

**Environmental Defense Institute**  
**News on Environmental Health and Safety Issues**

June 2005

Volume 16 Number 4

## **Elevated Cancer in Lewiston, ID Clarkston, WA Valley**

Eric Barker reports in the Idaho *Lewiston Morning Tribune* “ The area that includes Lewiston [Idaho] and Clarkston [Washington] zip codes has a cancer rate 12 percent higher than the State of Idaho average. The cancer (types) that drive that are colorectal, lung and prostate cancer, said Chris Johnson of the Idaho Cancer Data Registry. Higher than normal rates of colon and rectal cancers were observed in the valley between 1997 and 2003.”<sup>1</sup>

Admittedly and understandably, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare study focused on the Lewiston Potlatch Forest Industries (PFI) emissions of chloroform and benzene used in the paper production process. As Barker reports “ The higher levels of lung cancer in the valley are probably explained by smoking rates here, according to [Idaho Cancer Data Registry] Chris Johnson.”

There can be no doubt that PFI contributes to air pollution in the Lewiston/Clarkston valley as anyone with a nose could attest during a Lewiston air inversion , **but is it the only air pollution to which the Clearwater Valley was subjected ??**

EDI conducted a review of the Cancer Data Registry of Idaho reports for Health District No. 2 that includes the cities of Lewiston/Clearwater, and the Idaho counties of Latah, Lewis, Idaho, and Nez Perce. These counties show elevated cancer levels of all types and specific elevated levels of: endometrium, esophagus, kidney/renal pelvis, larynx, lung and bronchus, melanoma of skin, pancreas, prostate, stomach, and testis.<sup>2</sup> Most these cancers can also be caused by exposure to radiation.

Allen Benson, PhD, technical scientific consultant on the Hanford Downwinder suit and author of the landmark book *Hanford Radioactive Fallout*,<sup>3</sup> agrees that the radioactive particle emissions from Hanford must be included with the iodine-131 emissions to accurately estimate the impact on the downwind populations. Dr. Benson also authored *Radiation Exposure Examples, One on Plutonium Particles in Lewiston, ID, and One on Radiation Particles Downwind of the Hanford Reservation* offers the following comments:

“If the article I wrote on Plutonium Particle Fallout in the Lewiston area from Hanford official quarterly evidence and my estimate for creditable lung cancer doses (reviewed by Dr. John Gofman), and the article I wrote on particle wind movement and estimated doses on humans in the Hanford downwind area by Hanford scientists from Hanford official reports are released from the Tom Foulds, esq., law firm engaged in Hanford litigation, it will substantially expand the radiation areas and human harm caused by Hanford releases. It will also allow for residual human and environmental radiation measurements to help achieve Scientific Method quality, e.g., Radium lady studies,” said Benson.<sup>4</sup>

EDI’s review of earlier Cancer Data Registry of Idaho (CDRI) reports shows that Idaho Health District No. 2 had statistically significantly higher cancer incident rates between 1979 and 1998. Specific cancers include: stomach, prostate, ovary, lung/brochus, kidney/renal pelvis, breast, and colon.<sup>5</sup>

The bottom line is that the State of Idaho’s analysis of air pollution in the Lewiston - Clarkston valley is grossly inadequate because not all air pollutants were considered. The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and the Idaho Division of Health categorically are not telling the public the whole truth by not fully disclosing the CDRI data and the radioactive fallout impact on the region.

According to the CDRI, there is a steady increase in Idaho cancer rates from the beginning of data collection through 2002 (the latest report issued by the Registry). The 2000 report notes:

“This was one of the largest single-year increases in cancer incidence in the history of the CDRI. Cancer sites with notable increases from 1999 to 2000 were lung, melanoma (in-situ), oral cavity and pharynx cancer counts increased over 1999 levels.

