

DRAFT -- 6/2/86

Governor's Remarks

Hanford

(Shorter Version)

Governor's Statement (Hanford)

President Reagan has chosen Hanford as one of three final candidate sites for a permanent repository for high-level radioactive wastes.

The President acted on a recommendation from the Secretary of Energy. The Secretary's recommendation upgraded Hanford from fifth among five sites to one of three finalist sites.

There are some who believe -- and I do not blame them -- that involved some remarkable sleight-of-hand. Somehow, Hanford jumped from dead last to a three-way tie for first.

Moreover, the President said that US DOE will make no further effort to find a site for a second repository. How that will withstand the mandate in the nuclear waste policy act remains to be seen. Federal law says there shall be two repositories.

I believe the President has been ill-advised. I believe US DOE is wrong. Oregonians want to know why Hanford -- a site that US DOE concedes has serious flaws -- still is in the running.

Oregonians want to know why there will be no search for a second repository.

Oregonians want to know why the west must bear the burden of accommodating the entire nation's nuclear wastes.

My position always has been that Hanford is not and never has been the best site for a permanent repository. The tangled reasoning by which the Secretary of Energy recommended Hanford as a finalist site does nothing to change my mind.

But Neither does that change reality. Reality is that U.S. commercial reactors have produced and accumulated <sup>15,000</sup>~~77,000~~ metric tons of spent fuel. That nuclear waste has to be stored somewhere -- safely and permanently for tens of thousands of years.

When Hanford was among nine candidate sites in 1984, and among five candidate sites this year, I took a responsible and realistic position. If a fair and impartial scientific and technical study -- untainted by politics and strident polemics -- made a persuasive case that Hanford should remain a viable candidate, I would not oppose more studies.

And, until last wednesday, I was comfortable with the clear and detailed decision process mandated by Congress in 1982.

But, clearly, US DOE has played fast and loose with the rules. The Nuclear Waste Policy Act mandated a study of sites comprising different kinds of geology -- including granite.

When there were nine candidate sites, those with granite geology were all in the eastern U.S. When the list of nine was narrowed to five -- granite sites were dropped from the first repository list.

Now, with the search for a second repository on a so-called "indefinite hold", granite sites have been totally eliminated from all consideration.

Remember where the granite sites are. The east.

There are 16 operating commercial reactors west of the Mississippi

River. There are 84 such reactors east of the Mississippi. The eastern reactors have produce more than 80 percent of the nation's accumulation of spent nuclear fuel.

Somehow, US DOE has concluded that the west is to be the dumping ground for 100 percent of the waste. Reactions in the west have been 100 percent predictable -- and with just cause.

One, the State of Oregon will join Washington State in legal action against US DOE. At my request, Attorney General Dave Frohnmayer will join Washington in the U.S. Federal Court. The suit will challenge the decision that moved Hanford from fifth-ranked site to one of three first-ranked sites.

Washington State's suit contends the decision violates federal law in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act on three points:

One, the determination that Hanford is a "suitable" site was made before all the site characterization studies required by law have been finished at all five candidate sites.

Two, because Hanford was fifth ranked among the five sites it should not be among the three for which further studies for suitability are to be made.

Three, the decision to abandon the search for a second repository is in direct conflict with the mandate in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act.

In mid June, I intend to meet with Ben Rusche, director of US DOE's office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management. It is time that Mr. Ruche and I talk frankly about US DOE's "short end of the stick" attitude toward Oregon.

Since 1983, I repeatedly have sought direct US DOE funding for Oregon's involvement in the decision process that could choose Hanford as the final resting place for the nation's nuclear waste.

Despite the real and legitimate concerns we have about the implications of such a decision, my repeated requests for direct funding have been stonewalled. We have been obliged to ask Washington State to share their study funds with us.

Governor Gardner was not obliged to do that - but he did. And, that agreement would have given us sufficient funding to do our work so long as Hanford remained fifth-ranked among the five candidate sites.

Last week's decision changes all that. Now, Hanford simply has to be considered a front runner, if not the most likely choice. According to law, the final choice will be made by the President of the United States in 1992.

I have asked US DOE for \$2.5 million in direct, dedicated funding for our

Hanford studies over the next five years.

I believe that is a fair and reasonable request. Oregon electric ratepayers have, in effect prepaid this expense. The Trojan Nuclear Plant has been assessed \$45 million by US DOE since 1976. The assessment is to help pay the cost of US DOE's search for a permanent storage place for high level wastes, including spent fuel from commercial reactors.

I believe that returning about 5 percent of what we already have paid into the fund is reasonable and fair. And, my request amounts to one-quarter of 1 percent of US DOE's \$1 billion price tag for the Hanford site characterization study.

There is no doubt in my mind that Oregon's interests and concerns must fully be addressed in the Hanford study. To ask Oregon ratepayers to pay again -- is simply not acceptable.

I have asked every member of Oregon's congressional delegation to join me in my request for US DOE direct funding.

The potential for a permanent high-level waste repository at Hanford did not surface last week. That potential became real when Congress passed the Nuclear Waste Policy Act in 1982.

The President's announcement last week is not the end of the story. It is the next-to-last chapter. The studies of the three candidate sites will take five years -- and cost \$3 billion.

I still do not believe Hanford has been proved to be among the better sites. Spending \$1 billion on more Hanford studies will not make it a better site. But, if the Hanford study is to proceed, and Oregon's interests are to be protected, Oregon must be involved in that work.

There is a long road ahead. There is an enormous amount of work to be done. In two weeks, I will be in Washington, D.C., to press again our case that Oregon must have direct US DOE funding. I have today asked our Congressional delegation to support me again in that effort. I believe they will, as they have in the past.

To those who showed up last week, I say join me in working to protect Oregon's interests. It's about time.

WJS:so

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