

Hanford Site Air Operating Permit Renewal 4 Public Comment Period



Figure 1. Columbia River at the Hanford Reach.

At a glance

Comments accepted Oct. 5 12:00 am – Nov. 4, 2026, 11:59 pm

The Hanford site Air Operating Permit (AOP) protects the people and air resources of Washington State by combining air-related applicable requirements, limits, and standards for the Hanford Site in a single permit for periodic compliance evaluations and inspections. The draft Renewal 4 contains the changes and updates that have occurred since the issuance of Renewal 3.

Public comment invited

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is proposing to issue Renewal 4 of AOP No. 00-05-006 for the Hanford Site, addressing applicable requirements for Title V of the federal Clean Air Act. This renewal and comment period cover all stationary sources of air pollutants with applicable requirements at the Hanford Site.

An initial draft of Renewal 4 (AOP.2025.1D) was posted for public comment from July 28 through Sept. 19, 2025. Comments from members of the public and the permittee resulted in updates that were significant, leading to an Ecology decision to host a second comment period on an updated draft.

Additionally, there have been multiple new and updated sources of applicable requirements for the Hanford Site since the AOP.2025.1D draft went out for public comment. These include new and revised Notice of Construction Approval Orders, updates to state and federal regulations, and retirement and addition of new equipment. These requirements have been incorporated into the second AOP Renewal 4 public notice draft, AOP.2026.1D.

The permittee is:

U.S. Department of Energy (Energy)
Hanford Field Office
P.O Box 550
Richland, WA 99352

Background

The Hanford Site occupies 586 square miles in southeastern Washington State. The site produced plutonium for the nation's defense program from 1943 to the late 1980s. Today, waste management and environmental cleanup are the primary missions at Hanford.

Overview & Changes

This permit renewal would incorporate all identified changes in applicable requirements for the Hanford Site since issuance of Renewal 3. These changes include:

- New and revised Notice of Construction approval orders issued by Ecology under Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-400-110.
- Updates to the site's Radioactive Air Emissions License, FF-01, issued by the Washington State Department of Health (Health) under WAC 246-247-060.
- Updates to WAC 173-400, 173-401, 173-460, and 173-446.
- Updates to Code of Federal Regulations Title 40, Parts 60 and 63.
- Addition and retirement of facilities and equipment.
- Other changes in regulatory applicability, guidance issued by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and general language updates intended to better address and explain applicable requirements.

About the permit

Congress amended the federal Clean Air Act in 1990, creating the requirement for larger sources of air pollution to be covered by an AOP. An AOP brings all applicable air requirements into one document to ensure that facilities are aware of these requirements and to assist regulatory agencies in determining compliance status.

In 1991, the Washington State Legislature updated the Washington Clean Air Act (now recodified as RCW 70A.15) to make it consistent with these changes. In 1993, Ecology developed Washington's AOP regulations (WAC 173-401) to comply with federal regulations. The EPA granted Washington State the authority to implement the AOP regulations in November 1994. The Hanford Site AOP was first issued in June 2001.

Three agencies administer the Hanford Site AOP. Ecology regulates the nonradioactive criteria and toxic air emissions. Health regulates radioactive air emissions. The Benton Clean Air Agency administers outdoor burning.

WAC 173-401-610 limits the duration of an AOP to five years. Renewal 3 of Hanford Site AOP expired on Aug. 1, 2024. However, Energy submitted a complete renewal application on Nov. 13, 2023. In accordance with WAC 173-401-620(2)(j), Renewal 3 remains in effect until Ecology issues Renewal 4 or denies the application. The Hanford Site still meets criteria that require issuance of an AOP.

Reviewing the draft permit

Ecology invites you to review and comment on the proposed draft of Renewal 4. See the last page of this focus sheet for comment period dates and how to submit comments.

Copies of the application for the proposed permit, the draft permit, and statements of basis, will be available online during the public comment period at Ecology's website¹. Additional supporting materials will also be available electronically, upon request, or at the Nuclear Waste Program office.

Ecology will consider and respond to all comments received during the public comment period. We will document our responses and issue a response to comments document when we make our final permitting decision. The proposed final AOP will then be sent to the EPA for a 45-day review prior to issuance, in accordance with WAC 173-401-700(1)(f).

For information on other comment periods or ways to get involved, go to ecology.wa.gov/Hanford and click "Public involvement" on the left bar or visit Hanford.gov "public involvement opportunities".

You can also follow us on social media.



