

of application notices for discretionary grant competitions, can be viewed on the Department's electronic bulletin board (ED Board), telephone (202) 260-9950; or on the Internet Gopher Server at GPOHER.ED.GOV (under Announcements, Bulletins, and Press Releases). However, the official application notice for a discretionary grant competition is the notice published in the Federal Register.

Program Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1135–1135a-3.

Dated: October 23, 1995.

David A. Longanecker,

Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.

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BILLING CODE 4000-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Availability of Implementation Plan for the Medical Isotopes Production Project: Molybdenum-99 and Related Isotopes Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) announces the availability of the Implementation Plan for the Medical Isotopes Production Project: Molybdenum-99 and Related Isotopes Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), DOE/EIS-0249-IP.

DATES: The Department intends to issue the Draft Medical Isotopes Production Project EIS for public comment later this fall. A 45-day public comment period will be provided. The Department plans to hold public hearings on the Draft EIS during the public comment period. The public hearings are tentatively scheduled to be held in the following locations: Idaho Falls, Idaho, Oak Ridge, Tennessee, Albuquerque, New Mexico, Los Alamos, New Mexico.

The meetings will provide opportunities for information exchange and discussion as well as for the submittal of written statements or oral comments. Specific times, dates, and locations for the hearings will be announced at a later date.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the Medical Isotopes Production Project EIS Implementation Plan or other correspondence regarding this environmental review should be addressed to: Mr. Wade Carroll, MIPP EIS Project Manager, NE-70, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874. Mr. Carroll may be contacted by

telephone at (301) 903-7731, facsimile (301) 903-5434.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information on the DOE NEPA process, please contact: Ms. Carol Borgstrom, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20585. Ms. Borgstrom may be contacted by leaving a message at (800) 472-2756 or by calling (202) 586-4600. For general information on the DOE isotope production program, please contact: Mr. Owen W. Lowe, Associate Director, Office of Isotope Production and Distribution, NE-70, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874. Mr. Lowe may be contacted by calling (301) 903-5161.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The proposed medical isotopes production project would establish a production capability to ensure a reliable domestic supply of molybdenum-99 (Mo-99), which decays to form the medical isotope technetium-99m (Tc-99m). The proposed project would also enable the production of related medical isotopes (iodine-125, iodine-131, and xenon-133).

Tc-99m is an important medical isotope, used in more than 30,000 diagnostic medical procedures each day in the United States. The United States medical community is reliant upon a single 38 year old reactor in Canada for its entire supply of Mo-99, from which Tc-99m is obtained. The Department's near-term goal would be to provide a backup capability to supply a baseline production level of 10 to 30 percent of current United States demand for Mo-99 and 100 percent of the United States demand should the existing Canadian source be unavailable. The baseline production level would serve to maintain the capabilities of the facilities and staff to respond on short notice to supply the entire United States demand on an as-needed basis. The Department's longer term objective is to support private sector production of Mo-99 in the United States.

The Department is preparing the Medical Isotopes Production Project EIS to evaluate the environmental impacts of reasonable alternatives for the domestic production of Mo-99. The EIS will also evaluate the required "no action" alternative. Short descriptions of the alternatives to be evaluated in the EIS are included in the Implementation Plan.

The EIS Implementation Plan has been distributed to appropriate Congressional members and committees, the States of Idaho, New

Mexico, and Tennessee, American Indian tribal governments, local county governments, other federal agencies, and other interested parties. The Implementation Plan is available for review at the following locations:

DOE Headquarters, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Room 1E-190, Washington, DC, 20585, phone (202) 586-3142;

National Atomic Museum, Building 20358, Wyoming Boulevard, Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, 87158, phone (505) 845-4378;

Los Alamos National Laboratory Community Reading Room, 1450 Central Avenue, Suite 101, Los Alamos, New Mexico, 87544, phone (505) 665-2127;

Idaho Operations Office, Idaho Public Reading Room, 1776 Science Center Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho, 83402, phone (208) 526-0271;

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Nuclear Reactor Laboratory, 138 Albany Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 02139, phone (617) 253-4202;

Georgia Institute of Technology, Price Gilbert Memorial Library, 225 North Avenue, Atlanta, Georgia, 30332-0900, phone (404) 894-4519;

Rhode Island Nuclear Science Center, South Ferry Road, Narragansett, Rhode Island, 02882, phone (401) 789-9391; and

University of Missouri-Columbia, Ellis Library, Columbia, Missouri, 65201, phone (314) 882-0748.

