

What is the Holistic Settlement Agreement all about?

The Holistic Settlement Agreement changes and updates the plan and timeline for tank waste cleanup. You can comment on the agreement through September 1, 2024.

The Quick and Dirty

Back in 2019, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) proposed holding negotiations with the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) to get tank waste treatment back on track and break the cycle of endlessly extended milestones for emptying tanks and treating tank waste. In the original letter, Ecology said they would take 6-9 months max to negotiate. Fast forward, it took over four years of closed-door negotiations. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was also involved as a Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agency that must sign off on all TPA changes. Ecology is the lead regulator for tank waste cleanup which is why they initiated the negotiations.

Highlights of the Holistic Settlement Agreement

Ban (for now) on Using High-Level Waste Reinterpretation at Hanford: Big win (kind of). USDOE says it won't use the high-level waste reinterpretation at Hanford, for now. This means USDOE won't wave a pen and say the tank waste isn't high-level waste, but that could change in the future.

New Tank Space: The agencies are finally committing to building new tank space for waste storage and staging... in 16 years. Exciting, but let's get this done faster and build more space.

Fast Track to Grout: USDOE will be deciding where/how to treat and grout millions of gallons of liquid tank waste by the end of 2024, before they have any results from their 2,000-gallon grout test, which won't be done until spring 2025 at the earliest. Not a shocker that we think this timing makes no sense. Get test results first, please and require a public comment period on the proposed grout decision.

Delaying Delays: A big highlight of the agreement is the *ASTERISK* and it basically means the agencies postponed telling us how long certain cleanup work will be delayed. The asterisk tells us the agencies know they aren't going to meet certain deadlines, but kept the date anyway and added a new schedule for changing the date in the future. One set of delays will be negotiated over the next 5 years, mostly related to getting high-level waste treatment up and running. The other set of delays is contingent on when the high-level waste facility is making glass, probably around 14 years from now.

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Questions/Comments/Topics for Public Meetings

1. **Public Involvement Planning:** Why did the agencies neglect to get input from groups, agencies, and Tribes about its public involvement plan (materials, presentations, meeting location, timing of comment period) and rollout of the Holistic Settlement Agreement prior to the public comment period after four years of closed-door meetings?
2. **Big Picture:** What is the big picture plan for Hanford tank waste?
3. **Grout Planning Specificity:** If finalized, the Holistic Settlement Agreement sets in motion a shift to grouting millions of gallons of tank waste from three tank farms in Hanford's 200 West Area. HC issues with grout: hanfordchallenge.org/grout Some questions to ask are:
 - a. How much tank waste are the agencies planning to grout?
 - b. What is the timeline for setting the grout plan in motion?
 - c. Why isn't USDOE waiting for grout test results before making a big, expensive decision about grouting millions of gallons of tank waste?
4. **Environmental Impact Analyses:**
 - a. How are transportation impacts from the grouted tank waste proposal being assessed through the environmental impact analyses?
5. **New Tank Waste Storage Space:**
 - a. Why are the agencies waiting 16 years to build new tank storage space?
 - b. Why is tank waste storage limited to one million gallons of space?
6. **Plain-Language Timeline:**
 - a. Can you please share a plain-language timeline, in chronological order, of the proposed changes in the Holistic Settlement Agreement?
7. **New Plan for High-Level Waste Facility:**
 - a. Can you please explain, in plain language, what a Direct-Feed High-Level Waste treatment plan looks like, what facilities and technology will be needed, and when they will be finished? What is sludge washing?
 - b. What happens to the old, unfinished Pretreatment Facility?
8. **Tank Waste Retrievals Independent Technical Review:** What is the plan for Waste Management Area C and will the independent technical review team's findings be used to remove more waste from the tanks in C Farm?
9. **Cost of Changed Tank Waste Treatment Plans:**
 - a. How much will it cost to change to a Direct-Feed High-Level Waste approach? Please break down the estimated cost in bins of construction, commissioning, operations, and total project budget. Is the money needed for this in addition to the baseline cost of Hanford cleanup, which is around \$3 billion/year now?
 - b. How much will it cost to treat, transport, grout, and dispose of millions of gallons of tank waste from the proposed 200 West Area tank waste grouting project? Is the money needed for this in addition to the baseline cost of Hanford cleanup, which is around \$3 billion/year now?