

# House Joint Memorial 24

Sponsored by COMMITTEE ON RULES

## 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 provide stable and sufficient funding for cleanup effort at Hanford nuclear site.

## JOINT MEMORIAL

To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled:

We, your memorialists, the Seventy-sixth Legislative Assembly of the State of Oregon, in legislative session assembled, respectfully represent as follows:

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

Whereas the United States Department of Energy's Hanford nuclear site is the most contaminated site in North America; and

Whereas radioactive waste stored at the Hanford nuclear site is leaking into and contaminating the ground water beneath the Hanford site; and

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

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

Whereas the environmental cleanup of the Hanford nuclear site is a top priority for Oregonians; and

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

Whereas the United States Department of Energy projects that cleanup will not be complete at the Hanford nuclear site until at least 2048; and

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

Whereas the United States Department of Energy is constructing a massive complex of treatment facilities to vitrify the 53 million gallons of high-level radioactive waste stored at the Hanford nuclear site, a process that puts the waste into a stable form suitable for long-term storage or disposal; and

Whereas this waste is stored in aging underground storage tanks, many of which have leaked;

**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 and

2 Whereas significant delays with the vitrification project will likely result in treatment facilities  
3 being unavailable until 2019; and

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

6 Whereas Hanford workers have demonstrated that with additional funding they are able to make  
7 considerable cleanup progress; and

8 Whereas funding shortages are expected to slow cleanup progress, cause increasing numbers of  
9 regulatory milestones to be missed and result in an increase in risks; now, therefore,

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

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

12 (a) Provide stable and sufficient funding for the cleanup effort at the Hanford nuclear site, in-  
13 cluding the construction of the vitrification facilities and other needed cleanup and waste manage-  
14 ment efforts, to ensure the health and safety of Oregonians and the health of the Columbia River;  
15 and

16 (b) Direct the United States Department of Energy to work closely with Pacific Northwest offi-  
17 cials and residents to ensure success of cleanup and waste management efforts.

18 (2) A copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to the United  
19 States Secretary of the Interior, to the United States Secretary of Energy, to the Administrator of  
20 the United States Environmental Protection Agency and to each member of the Oregon Congres-  
21 sional Delegation and the Washington Congressional Delegation.

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