Signed in Washington, D.C., this 10th day of October, 1995, for the United States Department of Energy.

Ray A. Hunter,

Deputy Director, Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology.

[FR Doc. 95-26844 Filed 10-27-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Record of Decision; Savannah River Site Waste Management, Savannah River Operations Office, Aiken, SC

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Record of decision.

SUMMARY: DOE announces its intention to implement the moderate treatment configuration alternative identified in the Savannah River Site (SRS) Waste Management Final Environmental Impact Statement (WMEIS). DOE has evaluated the potential environmental impacts and costs of storing, treating, and/or disposing of liquid high-level radioactive, low-level radioactive, hazardous, mixed (radioactive and

hazardous), and transuranic wastes at SRS in the WMEIS.

DOE plans to use a phased approach to making decisions on treatment, storage and disposal facilities identified in the moderate treatment configuration alternative. This Record of Decision (ROD) identifies decisions regarding continuation of existing activities and current operation of existing facilities, new waste recycling initiatives, operation of the Consolidated Incineration Facility (CIF), low-level waste volume reduction activities, and the operation of a mobile soil sort facility. After DOE and the State of South Carolina complete negotiations under the Federal Facility Compliance Act (FFCAct), DOE will issue additional RODs on the treatment of mixed low-level radioactive and mixed transuranic waste.

The final SRS WMEIS provides a baseline for the analysis of future SRS waste management needs. DOE will continue to review its SRS waste management activities at the SRS to ensure that those activities are adequately addressed by this EIS, or in the event they are not, that the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews are initiated.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on Savannah River Site Waste Management, write or call: A. R. Grainger, Environmental Compliance Division, SR NEPA Compliance Officer, Savannah River Operations Office, P.O. Box 5031, Aiken, South Carolina 29804, Phone/FAX: (800) 242-8269, e-mail: nepa@barms036.b-r.com.

For general information on the U.S. Department of Energy NEPA process, write or call: Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20580, Telephone: (202) 586-4600, or leave a message at (800) 472-2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

DOE prepared this Record of Decision pursuant to the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR Part 1021). This Record of Decision is based on DOE's Final WMEIS, Savannah River Site, Aiken, South Carolina (DOE/EIS-0217). DOE's SRS occupies approximately 800 square kilometers (300 square miles) adjacent to the Savannah River, principally in Aiken and Barnwell counties of South

Carolina, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) southeast of Augusta, Georgia, and about 32 kilometers (20 miles) south of Aiken, South Carolina.

DOE's primary mission at SRS from the 1950s until the recent end of the Cold War was the production and processing of nuclear materials to support defense programs. The end of the Cold War has led to a reduction in the size of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. Many of the facilities used to manufacture, assemble, and maintain the arsenal are no longer needed. Some of these facilities can be converted to new uses through decontamination processes; others must be decommissioned. Wastes generated during the Cold War also must be cleaned up in a safe and cost-effective manner. In addition, DOE must manage wastes that may be generated in the future in compliance with the applicable environmental requirements.

DOE estimates that it will manage the following approximate amounts of wastes (expected waste forecast) at SRS over the next 30 years (1995 to 2024): 153,000 cubic meters of liquid high-level radioactive waste; 476,000 cubic meters of low-level radioactive waste; 435,000 cubic meters of hazardous waste; 230,000 cubic meters of mixed waste; and 23,000 cubic meters of transuranic waste.