“The number of in-situ melanoma cases is 65% higher than for any previous year. The prostate cancer incidence rate is the highest it has been since the spike in prostate cancer rates in 1990-1993 due to prostate-

specific antigen screening. However, the increase in rates was limited to Health Districts, 2 [north-central],4, 5 [south-western], and 7 [south-eastern].”<sup>6</sup>

<b>Hanford Environmental Dose Reconstruction Estimates of Radiation Released Into the Air by Hanford, 1944-1972<sup>7</sup></b>		
<b>Radionuclide</b>	<b>Average Amt./ High Amount Released *</b> (Curies)	<b>Half-Life</b>
Iodine-131	740,000 / 980,000	8 days
Tritium (H-3)	200,000	12 years
Cobalt-60	1	5 years
Krypton-85	19,000,000	11 years
Strontium-89	700	50 days
Strontium-90	64 / 180	29 days
Zirconium-95	1,200	64 days
Ruthenium-103	1,200 / 4,100	39 days
Ruthenium-106	390 / 1,400	370 days
Iodine-129	46	16 million year
Tellurium-132	4,000	78 hours
Xenon-133	420,000	5 days
Cesium-137	42	30 years
Cerium-144	3,800 / 11,000	284 days
Plutonium-239	1.8 / 31.0	24,000 years

\* The above average amount released / high amount released is the “uncertainty range” expressed in the HEDR data.

For comparison purposes, the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident in 1979 released an estimated 15 to 24 curies of iodine-131. The Hanford region also received fallout from nuclear bomb testing in Nevada during the same period, however, the Centers for Disease Control, for political reasons, refuses to combine the doses.<sup>8</sup> The public’s concern is that crucial information in federal court records (see article below) is currently bound up in the Hanford Downwinder litigation process. ☹

### **Cases Against Hanford Nuclear Plant Finally Heard**

*Los Angeles Times* staff writer Tomas Alex Tizon reports in 5/16/05; “After 15 years of delays, 2,300 plaintiffs who say radioactive releases at the Hanford site made them seriously ill.” See next article below on the final jury verdict.

“It all began for Fairfield, WA wheat farmer Ralph Hein with a finger gliding down his neck one cold

morning in 1952. The finger, his doctor's, came upon a lump just below the Adam's apple. The lump was a malignant tumor on his thyroid.

“Later, Hein's wife, Dolores, and three of their four daughters developed thyroid problems. Then neighbors, all farming families in this rolling grass country between Spokane and the Columbia River, began to fall ill, and many died.

“Emma Crabtree was diagnosed with breast cancer, and she and her husband, Harley, died of Hodgkin's disease. Their son Gordon survived bladder cancer. James Hahner died of pancreatic cancer; two of his children died of brain tumors. Mona Zehm also fell victim to a brain tumor. Down the road, Ed Brewer succumbed to pancreatic cancer, and his son David developed leukemia and died at 13.

“The Heins counted 15 cases of cancer in their rural neighborhood. ‘It seems important for you to realize this is every single house within this square-mile area,’ said Dolores Hein in a court deposition.

“Nobody knew what to make of the slow devastation until 1986, the year that the Hanford nuclear reservation, 100 miles southwest of here, was forced to reveal some of its secrets.

Today, the Heins are among 2,300 plaintiffs who say their illnesses were caused by radioactive clouds that blew out of Hanford's smokestacks and blanketed much of eastern Washington over several decades. The plaintiffs are suing the contractors that ran Hanford in the 1940s and 1950s as part of the government effort to build up the nation's nuclear weapons arsenal.

“After nearly 15 years of delays, the first trial involving Hanford ‘downwinders’ got underway in Spokane last month. A jury in U.S. District Court is to begin deliberations today to decide whether the plaintiffs were ‘more likely than not’ harmed by the plant's discharges.

“If the plaintiffs win, jurors would determine damage awards, which both sides say could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars. Damages would be paid by the U.S. government, which indemnified the contractors. The government is also paying for the contractors' defense, a legal bill that has already exceeded \$60 million.

“The trial focuses on several bellwether cases, a method used in toxic tort litigation that involves large numbers of plaintiffs. Six people with thyroid illnesses were chosen as representative cases in the Hanford lawsuit (the Heins were not chosen as bellwethers). The verdict would become a standard that lawyers could use to settle the other cases.

