Dated: June 3, 1998.

Raymond J. Fatz,

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Environment, Safety and Occupational Health) (OASA (I, L&E).

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Pilot Testing of Neutralization/ Supercritical Water Oxidation at Newport Chemical Depot, Indiana

AGENCY: Department of the Army, DOD.

ACTION: Notice of Availability (NOA).

SUMMARY: This announces the availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) which assesses the potential environmental impacts of the construction and operation of a facility to pilot test the chemical neutralization process followed by supercritical water oxidation (SCWO) as a potential disposal technology for the bulk agent VX stored at Newport Chemical Depot (NECD). The proposed facility will be used to demonstrate, as part of a research and development program, the neutralization process followed by SCWO, to destroy VX agent currently stored in ton containers at NECD.

The two alternatives considered in this DEIS are the proposed action and no action (i.e., continued storage of VX in ton containers). Although the no action alternative is not viable under Pub. L. 99–145, it was analyzed to provide a comparison with the proposed action. In addition, the no action alternative would not comply with Public Law 102–484, which specifies that the Army must consider using a technological alternative to incineration.

DATES: The public comment period for the DEIS will end 45 days after publication of the NOA in the **Federal Register** by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. All public comments received on the DEIS will be considered and addressed in the final EIS and also considered by the Army in its Record of Decision.

ADDRESSES: To obtain copies of the DEIS, contact Ms. Mona Harney, NECD Public Affairs Office, at (765) 245–4597 or write to: Department of the Army, Newport Chemical Activity, P.O. Box 121, Newport, Indiana 47966–0121.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Office of the Program Manager for Chemical Demilitarization, ATTN: SFAE–CD–P (Ms. Catherine Herlinger), Building E4585, Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, 21010–5401; telephone: (800) 488–0648 or (410) 671–1479; e-mail: cherling@cdra.apgea.army.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The DEIS concludes that VX stored in bulk containers can be pilot tested at NECD using the neutralization process, followed by SCWO, in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner. At one time, the option of sending the neutralization hydrolysate to an off-site biotreatment facility was under consideration by the Army. However, technical and programmatic evaluations have concluded that off-site biotreatment is not suitable at this time. Therefore, off-site biotreatment is not addressed further in this EIS.

Dated: June 2, 1998.

Raymond J. Fatz,

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, (Environment, Safety and Occupational Health) OASA (I,L&E).

[FR Doc. 98–15457 Filed 6–9–98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Land Exchange Between Fort Benning and the City of Columbus, Georgia

AGENCY: U.S. Army Infantry Center and Fort Benning, Fort Benning, Georgia; Department of the Army, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The United States Army will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to assess the potential environmental impacts of the exchange of tracts of land between Fort Benning and the City of Columbus (hereafter referred to as the City). Section 2829 of Public Law 101–510, enacted November 5, 1990, authorized a land exchange between the City and Fort Benning. Fort Benning would convey approximately 3,000 acres of land to the City; and in exchange, the City would convey to Fort Benning approximately 3,300 acres located on the southern boundary of the military reservation. Those land tracts were refined by survey to 3,106 and 3,228 acres, respectively. The City intended to use the land for economic development, passive recreation and a sanitary landfill. Fort Benning would use the land it receives for dismounted light infantry training. A Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the **Federal Register**, June 27, 1994 (59 FR 32957), and a scooping meeting was held in Columbus, GA, on July 20, 1994. Due to changes in the proposed project and the length of time since prior scoping, this NOI provides an opportunity for more current public involvement based on newer information.

ALTERNATIVES: The proposed North-South tract land exchange will be evaluated for the following alternatives:

No-Action Alternative: No land would be exchanged under this alternative. Impacts associated with the Fort Benning mission and land use will be evaluated for the North tract. Impacts associated with the City's projected use of the South tract will also be analyzed.

Maximum Development: This alternative would provide approximately 2,110 acres of the North tract for economic/light industrial development. Also, approximately 650 acres of the North tract would become a Parks and Recreation Area near Bull Creek for the purpose of wetland mitigation. The Army would use the South tract for dismounted light infantry training.

Partial Development (preferred alternative): This alternative would also include an approximately 650 acre and Parks and Recreation Area near Bull Creek for wetlands mitigation on the North tract. A Habitat Conservation Area would be established and managed for protected species on approximately 710 acres. The remaining North tract property (approximately 1,400 acres) would be developable. The Army would use the South tract for dismounted light infantry training.

Minimum Development: This alternative would preserve all existing protected species and habitat on approximately 1,375 acres on the North tract. Also the approximately 650 acre Parks and Recreation Area would be established for wetlands protection, leaving only approximately 735 acres of developable land. The Army would use the South tract for dismounted light infantry training.