DOE analyzed three alternatives, in addition to the no action alternative, for minimizing, treating, storing, and/or disposing of wastes (low-level radioactive, hazardous, mixed, and transuranic) in a manner that would protect human health and the environment, achieve regulatory compliance, and be cost effective. (Alternatives for managing high-level radioactive waste were considered in the Defense Waste Processing Facility (DWPF) EIS and Supplemental EIS (DOE/EIS-0082 and DOE/EIS-0082-S), and decisions were announced in the DWPF Records of Decision on June 1, 1982 (47 FR 23801) and April 12, 1995 (60 FR 18589)). Mixed wastes are regulated under both the Atomic Energy Act and Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), as amended by the FFCAct. The FFCAct requires DOE to prepare a Site Treatment Plan (STP) that addresses options for treating mixed wastes currently in storage or that will be generated within the next 5 years at the SRS. The Department expects that negotiations with the State of South Carolina under the FFCAct will not be completed until later this year. Because these negotiations are an essential part of DOE's decision making process regarding mixed waste and mixed transuranic waste, no decision

concerning mixed waste management options analyzed in the SRS WMEIS will be made until those negotiations are concluded. The sole exception to this is the Department's decision concerning the CIF.

DOE prepared an environmental assessment (DOE/EA-0400) and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (Federal Register, December 24, 1992, 57 FR 61402) for the construction and operation of the CIF to incinerate mixed, hazardous, and low-level radioactive wastes. In 1993 DOE decided to reexamine whether incineration was the most appropriate method to treat low-level radioactive waste. DOE is now deciding to complete construction and operate the CIF for hazardous, mixed, and low-level radioactive waste. This decision concerning mixed waste was made after consultation with the State of South Carolina.

DOE published a Notice of Intent to prepare the SRS WMEIS in the Federal Register on April 6, 1994 (59 FR 16494). The notice announced a public scoping period that ended on May 31, 1994, and solicited comments and suggestions on the scope of the EIS. DOE held scoping meetings in Savannah, Georgia, and North Augusta and Columbia, South Carolina on May 12, 17, and 19, 1994, respectively. Comments received from individuals, organizations, and government agencies during the scoping period were considered in the preparation of the EIS.

On January 27, 1995, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Notice of Availability of DOE's Draft SRS WMEIS in the Federal Register (60 FR 5388). This notice officially started the public comment period on the Draft SRS WMEIS, which DOE extended through March 31, 1995, in response to a request from the Savannah River Site's Citizens Advisory Board. Comments were received by letter, electronic mail, and formal statements made at 12 public hearings. The hearings (2 sessions each) provided opportunity for informal discussions with DOE personnel involved with waste management. They were held in Barnwell, South Carolina on February 21, 1995; Columbia, South Carolina on February 22, 1995; North Augusta, South Carolina on February 23, 1995; Savannah, Georgia on February 28, 1995; Beaufort, South Carolina on March 1, 1995; and Hilton Head, South Carolina on March 2, 1995.

DOE considered comments it received on the Draft WMEIS from agencies, organizations, and individuals in preparing the Final WMEIS. EPA published a Notice of Availability of the

Final WMEIS in the Federal Register on July 28, 1995 (60 FR 38817).

DOE received three letters after issuance of the Final WMEIS. The South Carolina Department of Transportation stated that it had no comments on the project. The Centers for Disease Control, on behalf of the U. S. Public Health Service, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, stated that the Final EIS adequately addressed their comments on the Draft EIS. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, however, stated that it would have preferred that the Final EIS not characterize the Agency's comments as endorsing Department of Energy actions. The Agency noted that it does commend DOE for its efforts to develop a strategy for long-term waste management at SRS using the NEPA process, and will continue to work with DOE to ensure that waste management activities protect human health and the environment, comply with applicable environmental requirements, and minimize waste generation.

