

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – May 4, 2010**

Rochelle Olson, Public Affairs Manager, 509-377-4728

Michael Paoli, Public Affairs Supervisor, 509-377-4164

News Release 10-08

Page 1 of 2

## **Media Advisory:**

### **U.S. congressmen speak on commercial used nuclear fuel storage**

**RICHLAND, Wash.** – U.S. Congressmen Doc Hastings and Jay Inslee will offer a media availability at Columbia Generating Station near Richland on Friday, May 7 at 2:15 p.m. to discuss the future of used commercial nuclear fuel storage. The Washington congressmen, joined by Energy Northwest CEO Vic Parrish, will speak at Columbia's Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installation. The highly-secure storage facility houses used fuel from Columbia's nuclear reactor.

*Media interested in attending should contact Holly Petersen, 509-377-4432, at Energy Northwest Public Affairs by noon on Wednesday, May 5.*

Due to the highly secure nature of both Columbia Generating Station and its used fuel facility, attending media must arrive at the Columbia security gate by no later than 1:15 p.m. for a vehicle search followed by two in-depth access briefings.

The congressmen are at Columbia to specifically address the Energy Department's legal obligation to transfer all commercial used fuel generated in the United States to a permanent national repository. Reps. Inslee, Hastings and Norm Dicks recently introduced a disapproval resolution ([H. Res. 1209](#)), along with other House members, to stop the Department of Energy from using appropriated funds to terminate the program, and to ensure the preservation of all scientific and site specific files and data related to the Yucca Mountain Repository.

Columbia's used fuel is currently stored safely and securely on site in above-ground, 225-ton concrete and steel dry storage containers. However, since 1984 Northwest ratepayers have paid \$176 million in taxes into the Nuclear Waste Fund, which was established by DOE to fund a national repository. More than \$33 billion has been collected to date, of which more than \$22 billion remains in the fund balance.

Within the broader context of U.S. nuclear waste – commercial and defense – please note that Columbia’s used fuel is managed solely by Energy Northwest under oversight by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and is independent from DOE’s defense-related nuclear waste management.

**About Energy Northwest:**

Energy Northwest develops, owns and operates a diverse mix of electricity generating resources, including hydro, solar and wind projects – and the Northwest’s only nuclear power plant. These projects provide enough reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible energy to power more than a million homes each year, and that carbon-free electricity is provided at the cost of generation. As a Washington state joint operating agency, Energy Northwest comprises 28 public power member utilities from across the state serving more than 1.5 million ratepayers. The agency continually explores new generation projects to meet its members’ needs. Energy Northwest – [www.energy-northwest.com](http://www.energy-northwest.com).

###