SCOPING: Comments received as a result of this notice will be used to assist Fort Benning in identifying additional alternatives for study, significant resources to be evaluated, as well as potential impacts to the quality of the human and natural environments. Individuals or organizations wishing to participate in the scoping process may forward their written comments to: U.S. Army Infantry Center, Directorate of Public Works, Environmental Management Division (ATTN: Mr. John Brent), Fort Benning, Georgia 31905–

5122, or send e-mail to BrentJ%EMD%BNG__DPW@benning-emh2.army.mil. Comments and suggestions should be received no later than 30 days following the publication of this notice to be considered in the preparation of the Draft EIS.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions regarding this proposal may be directed to Mr. John Brent at (706) 545–4766.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Since the 1994 scoping effort, the land exchange was separated into two distinct exchanges: (1) A landfill land exchange, and (2) a North-South tract land exchange. On June 26, 1996, Fort Benning conveyed 346 acres from the 3,106 acres to the City for landfill development in exchange for 380 acres of the City's 3,228 acres. An Environmental Assessment was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and a Finding of No Significant Impact was published in the ''Columbus Ledger-Enquirer'' on October 25, 1995, for the landfill land exchange.

This NOI pertains only to the proposed North-South tract land exchange, involving the remaining 2,760 acres of Fort Benning land (the North tract) and 2,848 acres of the City land (the South tract). An EIS will be prepared and will include an analysis of the Cumulative environmental impacts from both the North-South tract exchange and the landfill land exchange.

The general study areas for environmental concerns will be the North and South-tracts plus any additional surrounding areas necessary to satisfy the requirements of NEPA, as well as any relevant environmental laws and regulations to include (as a minimum but not necessarily limited to) the following: Endangered Species Act, Migratory Birds Treaty Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, Resource Conservation Recovery Act, Environmental Justice Executive Order, etc. The information developed will identify, evaluate, analyze and compare the potential individual and cumulative impacts of the North-South tract land exchange alternatives. The cumulative impact analysis will include an environmental assessment of other recent or reasonably anticipated similar actions in the area of concern, including the landfill land exchange.

Dated: June 3, 1998.

Raymond J. Fatz,

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army, (Environment, Safety and Occupational Health), OASA (I, L&E).

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Proposed Implementation of the Defense Table of Official Distances (DTOD) in the DoD Personal Property Program

AGENCY: Military Traffic Management Command, DoD.

ACTION: Notice (Request for Comments).

SUMMARY: The Military Traffic Management Command (MTMC), as Program Director for the Department of Defense (DoD) Personal Property Program, intends to utilize a new automated distance calculation product known as the Defense Table of Official Distances (DTOD) in the DoD personal property program. The DTOD will replace existing distance calculation products used within the DoD such as the Rand McNally TDM Milemaker System, and Household Goods Carriers' Mileage Guide. The DTOD will become the DoD standard source for distance information worldwide. Commercially, DTOD is known as PC*MILER by ALK Associates, Inc. The DTOD/PC*MILER will be used by the DoD for all distance calculations, analysis, and for transportation payments/audits. Carriers and third party providers may continue to use other mileage sources for their own business purposes. However, carriers and third party providers participating in the DoD personal property program must agree to be bound by the DTOD/PC*MILER distance calculations for payment and audit purposes.

DATES: Comments must be submitted on or before August 10, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Comments may be mailed to: Headquarters, Military Traffic Management Command, ATTN: MTOP–T, Room 617, 5611 Columbia Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041–5050.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Additional information concerning the DTOD for MTMC Personal Property Program can be provided by contacting Mr. Alex Moreno (Domestic solicitation) (703) 681–6190 or Ms. Shelia R. Woodson (International solicitation) (703) 681–9383. Information regarding DTOD Compliant Commercial Software and Other Technical Information can be provided by contacting ALK Associates, Inc. at 1 (800) 377–MILE or on the Internet at www.pcmiler.com.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. The proposed effective dates for use of the DTOD in the DoD personal property program will be: (A) 1 April 1999 for the international thru government bill of lading (ITGBL) rate solicitation; and (B) 1 May 1999 for the domestic rate solicitation. All shipments picked up on or after the effective dates will be governed by the DTOD.

2. In accordance with this implementation process, the ITGBL Rate Solicitation, Item 405 (Governing Regulations), paragraph a, will be revised as follows: a. ITGBL shipments made under this solicitation are subject to the terms and conditions of the PPGBL, the rules and regulations contained herein, and the carrier Tender of Service on file with HQMTMC. Where rates or other services are based on mileage, the distance or mileage computations shall be those provided in the Defense Table of Official Distances (DTOD).

3. The Domestic Rate Solicitation, Item 10, (Governing mileage guide), paragraph 1 and 4, will be revised as follows: paragraph 1. Where rates or other services are based on mileage, the distance or mileage computations shall be those provided in the Defense Table of Official Distances (DTOD); paragraph 4 will be deleted.

4. DTOD and PC*MILER will produce identical distance calculations. Carriers and other parties who seek more information about PC*MILER may contact ALK Associates Inc. at telephone 1–800–377–MILE, or via Internet at www.pcmiler.com.

5. Proposed Implementation Dates. The schedule for use of the DTOD/PC*MILER in distance calculations, payment, and post payment audits for shipments under the DoD International Government Bill of Lading Rate Solicitation is 1 April 1999 and for the DoD Domestic Rate Solicitation is 1 May 1999.

6. Background. Currently, several sources for highway distance information are being used to support various DoD transportation programs, such as travel, travel entitlement reimbursement, freight and personal property movements. Moreover, separate products are used to calculate overseas distances. The result is a variance in distance computations produced by different products and a high cost to DoD of licensing and maintaining multiple mileage sources.

a. Until 1996, DoD was required by law to maintain an official mileage table