



Columbia Riverkeeper
111 Third Street
Hood River, OR 97031
phone 541.387.3030
www.columbiariverkeeper.org

PRESS RELEASE

February 22, 2013

For More Information, Call:

Theresa Labriola – 541.490.2411

Hanford Coordinator, Columbia Riverkeeper

Six New Leaks At Hanford Pose Unacceptable Risk to the Columbia River

On the heels of last week's announcement that one of Hanford's single-shell underground tanks is leaking upwards of 300 gallons of radioactive waste into the ground every year, Governor Inslee announced on February 22 that six single-shell tanks are leaking. "It is shocking and unacceptable," stated Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director of Columbia Riverkeeper. "These high-level nuclear waste leaks are another blow to the public's confidence in Hanford cleanup. We need Congressional oversight and immediate answers."

Secretary Chu informed Governor Inslee earlier in the day that six single-shell tanks are leaking radioactive waste into the ground at Hanford. This announcement is a stark reminder of the imminent danger Hanford poses to the public and the Columbia River. This news came less than four months after the US Department of Energy learned that, for the first time, a double-shell tank leaked radioactive and chemical waste into the annulus space, the 30-inch space between the inner and outer tank. On top of the existing contamination at Hanford, the public cannot afford delay in responding to tanks leaking radioactive waste. Action is now needed on Capitol Hill.

We urge Senators Cantwell, Murray, Wyden and Merkley to schedule promptly hearings to address the unacceptable risks posed by leaking single-shell and double-shell tanks and interim measures to protect the public, Hanford workers, and the Columbia River from the serious threats posed by leaking tanks.

Columbia Riverkeeper is a non-profit serving as a watchdog for Columbia River protection from its source to the sea. Riverkeeper is a member of the Hanford Advisory Board which provides informed recommendations and advice to the U.S. Department of Energy, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and the Washington Department of Ecology on selected major cleanup decisions at the Hanford Site.

####