

DOE NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 9, 2003

**STATEMENT OF RICHLAND OPERATIONS OFFICE MANAGER KEITH KLEIN
ON THE IMPACT OF THE WASHINGTON STATE ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER**

Good Morning, I'd like to acknowledge the heads of DOE contracting elements, most of whom are joining me this morning. I have a brief statement, and then I have time for two or three questions.

Late yesterday evening, Leif Erickson and I signed orders directing all Hanford contractors to immediately cease operations that would generate any newly generated mixed waste that cannot be treated within one year or that would contribute to the backlog of untreated wastes. We must do this to comply with the Washington State Department of Ecology's order of April 30th, which states, in part, "*DOE shall immediately stop creating a backlog of untreated mixed waste.*"

The state's order is clear. In short, DOE must cease operations that would generate waste that cannot be treated in a way that will to meet the order's requirements for treatment.

The impact of this order on cleanup and other operations at Hanford facilities, including the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, appears serious. Our contractors have provided a preliminary list of projects that they believe will be affected by the terms of the state's order. For example, the order:

1. Basically requires the shutdown of the Plutonium Finishing Plant -- including stabilization, deactivation and decontamination (D&D) activities.
2. Curtails important work on interim stabilization of single-shell tanks and retrieval of the waste inside Tank C-106 -- key risk reduction projects.
3. Restricts preventative and corrective maintenance and D&D work on the Central Plateau, especially on the Plutonium Concentration Facilities and the now shut down U Plant reprocessing canyon.

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4. And detrimentally impacts PNNL cleanup support activities including Waste Treatment Plant process testing, vadose zone characterization, and support for K-basin sludge retrieval. In addition, there are eight major national security programs impacted -- including work for the National Nuclear Security Administration and the Department of Defense.

In closing, I would like to make a couple of very important points. First, we believe the effects of the state's order, issued by the Director of the Department of Ecology, impede the achievement of the Department's cleanup goals and the accelerated cleanup agreement reached between the Department of Energy and the state of Washington.

The Department and our contracting teams have no choice but to comply with the terms of the order as directed by the State. We do not have the option to interpret the order in any way other than what is specifically spelled out in the plain language of the order.

The Department's job is to clean up waste and take the necessary steps to ensure the job is done in a safe and effective manner, in accordance with all applicable laws. We are doing that. We are also required to comply with orders from the state that are within its jurisdiction, even the ones that appear to run completely counter to our critical cleanup operations and ongoing research work.

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RL 03-0011