



# Heart of America Northwest

The Public's Voice for Hanford Cleanup

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TESTIMONY OF  
HEART OF AMERICA NORTHWEST  
to the Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
U.S. Senate  
Washington D.C.  
On S. 1694  
July 7, 2015

Sen. Murkowski (Chair) and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity for Heart of America Northwest to comment on S. 1694. Heart of America Northwest is the leading citizens' watchdog organization working for the clean-up of the federal Energy Department's Hanford Nuclear Reservation, which is the most contaminated area in North America. The Columbia River runs through Hanford for over fifty miles, and there is a massive amount of deep soil contamination above the current groundwater level which would be re-wetted, mobilized and transported to the River if Black Rock Reservoir were constructed just upgradient of Hanford.

The Black Rock reservoir proposal was investigated in the early 2000s by the Bureau of Reclamation and the State of Washington. This multi-billion dollar dam project would have been constructed southeast of Yakima, WA, and filled with pumped water from the Columbia River for transfer to the Yakima River Basin. Heart of American Northwest opposed this project because studies showed that groundwater seepage from a Black Rock reservoir would have migrated under the Hanford Nuclear Reservation carrying radioactive contamination toward the Columbia River. <http://columbia-institute.org/blackrock/backrock/Home.html> Our review was conducted by experts, including board member geohydrologist Floyd Hodges, Ph.D., retired senior scientist for Pacific NW National Lab.

This threat is back in the form of the Bureau of Reclamation's Yakima Plan, which is the subject of S. 1694. We were concerned to learn that at the June 3, 2015, Yakima Workgroup meeting the Bureau of Reclamation reported that they had begun "appraisal of potential projects to transfer water from the Columbia River to the Yakima Basin."

<http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/yrbwep/2011integratedplan/2015meetings/2015-06-03/ppt.pdf>  
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In addition, the Yakima Basin Storage Alliance, a member of the Yakima Workgroup has announced that "It is Time to Revive the Black Rock Reservoir Plan."  
<http://ybsa.org/2015/07/ybsa-monthly-report-june-2015/>

S. 1694 appears to provide Congressional support and endorsement for the entire Yakima Plan, including projects to transfer water from the Columbia River to the Yakima Basin, which could include projects such as Black Rock. Therefore, Heart of American Northwest is opposed to S. 1694, as proposed. Please include this testimony in the hearing record for S. 1694. Thank you.

Representative Gerry Pollet, J.D.,  
Executive Director,

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