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**Federal Stimulus Money Awarded to  
Oregon and Washington for Underground  
Storage Tank Cleanups  
04/10/09**

**Breaking Developments In Environmental Law**

The federal Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") has announced how it will divide up among the states the \$200 million in the stimulus bill allocated for cleaning up leaking underground storage tank sites around the country. EPA is awarding nearly \$2.7 million to Oregon and \$3.4 million to Washington.

Part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 contains an appropriation for the EPA's Leaking Underground Storage Tank Trust Fund. The money will be used to pay for the agency's oversight of assessment and cleanup of underground tank leaks or directly pay for assessing and cleaning up leaks from federally regulated tanks where the responsible party is unknown or is unwilling or unable to pay for cleanup, or if there is an emergency situation requiring immediate cleanup.

The funding is intended to stimulate jobs in the form of site assessments and cleanups. EPA estimates that if all the money is used for assessing and cleaning up tank releases, it would create thousands of jobs and result in 1,600 cleanups. This, however, may be a drop in the bucket since nationwide there are approximately 480,000 confirmed releases from underground storage tanks and a backlog of more than 100,000 cleanups to be completed. Nevertheless, for states like Oregon and Washington facing serious budget shortfalls, the funding is good news. Oregon currently has more than 7,000 confirmed releases from underground storage tanks and 1,215 cleanups awaiting completion, while Washington has more than 6,000 confirmed releases and backlog of 1,935 unfinished cleanups.

All of the states and territories (except North Dakota and American Samoa, who turned down the money) will receive the funding in the form of cooperative agreements to address sites in their jurisdictions that are ready to be assessed or cleaned up. The cooperative agreements that each state will enter into with EPA will provide detailed descriptions of how the states plan to spend the money. Separate funds also have been allocated to assessments and cleanups on Native American lands.

*Lane Powell has launched an interdisciplinary team comprised of attorneys from a wide range of practice areas to assist our clients in identifying key opportunities and challenges presented by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 and related administrative policies. Please visit our [website](#) to read additional legal updates prepared by members of Lane Powell's Economic Stimulus task force.*

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