@EcologyWAHanford



@ecologyhanford.bsky.social

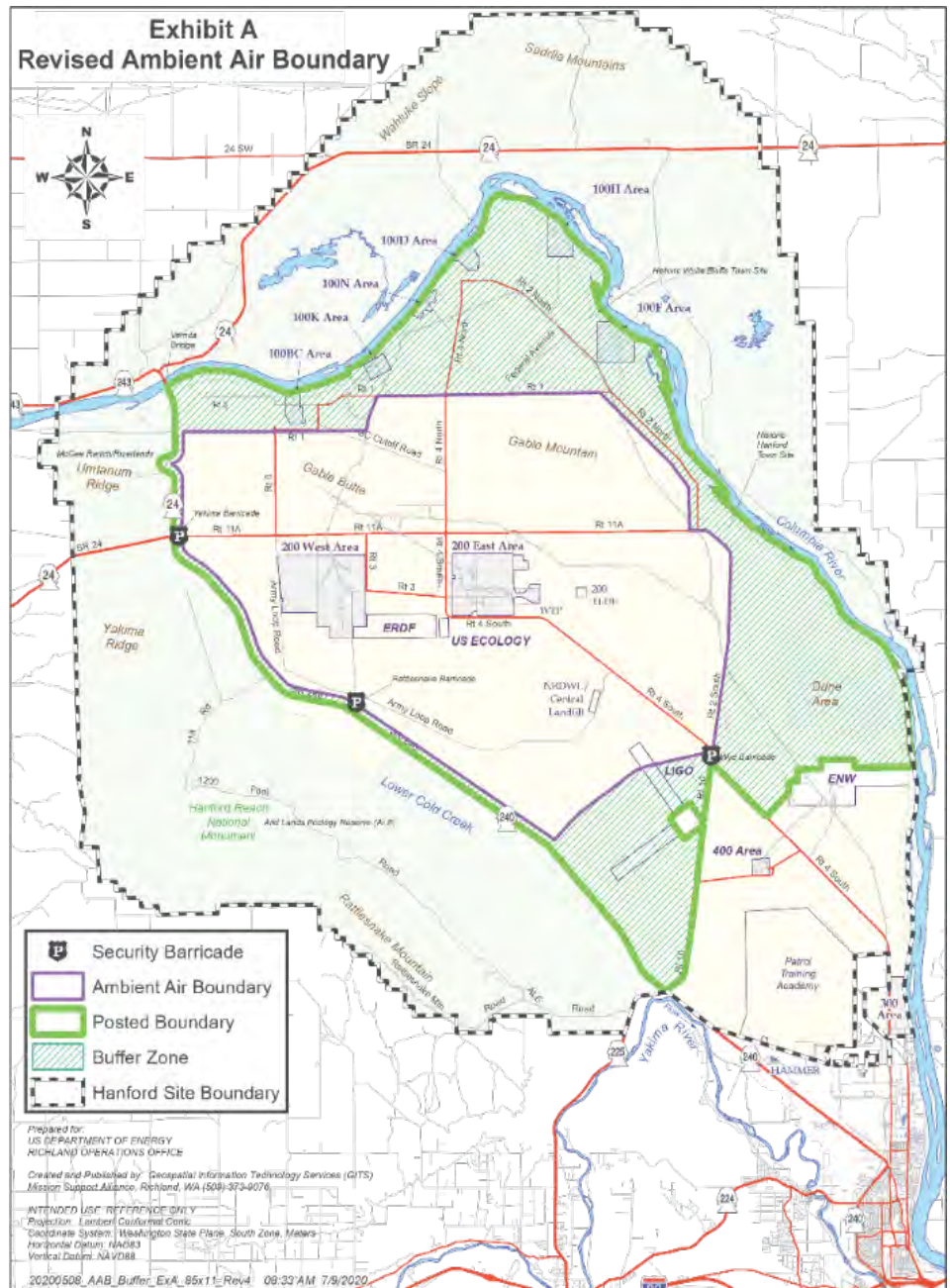


Figure 2 Current Hanford Site boundary map for air permitting.

¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/waste-toxics/nuclear-waste/public-involvement>



Nuclear Waste Program
3100 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland WA 99354

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Electronic submission (preferred):

<https://ecology.commentinput.com?id=FDfZiVsax2>

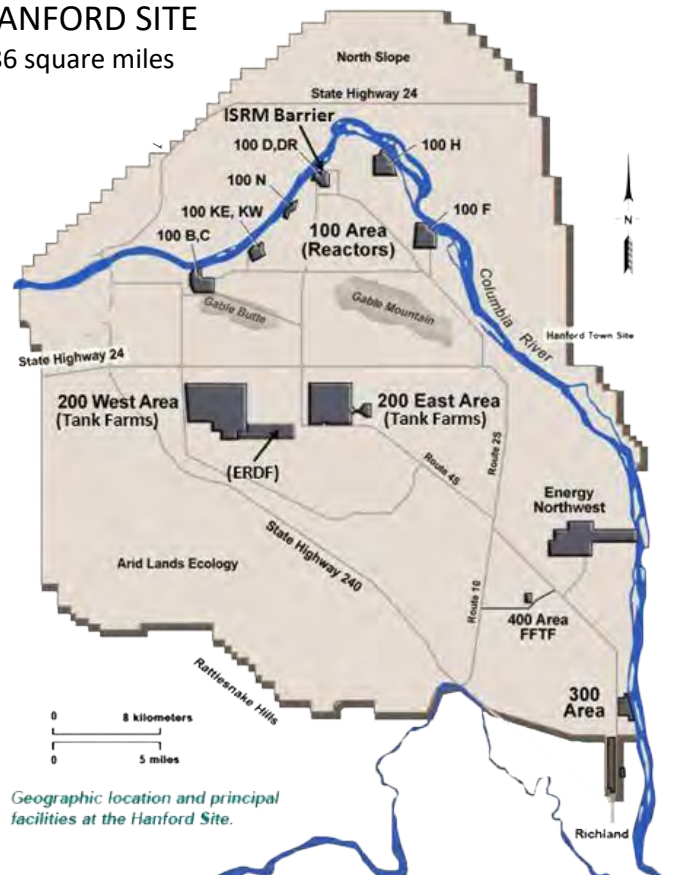
A public hearing is not scheduled, but if there is enough interest, we will consider holding one.

To request a hearing, mail or hand-deliver comments, or for more information, contact:

Daina McFadden
509-372-7950
3100 Port of Benton Blvd
Richland, WA 99354
Hanford@ecy.wa.gov

HANFORD SITE

586 square miles



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 509-372-7950 or email at Daina.McFadden@ecy.wa.gov, or visit ecology.wa.gov/Accessibility. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.