“Hanford released a host of chemicals, but the focus of the Spokane trial has been on one radioactive substance, iodine-131, which was carried by winds to cover 75,000 square miles of eastern Washington, parts of Oregon, Idaho, Montana and southwestern Canada.

“People breathed it and ate fruits and vegetables tainted with it. The most exposure probably came from milk produced by cows that grazed on contaminated grass. Once ingested, iodine-131 tends to concentrate in the thyroid, causing cells to malfunction or grow abnormally.

“The thyroid is a butterfly-shaped gland at the front lower part of the neck with a lobe the size of a teaspoon on each side of the windpipe. It affects bodily functions such as growth and development, energy level and metabolism.

“The contractors, in this case two Fortune 500 corporations, DuPont Co. and General Electric Co., say there's no proof that substances released by Hanford caused thyroid problems in the downwind area. Their lawyers rely heavily on a 13-year, \$19.5-million federal study that concluded in 2002 that ‘no associations between Hanford's iodine-131 releases and thyroid disease were observed.’

”There's no scientific basis for these claims. None,’ said Kevin Van Wart, the lead defense lawyer. ‘The downwinder groups are treating this whole thing so emotionally. Their whole case is orchestrated emotion. They've convinced themselves they are victims, and the lawyers are taking advantage of it.’

“Van Wart said the case would have settled years ago had there been fewer claims. The majority of the claims are ‘junk’ and largely ‘lawyer-driven,’ he said. ‘This is a population that has been badly misled. It's big business for lawyers. Big business and big dollars.’

“Lois Camp, 63, a downwinder who believes Hanford is responsible for her lifelong thyroid and heart problems, nonetheless opposes the lawsuit, characterizing it as a ‘horrendous grab for money.’ Rather than pursue monetary compensation, Camp said, downwinders should push to have medical clinics built to monitor the health of all people in the affected area.

“Scientists say that as many as 14,000 people could have suffered health effects from Hanford releases,

and that the number of people exposed through land, water or air may be as high as 2 million. The plaintiffs have their studies too, ones that show direct correlations between iodine-131 and thyroid disease. In some ways, the trial is a contest of studies backed by rival battalions of scientists. But for many plaintiffs, such as Ralph and Dolores Hein, now 84 and 77, the trial is simply a chance to tell their stories.

“Days after doctors found Ralph Hein's tumor, surgeons cut out his thyroid and removed sections of his jugular vein and several strands of muscle. He was never the same. He walked with a limp and endured intense headaches and dizziness. Later, as a complication of the surgery, he suffered a brain hemorrhage that left him disabled.

“The Heins, like a lot of farming families in the Palouse, as the region is known, didn't pay much attention to the plant then called Hanford Engineer Works. A hundred miles of hilly farmland separated Fairfield from the barren, flat desert of southeastern Washington where Hanford was built. But the family knew whatever was going on there was big. It began in 1943, and seemingly overnight the tiny towns of Hanford, White Bluffs and Richland, with a combined population of 1,200, ballooned to 50,000. Most of the newcomers were construction workers.

“What arose from all the activity, said Richard Eymann, a lawyer for the plaintiffs, was a complex of vast gray buildings, “a very strange and very large and very secret factory with high fences and armed guards.”

“The U.S. government chose Hanford as one of four development sites in the top-secret quest to develop an atom bomb, an effort known as the Manhattan Project. The Hanford site, 570 square miles nestled in a U-shaped bend of the Columbia River, was chosen for its remoteness and abundant water supply. The plant's main mission was to produce plutonium, and the reactors built on the site were to be cooled using river water.

“Plutonium was extracted from uranium fuel rods in separation plants that measured 800 feet long and eight stories high. One step in the process involved dissolving the uranium rods in large vats of nitric acid. As the rods dissolved, gases that contained iodine-131 were released through the smokestacks. The emissions were mostly invisible.

“You saw nothing!” said Harriet Fugitt, 66. Fugitt's father worked as an electrician at the Hanford plant, and the family lived near it for 12 years starting in the 1940s. Fugitt has suffered thyroid problems for decades.

