OIL, CHEMICAL, & ATOMIC WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION, RICHLAND, WA, JIM L. WATTS
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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY PLUTONIUM BURN HEARING

MEMBERS OF THE PANEL:

I'M JIM WATTS, I'M PRESIDENT OF THE OIL, CHEMICAL AND ATOMIC WORKERS UNION, LOCAL 1-369 AND ITS DISTRICT #1, COVERING NINE WESTERN STATES. I'M ALSO THE LABOR REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE HANFORD ATOMIC METAL TRADES COUNCIL ON THE HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD. THE HANFORD ATOMIC METAL TRADES COUNCIL IS THE GOVERNING BODY OF FOURTEEN AFFILIATE UNIONS THAT REPRESENT WORKERS ON THE HANFORD PROJECT. WE REPRESENT A HANFORD WORK FORCE OF OVER 3000 MEMBERS AND A NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP OF FOUR MILLION MEMBERS.

I APPEAR IN SUPPORT OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES RECOMMENDATION TO BURN PLUTONIUM. LABOR HAS A NUMBER OF REASONS FOR SUPPORTING THIS OPTION AND IF ITS THE OPTION THAT'S PICKED, WE BELIEVE THAT BOTH THE FUEL FABRICATION AND THE BURN SHOULD OCCUR HERE. OUR RATIONAL FOR THIS BELIEVE IS BASED ON SOME OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS. 1/08.03.01

WE BELIEVE ITS IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST TO ELIMINATE THE WEAPONS GRADE PLUTONIUM RELEASED BY THE START AGREEMENTS. IN TODAY'S COST CONSCIOUS WORLD, WE THINK THE SENSIBLE THING TO DO IS CONVERT IT TO ENERGY BY BURNING IT IN REACTORS. THE HANFORD AREA IS UNIQUELY SUITED TO DO THIS FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS. WE CURRENTLY HAVE TWO MACHINES THAT HAVE THE ABILITY TO DO THE BURN (FFTF AND WNP-2) AND ANOTHER THAT COULD BE COMPLETED TO DO THE JOB (WNP-1). WE ALSO HAVE A BRAND NEW, NEVER USED, 750 MILLION DOLLAR FUEL FACILITY (FMEF). THUS, WE HAVE SEVERAL BILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF TRIED AND TESTED EQUIPMENT TO DO THE JOB WITHOUT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY GOING THROUGH THE EXPENSE OF DOING BURN, OR ONE OF THE ALTERNATIVES, AT A TIME WHEN BUDGET DOLLARS ARE SHORT.

IN ADDITION TO THE EQUIPMENT TO DO THE JOB, WE ALSO HAVE THE EXPERTISE. WE HAVE SIEMANS WITH THE ABILITY TO MANUFACTURE THE FUEL. WE HAVE SANDVIK SPECIAL METALS TO MANUFACTURE THE TUBING TO HOUSE THE FUEL AND WE HAVE A DEDICATED WORK FORCE WITH THE EXPERTISE TO DO THE WORK AND SAFELY HANDLE THE WASTE. WE ALSO HAVE A COMMUNITY WHO ACCEPTS THIS TYPE OF WORK AND THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT GOES WITH IT.

WA-022

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The Department of Energy acknowledges the commentor's support for new missions at Hanford. Decisions on storage and disposition of weapon-usable fissile materials will be based on environmental analyses, technical and economic studies, national policy considerations, and public input.

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WE HAVE NOTICED THAT THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASED ACCEPTANCE FOR THIS MISSION STATEWIDE. THE GOVERNOR HAS EXPRESSED HIS WILLINGNESS TO ALLOW BURN TO GO FORWARD UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS. A NUMBER OF ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS, EAGER TO DISPOSE OF PLUTONIUM IN ITS WEAPONS GRADE FORM, HAVE EXPRESSED RESERVED SUPPORT FOR BURN PROVIDED THAT THE RESULTING WASTE FROM SUCH A PROCESS DOESN'T FIND A PERMANENT RESIDENCE AT HANFORD. THEREFORE, LET ME SUMMARIZE LABOR'S POSITION AS FOLLOWS:

1. WE SHOULD DO THE BURN OPTION, AND DO IT AT HANFORD, MAXIMIZING THE POTENTIAL OF OUR EXISTING AND POTENTIAL EQUIPMENT AND THE EXPERTISE OF OUR WORK FORCE.

2. WE SHOULD MANUFACTURE THE FUEL USING THE FMEF FACILITY. IN FACT, IF THE BURN IS NOT DONE HERE, THE FUEL MANUFACTURE SHOULD BE DONE HERE IN ANY CASE.

3. THE RESIDUAL WASTE AND ALL MATERIAL SHOULD ONLY RESIDE AT HANFORD IN TEMPORARY STORAGE.

4. BECAUSE THE STATE AND THE COMMUNITY ARE WILLING TO PERFORM THIS NATIONAL SERVICE, HANFORD WASTE SHOULD HAVE A PRIORITY STATUS FOR OFF-SITE STORAGE.

1/08.03.01 cont.

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT OUR VIEWS.

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JIM L. WATTS,
PRESIDENT

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