



Nonprofit Launched to Transform Hanford Cleanup, Safety

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Nonprofit Launched to Transform Hanford Cleanup, Safety 'Hanford Challenge' a GAP Sponsored Project

(Seattle, WA) –A new nonprofit organization, Hanford Challenge, is launching immediately to address the many issues facing the Hanford Nuclear Site in southeastern Washington State. Hanford Challenge will combine decades of experience and hard-won respect with a new mission to achieve safety and sustainable prosperity for people affected by Hanford.

“The intention of the new organization is to facilitate the clean up of the Hanford site in a way that uses the spirit and inspiration of all stakeholders. It serves the workers, the public, the environment, and whistleblowers. Better cooperation and policy mean a better cleanup – which is something the Columbia River and all affected communities need,” says Tom Carpenter, Executive Director of Hanford Challenge.

Carpenter served as Nuclear Oversight Program Director of the Government Accountability Project (GAP) since 1985. Hanford Challenge is starting operations as a project sponsored by GAP, whose national Nuclear Oversight Program will continue to operate out of its Washington, D.C. office. Carpenter, an attorney, intends to focus his energies on bringing a new public interest approach to Hanford cleanup. Carpenter co-founded the Hanford Concerns Council (HCC), a forum where contractors, workers, and public interest groups resolve employee concerns at Hanford while protecting the employee from reprisal.

Hanford Challenge will seek to foster a discussion and develop a new approach to advocacy and change at Hanford.

Despite the massive cleanup challenges, opinion leaders are optimistic about the impact of this new organization. Denis Hayes, President of the Bullitt Foundation, stated: “Nothing poses a more dire threat to the Pacific Northwest than the millions and millions of gallons of deadly nuclear waste entombed at Hanford. After a half-century of accidents, leaks, spills, and cover-ups – a half-century of government incompetence and complicity – some have come to view Hanford as hopeless. But Hanford Challenge gives me renewed hope, because its leaders have the integrity, experience and determination to pull us back from the brink.”

Hanford Challenge will continue the work of serving Hanford whistleblowers and workers and will be a clearinghouse for serious employee concerns: identifying patterns, documenting evidence and devising strategies and campaigns (such as public reports, media attention, Congressional investigation, and agency action) to spur corrective action. Individual cases will be referred to existing mediation vehicles such as the Hanford Concerns Council, or to a network of independent, experienced attorneys and medical professionals.

While Hanford Challenge does not intend to provide direct litigation services to any client, they will be a credible source of advice and counsel for workers seeking help under the federal radiation compensation program.

Hanford Challenge will also continue participation in the Hanford Concerns Council, and seek to expand the Council’s membership to other contractors at the Hanford Site, and cultivate open lines of dialogue and connections with senior Hanford managers.

Mark Cohen, the Executive Director of GAP, added, “The launch of Hanford Challenge offers new hope for the residents of southeastern Washington. Although the challenge is indeed immense, the commitment, talent and experience that Hanford Challenge brings to the table is unrivaled.”

Government Accountability Project

The Government Accountability Project is the nation’s leading whistleblower protection organization. Through litigating whistleblower cases, publicizing concerns and developing legal reforms, GAP’s mission is to protect the public interest by promoting government and corporate accountability. Founded in 1977, GAP is a non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization based in Washington, D.C.