“There were no huge clouds,” she said, recalling the smokestacks. “Sometimes there would be steam coming out. That's what they called it, anyway: steam.” Just 27 months after construction started, Hanford produced the plutonium used in the world's first nuclear explosion, the Trinity test in Alamogordo, N.M., in July 1945 near the end of World War II.

“A few weeks later, the United States dropped an atom bomb on Hiroshima, and then bombed Nagasaki. Japan surrendered shortly after. The plutonium in the Nagasaki bomb, which killed 75,000 people, was made at Hanford.

“That's why I don't want too much negative ragging on Hanford,” Fugitt said. “They did stop the war. We can't forget that. But we can't forget about the people here, either. We were hurt too. And they kept it secret from us.”

“In 1986, rumors of radiation leaks prompted citizen groups to request access to classified records under the Freedom of Information Act. Hanford reluctantly released 19,000 pages, revealing for the first time its operations during World War II and the Cold War. The documents showed that between 1944 and 1972, Hanford released at least 740,000 curies of iodine-131 into the air. In one year alone, an estimated 3 million curies of radioactive material were dumped into the Columbia River.

“A curie, a measure of radioactivity, equals 37 billion atoms undergoing decay per second. The 1979 accident at Three Mile Island nuclear power plant in Pennsylvania, which led to sweeping changes in the way nuclear reactors were safeguarded, released 15 curies.

“The 1986 reactor explosion at Chernobyl in the former Soviet Union released as much as 150 million curies over two weeks, exposing millions to iodine-131. A United Nations report has identified 1,800 cases of thyroid cancer believed to be connected to the accident, and scientists predict the number will rise to 8,000 in coming decades.

“On a recent morning, the Heins, who moved to an apartment in Spokane a few years ago, drove out to their farm in Fairfield. The family still owns the heart of the farm, which at its peak stretched to 1,000 acres.

They rent out the house and lease the land to other farmers.

“The couple pointed out landmarks. To the north about half a mile, the top of a farmhouse peeked out from behind a hill. ‘Three of them got cancer there, died,’ Ralph Hein said. ‘At one point, he gestured to the south, where seemingly endless hills met with the horizon. Hanford,’ he said.

There's a different kind of commotion going on at the plant now. The government shut it down in 1990, and since then the chief activity has been cleanup, one of the most massive efforts of its kind in history. Among the tasks has been to figure out what to do about the 440 billion gallons of contaminated liquids that were poured into the ground: ‘Enough to create a poisonous lake the size of Manhattan and more than 80 feet deep,’ wrote Robert Alvarez, a scholar and longtime critic of the nuclear weapons industry.

“The government so far has spent \$60 billion in the cleanup, and officials say it will take an additional \$200 billion and 30 years to finish the job. Meanwhile, studies continue to come out on the long-term environmental effects of Hanford's radioactive discharges, traces of which have been detected, for example, in oysters in the Pacific Ocean.

“Cleanup operations contribute mightily to the local economy. What is now the Tri-Cities of Pasco, Kennewick and Richland is home to 125,000 people, many of them proud of Hanford's contribution to the nation's military might.

“A museum features several rooms dedicated to Hanford. The high school in Richland calls its athletes the Bombers, and its insignia is a mushroom cloud, although such a cloud was never seen in this part of the country. The mushroom clouds rose up in the Southwest, at the government's Nevada Test Site, where bombs were detonated from 1951 to 1963.

“Congress in 1990 passed legislation allowing people who lived downwind from those and other detonations to file for as much as \$50,000 compensation —if they developed cancer. So far, nearly 15,000 people have filed claims. In 2000, Energy Secretary Bill Richardson conceded that workers in 14 nuclear weapons plants had been exposed to harmful levels of radioactive and chemical contamination, opening the way for possible compensation.

“‘Back on the farm’, Ralph Hein said ‘he didn't know if he would live long enough to see his claim settled. It's gone on,’ he said. Scientists estimate 10% of Hanford downwinders have died. Lawyers say that each additional year the litigation drags on means fewer plaintiffs.

