

cleanup of buried transuranic and uranium wastes at the Hanford Site, including the US Ecology disposal facility.

From our August 6 discussions with the Tribes, they are concerned with:

1. The possibility of disposed transuranics at the US Ecology disposal facility in concentrations greater than 100 nCi/gram.
2. The incomplete characterization of waste in the early trenches.
3. The choice of an evapotranspiration (ET) cover because they have heard that the US EPA has determined that ET covers are failing.

The Tribes feel that if transuranics were disposed in concentrations greater than 100 nCi/gm, those wastes should be exhumed and disposed in a geological repository. Additionally, trench covers scheduled to be placed at the facility next summer should be postponed until the waste in the early trenches is fully characterized (including the possibility of exhumation).

The Department of Health is requesting technical assistance from the NRC to determine the following:

1. Did waste licensed by the NRC for disposal at the US Ecology disposal facility during the period 1965 to 1980 meet the four performance objectives of 10 CFR 61 (and WAC 246-250), even though it may have contained transuranics in excess of 100 nCi/gram?
2. What is the potential radiological risk to worker health and safety if waste is exhumed? Exhumation of waste would encompass seven trenches which contain approximately 1,267,000 cubic feet of waste. These trenches are pre-Part 61.

Please feel free to contact me at 360.236.3210 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Gary Robertson, Director
Office of Radiation Protection

cc: Larry Camper, NRC
Richard Turtill, NRC
Mark Shaffer, NRC