Press Advisory

 Immediate Release              Contact: Tom Carpenter
 March 14, 2016             206-292-2850, ext. 22

TRIAL IN HANFORD WHISTLEBLOWER CASE

LABOR DEPARTMENT FOUND IN FAVOR OF WALT FORD
IN CASE AGAINST BECHTEL NATIONAL, INC.


When: Tuesday, March 15, 2016, beginning at 8:30 am and expected to last 4 days.

Where: Benton County Justice Center, 7320 West Quinault Avenue
Kennewick, WA 99336

Background: Mr. Ford was a Hanford millwright who worked for Bechtel National. He filed a complaint with the Labor Department in 2012 after being “laid off” in late 2011. Prior to his termination, Mr. Ford filed numerous reports concerning worker health and safety. The Secretary of Labor ruled that because he raised these concerns, Mr. Ford “was scrutinized and treated more harshly than other employees,” and that raising the concerns “was a contributing factor in Respondent Bechtel’s layoff decision.” The Energy Reorganization Act (ERA), a federal law, prohibits retaliation against whistleblowers.

Walt Ford, who has worked at the Hanford site for more than 30 years, has a history of speaking up in favor of safety. In 2000, Ford filed safety complaints with Fluor Hanford, Inc. regarding the Spent Nuclear Fuel Project. In 2004, he testified on behalf of his supervisor, Richard Cecil, who blew the whistle on Fluor. After being hired by Bechtel in 2007, Mr. Ford consistently reported safety concerns, and served as the Chair of Bechtel’s Materials Handling Facility Safety Council, a position he was voted into by his peers.

The Secretary of Labor’s finding was issued in August 2015, and found that Mr. Ford, a former employee of Hanford’s Waste Treatment Plant (WTP) was wrongfully terminated by Bechtel National, Inc. in 2011 in retaliation for raising safety concerns.

Nikolas Peterson, Staff Attorney at Hanford Challenge, and Stephani Ayers, lead counsel for Mr. Ford, are representing him in a hearing that starts on Tuesday, March 15 at the Benton County Justice Center, at 8:30 am. The hearing is open to the public.