

House Joint Memorial 28

Sponsored by Representatives BAILEY, BERGER; Representatives BARKER, BARNHART, BENTZ, BEYER, BOONE, BREWER, BUCKLEY, CAMERON, CANNON, CLEM, CONGER, COWAN, DEMBROW, DOHERTY, ESQUIVEL, FREDERICK, FREEMAN, GARRARD, GARRETT, GELSER, GILLIAM, GREENLICK, HARKER, HOLVEY, HOYLE, HUFFMAN, HUNT, JENSON, KENNEMER, KOMP, KOTEK, MATTHEWS, MCLANE, NATHANSON, NOLAN, READ, ROBLAN, SCHAUFLEER, SHEEHAN, J SMITH, SPRENGER, THOMPSON, TOMEI, WAND, WEIDNER, WINGARD, WITT, Senators BURDICK, DEVLIN, DINGFELDER, HASS, JOHNSON, MONROE, PROZANSKI, ROSENBAUM, SHIELDS, VERGER

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 United States Department of Energy to remove Hanford Nuclear Reservation from list of candidate sites for national permanent storage of radioactive waste.

JOINT MEMORIAL

1
2 To the President of the United States and the Senate and the House of Representatives of the United
3 States of America, in Congress assembled:

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

6 Whereas for more than 40 years, millions of cubic feet of solid waste were disposed of improv-
7 erly and placed in trenches and burial sites at Hanford and, because of this operation, Hanford is
8 the most contaminated nuclear site in the United States today; and

9 Whereas the United States Department of Energy is already engaged in one of the largest and
10 most complex cleanup projects in United States history at the Hanford site; and

11 Whereas more than 50 million gallons of radioactive waste are currently stored in underground
12 tanks at Hanford, and approximately 475 billion gallons of less contaminated liquids have been dis-
13 charged into the soil, creating an area of groundwater contamination of more than 100 square miles
14 beneath the site; and

15 Whereas throughout the history of the site, more than 65 radioactive elements are known to
16 have been released into the environment, some decaying over time but others remaining present due
17 to their abundance and persistence, including strontium-90, tritium, cesium-137 and cobalt-6; and

18 Whereas the operations of the Hanford site have resulted in more than 43 million cubic yards
19 of radioactive waste and more than 130 million cubic yards of contaminated soil and debris, repre-
20 senting two-thirds of the nation's high-level radioactive waste by volume; and

21 Whereas existing efforts have been valuable, and there is still significant work needed in order
22 to successfully rehabilitate the area; and

23 Whereas Hanford, the most contaminated nuclear site in the western hemisphere, is just across
24 the Columbia River from Oregon, where more than one million people live downriver in Portland,
25 Hood River, The Dalles and other Oregon communities; and

26 Whereas the contamination also exists within Oregon communities; and

27 Whereas the existing situation is perilous enough without adding further radioactive waste to
28 Hanford; 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 besides river contamination, those who live along the interstate system will be ad-
2 versely affected by Hanford's selection as a site for permanent storage of radioactive waste, due to
3 vast increases in truckloads of radioactive waste traveling along interstate routes, passing through
4 our cities; and

5 Whereas although not included in recent drafts of the environmental impact statement for
6 Hanford, a 2008 United States Department of Energy study estimated that 800 deaths would occur
7 due to ambient radiation from the transport vehicles alone; and

8 Whereas current levels of estimated deaths that would follow from Hanford's selection as a site
9 for permanent radioactive waste storage does not include the unimaginable number of deaths from
10 a truck accident, earthquake or intentional attack that could happen in or near the centers of
11 Oregon's population; and

12 Whereas another study vetted by nuclear scientists in 2004 indicated that up to 57 square miles
13 of land could be rendered uninhabitable, wiping out much of the City of Portland, if an accident
14 were to occur at the confluence of Interstate 84 and Interstate 205; and

15 Whereas in the past, statements describing the scope of disaster involved following a foreseeable
16 accident associated with a site for storage of radioactive waste were often considered extreme, after
17 the events at Fukushima, Japan, all recognize that such dire outcomes may not be so easily dis-
18 missed; now, therefore,

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

20 (1) The United States Department of Energy is urged to remove the Hanford Nuclear Reserva-
21 tion from the list of candidate sites for national permanent storage of radioactive waste.

22 (2) A copy of this memorial shall be sent to the President of the United States, to the Senate
23 Majority Leader, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Secretary of Energy and
24 to each member of the Oregon Congressional Delegation.

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