Alternatives Considered

The three treatment configuration alternatives considered in this EIS (limited, moderate and extensive) addressed treatment, storage and disposal facilities using three potential waste volume forecasts. The minimum waste volume forecast included current inventories and current waste receipts from offsite, and projections of the waste that would be generated as a result of reasonable lower-bound estimates of ongoing site operations and environmental restoration and decontamination and decommissioning activities. The maximum waste volume forecast included current inventories and current waste receipts from offsite, additional wastes that might be received from offsite based on decisions resulting from the FFCAct process and ongoing DOE NEPA reviews; and projections of the waste that would be generated as a result of reasonable upper-bound estimates of ongoing site operations and environmental restoration and decontamination and decommissioning activities. The expected waste volume forecast included current inventories and current waste receipts from offsite, additional wastes that might be received from offsite based on decisions resulting from the FFCAct process and ongoing DOE NEPA reviews, and DOE's current estimates of the waste volumes anticipated to result from continuing site operations, environmental restoration of existing waste sites, and decontamination and decommissioning of surplus facilities.

Limited Treatment Configuration Alternative

This alternative consists of the siting, construction, and operation of facilities and the implementation of management techniques that would reduce impacts from treatment processes while complying fully with existing waste management requirements. For each waste type, however, the treatment under this alternative would be the minimum needed to meet applicable standards and allow prompt storage and/or disposal. The limited treatment processes under this alternative would produce a waste form suitable for disposal, but not one that had undergone the most vigorous volume reduction or stabilization treatment available. The volume of low-level radioactive wastes to be disposed of would be greater than under the moderate and extensive treatment configuration alternatives, the volume of mixed waste to be disposed of would be greater than under the moderate treatment configuration alternative but less than under the extensive treatment configuration alternative, and the potential for impacts in the future from storage and disposal would be greater than under the other action alternatives. Short-term impacts associated with treating waste generally would be less than under the more extensive treatment alternatives.

Moderate Treatment Configuration Alternative

This alternative consists of the siting, construction, and operation of facilities and the implementation of management techniques that would provide a balanced mix of technologies that includes extensive treatment of those waste types that have the greatest potential to adversely affect the public or the environment because of their mobility or toxicity if left untreated (such as wastes containing plutonium-238), or that would remain highly radioactive far into the future (such as waste containing transuranic elements). This alternative would provide less rigorous treatment than the extensive treatment configuration alternative of wastes that do not pose high potential for harm to humans or the environment, or that will not remain highly radioactive far into the future (such as non-alpha low-level radioactive waste). Under this alternative, the volume of low-level radioactive waste would be reduced by onsite compactors and some of the low-level radioactive waste would then be sent offsite for supercompaction, size reduction (e.g., sorting, shredding, melting), and

incineration as part of a low-level radioactive waste offsite volume reduction initiative.

Under this alternative, the volume of low-level radioactive and mixed wastes to be disposed of would be less than under both the limited and extensive treatment alternatives. The moderate treatment configuration would provide the highest degree of compatibility with the preferred treatments for mixed wastes described in the STP that was prepared and submitted to the State of South Carolina under the FFCAct process, and would use to the maximum extent practicable existing facilities or facilities that are proposed for operation in the near future (i.e., the CIF).

Extensive Treatment Configuration Alternative

This alternative consists of the siting, construction, and operation of facilities and the implementation of management techniques that would minimize environmental impacts from storage and disposal by extensive treatment of waste to reduce its toxicity and to create stable, migration-resistant waste forms. Under this alternative, the volume of low-level radioactive waste to be disposed of would be less than under the limited treatment alternative, but more than under the moderate treatment alternative. The volume of mixed waste to be disposed of would be greater than under either of the other action alternatives. The extensive treatment alternative would, however, be more likely than other alternatives to increase the short-term impacts due to the construction of additional treatment facilities and increased exposure to emissions that would result from more extensive treatment and increased handling.

