

March 16, 2006

DOE Cites Bechtel National Incorporated for Price-Anderson Violations

**WASHINGTON , DC** – The Department of Energy (DOE) today notified Bechtel National Incorporated (BNI) that it will fine the company \$198,000 for violations of the Department's nuclear safety requirements. BNI is the primary design and construction contractor for the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant (WTP).

The Preliminary Notice of Violation (PNOV) issued today cited a series of violations that occurred during the design and construction of the WTP between May 2002 and September 2005. Violations include failure to abide by design codes documented in facility safety requirements, failure to abide by inspection requirements for waste processing vessels, failure to utilize correct suppliers to fabricate certain components, and calculation errors resulting in inconsistencies in structural steel design requirements.

The proposed civil penalty of \$198,000 is based on the significance of the violations yet reflects substantial mitigation granted by the Department for aggressive corrective actions taken by BNI to prevent recurrence of the identified deficiencies. If left uncorrected, the design and construction issues could have adversely effected the operation of the WTP compromising the Department's ability to process radioactive waste currently being stored at the Hanford Tank farms and posing potential safety and health risks to workers and the public.

The Price-Anderson Amendments Act of 1988 authorizes the Energy Department to undertake regulatory actions against contractors for violations of its nuclear safety requirements. The enforcement program encourages DOE contractors to identify and correct nuclear safety deficiencies at an early stage, before they contribute to or result in more serious events.

Additional details on this and other enforcement actions are available on the Internet at <http://www.eh.doe.gov/enforce>.

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