to the completion of the entire vitrification complex;

15 (B) Demonstrate how continued, indefinite storage of waste in tanks at the Hanford Nuclear
16 Reservation will not harm the public and the environment;

17 (C) Expedite efforts to protect the Columbia River, including cleanup of contaminated ground
18 water that may threaten the Columbia River, the species that rely on the river and the people who
19 live downstream from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation;

20 (D) Act expeditiously on plans to remove plutonium from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation to
21 an off-site location;

22 (E) Work closely with Pacific Northwest officials and residents to ensure success of cleanup and
23 waste management efforts; and

24 (F) Provide the State of Oregon with a decision-making role in matters affecting the handling,
25 storing and cleanup of radioactive and chemical wastes at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation, in-
26 cluding a role in the Hanford Tri-Party Agreement or any successor thereto.

27 (2) A copy of this memorial shall be sent to each member of the Oregon Congressional Delega-
28 tion and the Washington Congressional Delegation, the United States Secretary of the Interior, the
29 United States Secretary of Energy and the Administrator of the United States Environmental Pro-
30 tection Agency.

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