No-Action Alternative

As required by NEPA, DOE also considered potential impacts if the Department were to take "no action" other than to continue its current waste management practices (including building additional facilities to store newly generated waste, as has been done in the past) and vitrify high-level waste in the DWPF as discussed above. Under this alternative the Department would continue current practices for storage and treatment of liquid high-level radioactive, for storage of mixed and transuranic waste; for treatment, storage, and disposal of low-level radioactive waste; and for offsite treatment and disposal of hazardous waste. Under this alternative, transuranic and mixed wastes would remain untreated and in storage, in a state not suitable for disposal. Were

DOE to take no action, it would not be in a position to comply with some regulatory requirements and compliance agreements.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

In DOE's judgment the extensive treatment alternative is environmentally preferable because it would minimize potential long-term environmental impacts as a result of achieving more stable, migration-resistant waste forms. DOE recognizes, however, that this treatment alternative would result in greater short-term impacts to workers.

Decision

Determination

DOE announces its intention to configure its waste management system according to the moderate treatment alternative. Pursuant to 10 CFR 1021.315, DOE may revise this ROD at any time, so long as the revised decision is adequately supported by existing reviews prepared in accordance with NEPA. Upon issuance of a ROD for the DOE Waste Management Programmatic EIS (DOE/EIS-0200, draft issued for public review September 22, 1995), this ROD will be reviewed to evaluate whether there is consistency with decisions reached on broader programmatic issues or whether a revised ROD or supplemental EIS for SRS waste management is needed to maintain consistency. Accordingly, DOE has decided to initiate the following actions and activities included in the moderate treatment configuration alternative.

- * Continue activities to manage waste at SRS, including construction of additional storage capacity for mixed transuranic, and low-level radioactive alpha wastes.

High-Level Waste

- * Continue to store liquid high-level waste in storage tanks.
- * Operate the newly constructed New Waste Transfer Facility, continue to construct and operate the Replacement High-Level Waste Evaporator, and operate waste removal equipment. These facilities will transfer waste from the high-level waste storage tanks to the Defense Waste Processing Facility for treatment (vitrification) when the facility becomes operational.

Hazardous Waste

- * Continue to treat and dispose of hazardous waste offsite until the CIF is operational, then treat wastes, including filters, paint waste, organic and aqueous liquids, organics and inorganic sludges,

and up to 50% of organic and inorganic heterogeneous debris, in the CIF.

- * Continue offsite treatment and disposal for wastes such as polychlorinated biphenyls, organic debris, inorganic debris, heterogeneous debris, metal debris, bulk equipment, glass debris, soils, and lead.

- * Continue to treat some aqueous liquids in the M-Area air stripper.

- * Continue to recycle some hazardous wastes, including solvents, fluorocarbons, lead, silver (from spent photographic fixatives), and sell excess chemicals and lead/acid batteries.

Low-Level Radioactive Waste

- * Operate the CIF for volume reduction of some low-activity job-control waste and some tritiated job-control waste.

- * Treat some low-activity job-control wastes and some low-activity equipment offsite (about 40% of the low-level radioactive waste in the expected waste forecast). About 60% of the waste sent offsite would be supercompacted, and the remainder reduced in size by sorting, shredding, or melting, and repackaged. The treated waste would be returned to SRS for further treatment in the CIF or for disposal in the low-activity waste vaults or in shallow land disposal trenches. About 10% of the waste treated offsite would be incinerated when CIF is not operating, and the treatment residuals would be returned to SRS. (Paragraph 2.6.3.1, Low-Level Waste—Expected Waste Forecast, of the WMEIS)

- * Send uncompacted low-level waste (currently stored in the low-activity waste vaults) to an offsite incinerator until CIF is operable.

- * Dispose of stabilized ash and blowdown from incineration in the low activity waste disposal vaults or shallow land disposal trenches.

