



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155
Seattle, WA 98101

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL
ADMINISTRATOR

April 3, 2023

Mr. Daniel Serres
Conservation Director
Columbia Riverkeeper
P.O. Box 950
Hood River, Oregon 97031

Dear Mr. Serres:

Thank you for your letter regarding the cleanup at the Hanford Site. We appreciate your engagement in the cleanup of the Hanford Site.

In response to the specific question you asked regarding protecting people from cancer risks related to hexavalent chromium, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's oversight of the cleanup does implement policies and guidance that ensures that updated toxicity information is incorporated into previous and future cleanup plans. Risk assessments use a hierarchy of sources for toxicity data (such as cancer slope factors), as outlined in the 2003 OSWER Directive 9285.7-53 *Human Health Toxicity Values in Superfund Risk Assessments*. The EPA considers the Integrated Risk Information System the first tier of values to use, and Tier 2 is the Provisional Peer-Reviewed Toxicity Values developed by the Superfund Technical Support Center. When those sources reflect updated toxicity data, future risk assessments and cleanup plans will then utilize that information.

In terms of reviewing past decisions, we conduct Five-Year Reviews when contamination remains on-site. One of the specific questions asked during the review is: "Are the exposure assumptions, toxicity data, cleanup levels, and remedial action objectives used at the time of remedy selection still valid?" The EPA will consider updated toxicity data during the next Hanford Five-Year Review (due May 4, 2027). The U.S. Department of Energy, with EPA oversight, is actively cleaning up the 100 Area and controls are in place to prevent exposures.

As part of our oversight of the cleanup in the 300 Area, including the 324 Building, the EPA has requested that DOE clarify whether the spilled material beneath the 324 Building B-cell was high-level waste. The classification of waste as high-level waste is determined by DOE under their Atomic Energy Act authority. DOE determined that the material was not HLW, however they are currently re-evaluating the historical documents to provide a clear and direct response on the classification. The EPA does not have independent authority to classify radioactive wastes. We will review the results of DOE's evaluation waste characterization to determine whether material resulting from the cleanup at the 324 Building meets the waste acceptance criteria for disposal at the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility. This is a critical assessment since the ERDF cannot accept HLW, transuranic waste or greater-than-class C waste.

We remain committed to fulfilling our responsibility as the regulatory agency to ensure that the Hanford site is cleaned up in a manner that meets the commitments outlined in the Tri-Party Agreement and under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act. The Hanford site

is a high priority cleanup for the EPA, and we have an important goal to ensure that the Columbia River and the communities that rely on this important resource remain protected.

Thank you again for being involved in the cleanup of this complex site. If you have further questions, please contact Dave Einan at (509) 376-3883 or einan.david@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Casey Sixkiller
Regional Administrator