“‘It was never about the money anyway,’ Dolores Hein said. ‘Money can't replace the life we would have had.’” ☹

### **Downwinders' Court Win Seen as 'Great Victory'**

Robert McClure reports in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* 5/21/05; “Every morning when 4-year-old Jay Mullen showed up at the Navy day care center, he got a glass of milk - milk that his lawyers now say was tainted by radioactive fallout from the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

“It would be 15 years before Mullen's body was gripped by paralysis that necessitated removal of his diseased thyroid. Three more decades elapsed before Mullen found out the government had purposely released radioactive substances upwind of his childhood home in North Idaho.

“Reflecting yesterday on verdicts in a lawsuit against government contractors at Hanford, Mullen savored what he called a long-awaited victory for people downwind from the bomb-making plant that ended World War II. It was a great victory,’ said Mullen, now 65 and a history professor in Medford, Ore. “Heretofore the government has not acknowledged that our health was damaged.’

“The federal jury in Spokane awarded \$500,000 in damages Thursday to two of six ‘downwinders’ a fraction of what plaintiffs' lawyers spent to bring the cases to trial. Both winning plaintiffs had thyroid cancer and could show exposure to high doses of radiation released from Hanford. But four other downwinders got nothing. Jurors deadlocked on the case of a cancer patient who suffered lower exposures, and rejected the

claims of three other plaintiffs who had thyroid disease but not cancer. Both sides claimed victory, and yesterday the lead attorney defending government contractors E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co. and General Electric Co. said he plans to appeal rulings that barred the jury from hearing certain defense evidence.

Considering the relatively modest jury awards, there's no way lawyers for the rest of the approximately 2,300 downwinders can afford to keep prosecuting the cases, said Chicago lawyer Kevin Van Wart.

"The cost of the trial far exceeded the recovery. The plaintiffs have to go back to the drawing board," Van Wart said. "These were the cases where they thought they were going to send a message, the ones with the highest doses and ... the most sympathetic. They failed to deliver the goods."

"Not so, said Richard Eymann, a Spokane lawyer who represents the downwinders. "These were not significant damage cases for us. We weren't interested in hitting the lottery on these cases," Eymann said. "All we were interested in doing was proving that emissions from Hanford caused thyroid cancer."

"The exposures of people living downwind of Hanford came from waste products purposely vented into the air during World War II and the Cold War. At the time, it was legal - part of a vital defense effort - and harmless for most people downwind, the defendants have claimed. Van Wart said if the plaintiffs had stuck to their relatively small number of strong cases, the legal tangle wouldn't have stretched out over the decade-plus it already has consumed.

"They've built up expectations in people who had low doses," Van Wart said. "The plaintiffs saw this as a big business opportunity. They decided to sign up anybody they could find with a thyroid condition. ... If the plaintiffs had concentrated on those small number of claims that were better claims, this case could have been settled years ago."

"Taxpayers are footing the bill for the defense, which Eymann said published reports have pegged as costing nearly \$100 million. It's up to the government to defend the companies because that was a condition of the firms working on Hanford.

"Eymann said the defendants have never offered to settle the cases that went to trial. He said the legal fight on behalf of the other downwinders will go on, and he may appeal some of the verdicts issued this week.

"There's not enough courts or enough juries to try 2,300 cases. Everybody knows that," Eymann said. "Here we have the United States government spending a hell of a lot of money fighting its own citizens when it's out there compensating (Hanford) workers for the very same illnesses." In speaking with jurors in a courthouse hallway after the verdict, Eymann said he learned that on one of the non-cancer cases involving hypothyroidism, jurors voted 10-2 to find against the government contractors. Only 11 jurors were needed for a verdict, he said, so he is encouraged about future cases.

"For his part, Mullen is most incensed not over the lack of compensation for victims but rather by the government's refusal to acknowledge blame. His father, then serving in the Navy in the Pacific, "believed the atomic bomb saved his life and protected his family."