- * Operate a mobile low-level waste soil sort facility for treatment of low-activity soils and suspect soils. (Paragraph 2.6.1.1, Pollution Prevention/Waste Minimization—Expected Waste Forecast, of the WMEIS)

- * Decontaminate and recycle some low-activity equipment waste (metal) in an offsite smelter. Treatment residuals would be returned to SRS for shallow land disposal. (Paragraph 2.2.1.4, Waste Minimization Practices and Initiatives, and 2.6.1.1, Pollution Prevention/Waste Minimization—Expected Waste Forecast, of the WMEIS)

- * Continue vault disposal of offsite job-control waste, tritiated soils, some tritiated job-control waste, tritiated equipment, and intermediate-activity job-control waste.

- * Continue disposal of naval hardware in shallow land disposal trenches.

Mixed Wastes

- * Treat small quantities of mixed polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) wastes offsite. Return treatment residuals to SRS for disposal.

- * Operate the CIF for mixed heterogeneous debris, inorganic debris, organic debris, DWPF benzene, organic liquid, radioactive oil, PUREX solvent, paint waste, and aqueous liquids.

- * Store tritiated oil to allow time for radioactive decay.

- * Recycle mixed waste, including radioactively contaminated lead and cadmium-coated HEPA filter frames, in an offsite facility. Return treatment residuals to SRS for shallow land disposal.

Transuranic and Alpha Low-Level Radioactive Waste

- * Return Rocky Flats Incinerator ash to the Rocky Flats Site for consolidation and treatment with similar wastes at that facility.

- * Dispose of alpha low-level waste in low-activity waste vaults.

Reasons for Determination

DOE selected the moderate treatment configuration for SRS because the Department believes that alternative will provide more than adequate protection of human health and the environment, and will be consistent with expected budgetary limitations. Specifically, DOE bases its choice of the moderate treatment configuration alternative for SRS on factors listed below, including potential environmental impacts and regulatory commitments.

- * In the moderate treatment configuration alternative, the CIF would treat hazardous, mixed, and low-level waste for its entire project life (approximately 30 years), which is the most cost-effective use of the facility. CIF also provides the "regulatory specified treatment" for certain waste streams and is the Best Demonstrated Available Technology (BDAT) for other waste streams. In contrast, under the limited treatment configuration alternative, the CIF would treat hazardous and mixed waste only, which would not be cost-effective. Similarly, under the extensive treatment configuration alternative, operation of the CIF would be discontinued after approximately 10 years when the non-alpha vitrification facility became operational. The potential environmental impacts from operating the CIF under the moderate treatment configuration alternative would be very small.

* Mixed waste treatment technology under the moderate treatment configuration alternative is consistent with the Site Treatment Plan, which is currently being negotiated with the State of South Carolina, and existing commitments under the Federal Facility Compliance Agreement regarding land disposal restrictions, which are being discussed with the EPA. The moderate treatment configuration alternative includes the same technologies as identified as the preferred treatment in the proposed STP. In contrast, the limited and extensive treatment configuration alternatives are not consistent with the STP submitted to the State of South Carolina because both alternatives include vitrification for some wastes for which incineration is the BDAT. The limited and extensive treatment configuration alternatives are also inconsistent with costs and technologies specified in the STP, and schedules that are currently under negotiation with the State of South Carolina.

* In the moderate treatment configuration alternative, transuranic waste technology is consistent with the "planning-basis" Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) waste acceptance criteria. Treatment (vitrification) is provided only for those transuranic wastes that do not conform to the applicable shipping requirements (i.e., plutonium-238). All other SRS transuranic wastes are expected to meet the WIPP waste acceptance criteria after repackaging and characterization/certification. DOE believes this to be the most realistic situation with respect to the operation of WIPP and the National TRU Program, which is currently being developed. The extensive treatment configuration alternative would use vitrification for both transuranic and alpha waste and would require a larger and more expensive vitrification facility. The limited treatment configuration alternative does not include a vitrification facility. It assumes that WIPP will receive a no-migration variance from the EPA, and that the transuranic waste transportation containers will be developed to allow Pu-238 waste to be safely transported to WIPP. Thus, all SRS transuranic waste would be disposed of at WIPP without additional treatment under the limited treatment configuration alternative. Both of these assumptions rely on developments that have not yet occurred. Therefore, this alternative is more speculative than the moderate treatment configuration alternative.

