

Senate Joint Memorial 11

Sponsored by Senator DEVLIN, Representative JENSON

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

4 We, your memorialists, the Seventy-fifth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legis-
5 lative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

6 Whereas the maintenance of healthy, unpolluted river systems, airsheds and land are essential
7 to the economic vitality and well-being of the citizens of the State of Oregon and the Pacific
8 Northwest; and

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

11 Whereas radioactive waste stored at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation is already leaking into
12 and contaminating the ground water beneath the Hanford site; and

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

15 Whereas Oregon cities currently rely on the Columbia River for drinking water and other
16 Oregon communities may eventually exercise their rights to drinking water supplies from the river;
17 and

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

20 Whereas the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, an Oregon tribe, with
21 treaty rights supported by the State of Oregon that protect resources and access to resources, are
22 at risk from Hanford operations and cleanup activities; and

23 Whereas the United States Department of Energy projects that cleanup will not be complete at
24 the Hanford Nuclear Reservation until at least 2048; and

25 Whereas despite considerable progress with many cleanup projects at the Hanford Nuclear
26 Reservation, significant other work remains, such as retrieval of buried wastes, the safe disposition
27 of sludge from Hanford's K Basins and demolition of the plutonium finishing plant; and

28 Whereas the United States Department of Energy is constructing a massive complex of treat-
29 ment facilities to vitrify the 53 million gallons of high-level radioactive waste stored at the Hanford
30 Nuclear Reservation, a process that puts the waste into a stable form suitable for long-term storage
31 or disposal; 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 this waste is stored in aging underground storage tanks, many of which have leaked;
2 and

3 Whereas significant delays with the vitrification project will likely result in treatment facilities
4 not being available until 2019; and

5 Whereas the risk of leaks from Hanford's underground storage tanks will increase because of
6 these delays; and

7 Whereas funding shortages are expected to cause increasing numbers of regulatory milestones
8 to be missed; and

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

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

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

15 (a) Provide stable and sufficient funding for the cleanup effort at the Hanford Nuclear Reser-
16 vation, including the construction of the vitrification facilities and other needed cleanup and waste
17 management efforts, to ensure the health and safety of Oregonians and the health of the Columbia
18 River; and

19 (b) Direct the United States Department of Energy to do the following:

20 (A) Expedite efforts to protect the Columbia River, including cleanup of contaminated ground
21 water that may threaten the Columbia River;

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

24 (C) Provide the State of Oregon with a decision-making role in matters affecting the handling,
25 storage 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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