"The irony was that while he was out there protecting his family from international enemies, his family was being radiated behind his back by his own government," he said.

"Mullen said his case would present a better shot at a verdict against the contractors because he can demonstrate that he got massive exposures at the Navy base near Coeur d'Alene, where his day care was located. Today, Mullen's still drinking a lot of milk, and waiting for his day in court." 🙄

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>U.S. House Funds New INL Nuclear Mission</b></p>
--

The Associated Press reports 5/25/05 that "The U.S. House passed a spending bill that sets aside money to upgrade buildings at the Idaho National Laboratory for storing bomb-grade uranium stockpiles from federal weapons labs in other states.

"The \$29.7 billion appropriations bill for federal energy and water programs includes money for several existing and new programs at the eastern Idaho nuclear research compound. The bill passed the House 416-13.

The legislation must still be considered by the Senate.

“The House bill boosts the budget for the Energy Department's Office of Security and Performance Enhancement to \$356.5 million, more than the \$300 million recommended by Bush. An unspecified portion of that increase will be used to design renovations to two concrete bunkers at INL to house surplus plutonium and highly enriched uranium no longer needed for nuclear bomb production.

“Hundreds of tons of the so-called "special nuclear materials" are stored at installations around the country. The bill orders the Energy Department to come up with a plan by Sept. 30 to consolidate much of the weapons material in Idaho. The Bush administration is seeking to cut costs and the threat of terrorist attack by moving the materials from multiple sites near population centers to more remote locations.

“Idaho Republican Rep. Mike Simpson is a member of the House appropriations panel that approved the language in the spending bill. He said that because the enriched uranium is not waste and similar materials are already stored at INL, he's willing to consider using the Idaho lab as a storage site. ‘It's important to keep in mind that Idaho has the experts, the facilities and the security to deal with these materials in a safe and responsible manner,’ Simpson said Tuesday. ‘If the Idaho National Laboratory can play a significant role in helping to secure our nation against nuclear terrorism and save taxpayers billions of dollars in the process, we have a responsibility to sit down with DOE and talk about it.’

“Opponents say that although the Idaho lab has been billed as the proving ground for new generations of clean nuclear power, consolidating the material there would put INL into a Cold War-era role of atomic weapons support.

“Simpson said several provisions in the House spending bill reinforce INL's role in developing nuclear power reactors, including \$13.5 million for an advanced test reactor for the Navy, \$7 million to accelerate operation of a homeland security test range to study ways to protect the nation's electrical grid and wireless communications systems, and \$16 million for upgrading research facilities at the site.

“The bill also directs the Department of Energy to begin storing spent commercial nuclear reactor fuel at interim storage sites by 2006, specifying INL as one possible alternative until a permanent repository is operating at Nevada's Yucca Mountain.

“Simpson says chances of that ever happening are slim. He said the bill's language does not alter the force of a 1995 court-ordered settlement between the state of Idaho and the Energy Department that states DOE ‘will make no shipments of spent fuel from commercial nuclear power plants’ to INL.” ☺

**Additional issues must be considered in  
relation to the new plan to ship spent  
nuclear reactor fuel (SNF) to Idaho  
National Laboratory (INL)**

1. Recent National Academy of Sciences review of INL/INTEC operations recommended the permanent closure of CPP-691 currently designated to receive SNF.
2. Any sub-surface storage of SNF or other "special nuclear material" (i.e. plutonium/neptunium-238) at INTEC is problematic due to the fact it is within the Big Lost River flood zone.
3. Apparently, CPP-691 and CPP-651 do not have the RCRA required secondary containment (stainless steel liner/leak detection and daily monitoring systems).
4. As we tragically learned from other INL SNF storage facilities (i.e. CPP-603) the SNF was allowed to corrode through the "baskets" and fall to the floor of the basin. Even CPP-603 had better access than CPP-691 has with three sub-surface levels.
5. With no information on age/previous storage history and other characteristics of the new SNF waste shipments to INL we are left with assuming a worst case scenario of old heavily compromised cladding that the generator was anxious to get off-site and dump on DOE. ☹