* In the moderate treatment alternative, hazardous wastes are treated onsite subject to availability of onsite

treatment capacity and compatibility with onsite technologies used to manage mixed waste. This alternative provides the most extensive utilization of existing onsite facilities, supplemented by use of offsite treatment and disposal options. The extensive treatment configuration alternative would call for new facilities (i.e., non-alpha vitrification) for treatment of hazardous waste while the limited treatment configuration alternative would rely on offsite treatment and disposal of hazardous waste.

* The moderate treatment configuration alternative provides the best volume reduction for low-activity waste (75 percent reduction in the moderate treatment alternative compared to 22 percent for the limited treatment configuration alternative and 70 percent for extensive treatment configuration), and thus conserves space in low-activity waste vaults, requires the lowest number of low-activity waste vaults, and thus avoids expenditures of land and money.

* The moderate treatment configuration alternative results in the smallest number of additional transuranic and alpha waste storage pads (10 compared to 12 and 11 for limited and extensive treatment alternatives, respectively). It also results in the smallest number of disposal facilities (low activity waste vaults, shallow land disposal trenches, and RCRA-permitted vaults). The total number of these disposal facilities are 85 for the moderate treatment configuration alternative, compared to 151 under the limited treatment alternative, and 167 under the extensive treatment configuration alternative.

* The moderate treatment configuration alternative results in the least construction-related air emissions. The largest percentage increase over current emissions would be from carbon monoxide (existing sources at 171 micrograms per cubic meter, compared to the 1-hr standard of 40,000 micrograms per cubic meter) at 673 micrograms per cubic meter for the moderate treatment configuration alternative. This compares to 769 and 737 micrograms per cubic meter for the limited and extensive treatment configuration alternatives, respectively. The differences between these increases would be insignificant.

* The moderate treatment configuration alternative employs less thermal treatment than the extensive treatment configuration alternative, under which a greater volume of waste would undergo thermal treatment through vitrification. The moderate treatment configuration alternative

would result in lower emissions and smaller radiological air impacts to workers and the public than would occur under the extensive treatment configuration alternative. Under both alternatives, however, the impacts would be very small and the difference would be insignificant. (For example, the maximally exposed offsite individual's probability of a fatal cancer probability is estimated to be 1.7×10^{-8} for the moderate treatment configuration alternative and 9.0×10^{-8} for the extensive treatment configuration alternatives.)

* The moderate treatment configuration alternative life cycle cost (\$6.9 billion) is higher than the extensive treatment configuration alternative (\$5.6 billion). However, the extensive treatment configuration alternative would require greater expenditures in the near term, and would be difficult for DOE to fund.

Environmental Impacts

In eight resource categories (socioeconomic, groundwater, surface water, air, traffic, transportation, occupational health and public health) the difference among the total impacts from any one alternative as compared to any other would be indistinguishable. Nevertheless, the no action alternative would not allow DOE to comply with all applicable requirements, and is therefore unacceptable.

For the expected waste forecast, the greatest differences among alternatives are in potential land use and potential impacts on ecological resources. The moderate and extensive treatment configuration alternatives would require the most additional land. These configurations would also require the most acres to be cleared. All of the additional land that would be needed is included within the current boundary of the area at the SRS that has been designated for waste management activities in future land use plans. In proposing sites for the waste management facilities, every effort was made to efficiently use the available land in E-Area, the current SRS waste management area. Land development plans have considered the change in demand for waste management facilities over the 30 year period considered in the EIS. For example, mixed waste storage buildings and transuranic and alpha waste storage pads required during the period while treatment capacity is being developed would be converted to long term use as long-lived waste storage buildings. In other instances, the buildings or pads would be removed and the land used as the location for new facilities.

