

# US Ecology Site Closure Project Background

## About the site

US Ecology, Inc. (USE) has operated a commercial low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) disposal facility since 1965. The facility is on a 100-acre tract near the center of the federal Hanford Site.

Washington State leases the land and subleases it to USE. The facility operates under a radioactive materials license from the Department of Health (Health). The site has been the regional commercial LLRW disposal site for 11 western states since 1993.

The facility contains about 14 million cubic feet of waste in 22 filled trenches. It received about 17,000 cubic feet of non-radioactive hazardous waste between 1965 and 1970. The site received some chemical waste, as a component of the radiological waste, as late as 1985. Since 1985, the site has only received radiological waste.

Washington State is required to ensure that the facility will be properly closed with adequate financial surety. The facility may be licensed for radioactive waste disposal until 2056.

## Site closure plans

Health and USE are working to close the 22 filled trenches under the radioactive materials license. Closure of the filled trenches also requires remediation of releases of hazardous chemicals disposed there. The Department of Ecology is overseeing that remediation under the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA). The closure will occur in phases.

The first phase for closure is referred to as the “Phase 1 cover.” This cover will be placed over the trenches already filled with waste. Health’s modeling showed that to stay within the required dose limit, Phase 1 cover construction must be completed before January 2016. To make this deadline, the contracting and installation must start in 2015.

## WHY IT MATTERS

US Ecology operates a commercial low-level radioactive waste disposal site on a site north of Richland near the center of the Hanford Site.

A cover must be installed there before January 2016 to ensure that off-site radiation dose meets federal health standards.

A study to define how to remediate the releases of chemical wastes disposed there also must be completed.

The project will

- Reduce toxic threats
- Promote sustainable energy and a clean environment (Governors Results Washington goal 3)
- Supports healthy and safe communities (goal 4)
- Protect natural resources

## MORE INFORMATION

[www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Radiation/WasteManagement.aspx](http://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/Radiation/WasteManagement.aspx)

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