**Matheson Bill Preserves Fallout Records and  
Prohibits Destruction by DoD**

Congressman Jim Matheson (Dem-UT) introduced legislation that would prevent the Defense Department from destroying records and data on military personnel's exposure to radioactive fallout from past nuclear weapons tests. Matheson's bill adopts a recommendation by the National Academy of Sciences, urging Congress to better preserve historical data related to the historical records. NAS, in its review of a Centers for Disease Control study into the health consequences to Americans from nuclear weapons testing, points out that DoD has not declared a moratorium on the destruction of "possibly relevant records; the Navy and Air Force, for example, have extensive documents of potential importance if additional analyses are undertaken."

"Atmospheric testing was a dark period in our history for many Americans and questions about long-term cancer risks are unanswered," said Matheson. "We should do whatever we can to preserve the limited records from that time so that they'll be available for scientific study." Matheson offered his bill as an amendment to the FY06 Defense Authorization Bill. It passed by voice vote. <sup>9</sup> ☹

---

*Editors Note: Destruction of thousands of documents at the Department of Energy Idaho National Laboratory and Hanford sites related to historical emissions and environmental monitoring have effectively compromised CDC dose reconstruction health studies. See EDI website publications for details.*

**EPA Calls for Public Comment on Reauthorizing the State of Idaho's  
Hazardous Waste Management Plan**

Despite repeated requests by the Environmental Defense Institute (EDI), EPA Region 10 remains unwilling to post on the agency's website a copy of the new EPA reauthorization to the State of Idaho that grants the state broad powers to issue Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) and Hazardous Waste Management Act (HWMA) permits. EPA would only post the "Table of Contents" of the new plan that is next to useless to the interested public and thus denies crucial information essential to any substantive public



comment.

Jeff Hunt at EPA claims that the new plan is “not in electronic form that could be posted.” If true, this suggests that EPA is still in the “dark ages” electronically and uninterested in public access to this crucial information.

EPA was forced to make major changes to this plan after EPA’s own Office of Inspector General issued a critical review of Region 10’s oversight of the previous Idaho authorization plan. EDI also issued formal comments challenging the adequacy of the Idaho management plan. See EDI’s website for more information.

**Send comments to : Jeff Hunt, USEPA Region 10, 1200 Sixth Av. MS AWT-122, Seattle, WA 98101-1128, or email to: [hunt.jeff@epa.gov](mailto:hunt.jeff@epa.gov). Comment deadline is June 16, 2005.**

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ) is not sitting idly by waiting for EPA’s reauthorization. In the last 12 months, IDEQ has rammed through at least seven RCRA permits at INL that EDI considers grossly inadequate. It is uncertain that these recent permits will meet the new reauthorization provisions. Below is a partial listing of these permits that EDI submitted formal comments.

- INL/INTEC VES-SFE-106 Waste Tank Closure Plan;
- INTEC High-Level Liquid Waste Evaporator Operating Permit;
- RWMC Waste Pit-4 Remediation/Closure Plan;
- ANL-W RCRA Waste Management Permit;
- INTEC Liquid Waste Management System Permit;
- INTEC High-Level Waste Tanks (WM-184,185, and 186) Closure Plan;
- INTEC High-Level Waste Tanks (WM-182 and 183) Closure Plan.

EDI demands that EPA furnish us a hard copy of the Idaho RCRA authorization. EDI also raises the issue that a whole spectrum of new activities are planned for the INL and that IDEQ is probably woefully understaffed and underfunded to conduct the oversight for these activities which will certainly encompass new waste reprocessing activities.

EDI’s formal comments on the above actions as well as our comments on the EPA RCRA reauthorization of Idaho are available on our website. 

## Endnotes:

1. Barker, Eric, “Study: Cancer not linked to air pollution, Agencies look at possible causes for elevated cancer rates, *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, May 7, 2005

2. Cancer Data Register of Idaho Annual Report, Cancer in Idaho, 2002 published April 2004, Idaho Hospital Association, Cancer Data Register of Idaho, page 72. The (\*) designates what Cancer Registry considers “Statistically Significant” when compared to Idaho state averages, ( $p > 0.05$ ). It must be noted that when these cancer rates are compared to U.S. cancer rates, they are even more significantly elevated. Prior to 1950, Idaho ranked to lowest in cancer rates, however the start of nuclear materials processing and testing of nuclear bombs radically changed this status.