DOE has conducted a survey of the forested lands within the SRS waste management area and determined that there are no threatened or endangered species or critical habitats on this land. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries Service have concurred in DOE's determination.

Mitigation

Based upon the above discussion, DOE believes that all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the moderate treatment alternative have already been adopted. DOE believes that all appropriate mitigation measures are included in the moderate treatment alternative.

There are 12 archaeological sites within the SRS waste management facility boundary that may be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Potential impacts to these sites will be achieved by avoiding them, if possible. If avoidance is not possible, there will be an archaeological excavation of the sites before any land clearing begins. Mitigation will be conducted in consultation with the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office.

Conclusion

DOE has determined that the most appropriate method of managing low-level radioactive, hazardous, mixed, and transuranic wastes at SRS, considering all relevant factors, is to implement the moderate treatment configuration alternative. These factors include beneficial and adverse environmental impacts, monetary costs, and regulatory commitments.

Issued in Washington, DC, on September 22, 1995.

Richard J. Guimond,

Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, for Environmental Management.

[FR Doc. 95-26845 Filed 10-27-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP95-700-000]

Williams Natural Gas Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Springfield Loop Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

October 24, 1995.

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will

discuss the environmental impacts of the construction and operation of the facilities proposed in the Springfield Loop Project.¹ This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether an environmental impact statement is necessary and whether to approve the project.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Williams Natural Gas Company (Williams) wants to extend its Springfield loop line by constructing about 28.2 miles of 20-inch-diameter pipeline in Newton, Lawrence, and Christian Counties, Missouri.

Williams' wants to complete construction of this project prior to November 1, 1996.

The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.²

Land Requirements for Construction

Construction of the proposed facilities would disturb about 342 acres of land. Most of the proposed 100-foot-wide pipeline construction right-of-way (ROW) would overlap the ROW of Williams' existing 16-inch-diameter pipeline ROW by 41 feet as the new pipeline would be installed with a 25-foot offset from the existing 16-inch-diameter pipeline. However, in order to avoid housing, landforms, and development, Williams would construct 13 segments totalling about 2.8 miles with an offset from the existing 16-inch-diameter pipeline that is greater than 25 feet. About 216 acres of undisturbed land and 126 acres of previously disturbed land would be affected by construction of this project.

The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. We call this "scoping." The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this Notice of

¹ Williams Natural Gas Company's application was filed with the Commission under Section 7 of the Natural Gas Act and Part 157 of the Commission's regulations.

² The appendices referenced in this notice are not being printed in the Federal Register. Copies are available from the Commission's Public Reference and Files Maintenance Branch, Room 3104, 941 North Capitol Street, NW., Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 208-1371. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail.

Intent, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues it will address in the EA. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EA. State and local government representatives are encouraged to notify their constituents of this proposed action and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

The EA will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project under these general headings:

- Geology and soils
- Water resources, fisheries, and wetlands
- Vegetation and wildlife
- Endangered and threatened species
- Public safety
- Land use
- Cultural resources
- Air quality and noise
- Hazardous waste

We will also evaluate possible alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

Our independent analysis of the issues will be in the EA. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the EA may be published and mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, public interest groups, interested individuals, affected landowners, newspapers, libraries, and the Commission's official service list for this proceeding. A comment period will be allotted for review if the EA is published. We will consider all comments on the EA before we recommend that the Commission approve or not approve the project.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

We have already identified issues that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by Williams:

- The proposed project would require a 100-foot-wide ROW.
- The proposed project would cross one perennial stream that is greater than 100 feet in width.
- The Springfield Loop Project may affect about 12 wetlands in the project area.

Keep in mind that these are preliminary issues. Issues may be added, subtracted, or changed based on your comments and our analysis.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by sending a letter addressing you specific