3. Benson, Allen. B, Ph. D, Hanford Radioactive Fallout, Hanford’s Radioactive Iodine-131 Releases (1944-1956), High Impact Press, 1989.

4. Letter to Chuck Broschius, Environmental Defense Institute, May 30, 2005, from Allen B. Benson, PhD Chemistry, 2011 Island Dreams Av, North Los Vegas, NV 89031.

5. Cancer Trends in Idaho, 1971 - 1998, A Report of the Cancer Data Registry of Idaho, September 2000. Statistically significant is defined by CDRI when the observed number of cancers exceeds the expected number based on Idaho state wide averages ( $p > 0.05$ ).

6. Cancer in Idaho - 2000, Annual Report of the Cancer Registry of Idaho, December 2001, page 5. <http://www.idcancer.org>

7. Hanford Health Information Network, Spring 1997, page 4 and 10, Sponsored by the States of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

8. For a more complete discussion on the increased cancer rates in Idaho, see EDI Newsletter July 2004, August 2003, and July 1999, available on our website publications section

9. Jim Matheson, Utah Congressional Representative, Second District, Press Release, May 25, 2005.

**On behalf of the Environmental Defense Institute Board of Directors and the all volunteer staff, we want to express our collective heart felt appreciation for all of the generous contributions that are crucial to our continued work.**

**These contributions do more than just make it possible to pay printing and postage for this newsletter.**

**Financial support, regardless of the amount, offers substantive reinforcement to us that the information you receive is useful.**

**We regret not being able to send individual thank you notes to each and every contributor, but hope you will understand that EDI's limited resources are best applied to addressing the major environmental health and safety issues that affect you and those your love.**

**Website Endnotes:** (not in printed version)

---

<sup>1</sup> Barker, Eric, “Study: Cancer not linked to air pollution, Agencies look at possible causes for elevated cancer rates, *Lewiston Morning Tribune*, May 7, 2005

<sup>2</sup> Cancer Data Register of Idaho Annual Report, Cancer in Idaho, 2002 published April 2004, Idaho Hospital Association, Cancer Data Register of Idaho, page 72. The Cancer Registry considers “Statistically Significant” when compared to Idaho state averages, ( $p > 0.05$ ). It must be noted that when these cancer rates are compared to U.S. cancer rates, they are even more significantly elevated. Prior to 1950, Idaho ranked to lowest in cancer rates, however the start of nuclear materials processing and testing of nuclear bombs radically changed this status.

<sup>3</sup> Benson, Allen. B, Ph. D, Hanford Radioactive Fallout, Hanford’s Radioactive Iodine-131 Releases (1944-1956), High Impact Press, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Chuck Broschius, Environmental Defense Institute, May 30, 2005, from Allen B. Benson, PhD Chemistry, 2011 Island Dreams Av, North Los Vegas, NV 89031.

<sup>5</sup> Cancer Trends in Idaho, 1971 - 1998, A Report of the Cancer Data Registry of Idaho, September 2000. Statistically significant is defined by CDRI when the observed number of cancers exceeds the expected number based on Idaho state wide averages ( $p > 0.05$ ).

<sup>6</sup> Cancer in Idaho - 2000, Annual Report of the Cancer Registry of Idaho, December 2001, page 5. <http://www.idcancer.org>

<sup>7</sup> Hanford Health Information Network, Spring 1997, page 4 and 10, Sponsored by the States of Washington, Oregon, and Idaho.

<sup>8</sup> For a more complete discussion on the increased cancer rates in Idaho, see EDI Newsletter July 2004, August 2003, and July 1999, available on our website publications section

<sup>9</sup> Jim Matheson, Utah Congressional Representative, Second District, Press Release, May 25, 2005.