



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, July 27, 2012

DOE Announces Issuance of Draft Supplemental Environmental Study on Plutonium Disposition

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration is releasing the *Draft Surplus Plutonium Disposition Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SPD Supplemental EIS)* for public review and comment. The Draft Supplemental EIS analyzes the potential environmental impacts of alternatives for the disposition of 7.1 metric tons (MT) of additional weapons-usable plutonium from pits that were declared surplus to national defense needs in 2007 but were not included in DOE's prior decisions as well as 6 MT of surplus, weapons-usable non-pit plutonium.

The *SPD Supplemental EIS* analyzes four alternative disposition pathways: disposition of plutonium using the can-in-canister vitrification approach, involving small cans of material, which would be placed in a rack inside a Defense Waste Processing Facility canister and surrounded with vitrified high-level radioactive waste at the Savannah River Site (SRS); disposition of non-pit plutonium via H-Canyon and DWPF at SRS; disposal of non-pit plutonium at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico; and fabrication of pit and some non-pit plutonium into mixed oxide (MOX) fuel for use in domestic commercial nuclear power reactors. The SPD Supplemental EIS also includes options for providing a pit disassembly and conversion capability including a stand-alone facility at SRS or installing capability in existing facilities at one or more of the following locations: the Plutonium Facility (PF-4) at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), H Canyon/HB-Line at SRS, K-Area at SRS and the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility at SRS.

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<http://sro.srs.gov/index.html>

The MOX Fuel Alternative is DOE's preferred alternative for surplus plutonium disposition. DOE's preferred option for pit disassembly and the conversion of surplus plutonium metal to supply feed for the MFFF, is to use some combination of facilities at PF-4 at LANL, K-Area at SRS, H-Canyon/HB-Line at SRS and MFFF at SRS, rather than to construct a new stand-alone facility. This would likely require the installation of additional equipment and other modifications to some of these facilities. DOE's preferred alternative for disposition of surplus plutonium that is not suitable for MOX fuel fabrication is disposal at WIPP in New Mexico.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) is a cooperating agency for the *SPD Supplemental EIS*. DOE and TVA have entered into an interagency agreement to evaluate the use of mixed oxide fuel in reactors at TVA's Browns Ferry and Sequoyah Nuclear Plants. TVA does not have a preferred alternative at this time regarding whether to pursue irradiation of MOX fuel in TVA reactors and which reactors might be used for this purpose.

DOE will host local public hearings to solicit comment on the *Draft SPD Supplemental EIS*:

- **August 21, 2012** – Holiday Inn Express, Los Alamos, NM, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **August 23, 2012** – Courtyard by Marriott Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **August 28, 2012** – Pecos River Village Conference Center, Carlsbad, NM, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **September 4, 2012** – North Augusta Municipal Center, North Augusta, SC, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **September 11, 2012** – Chattanooga Convention Center, Chattanooga, TN, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
- **September 13, 2012** – Calhoun Community College – Decatur Campus, Decatur, AL, from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

As a convenience to persons who may not be able to attend a public hearing, the hearing in North Augusta, South Carolina on September 4, will be available beginning at 6:30 p.m. (Eastern Time) via a live video webcast at http://msddev.srs.gov/general/2012_public_hearing.htm.

A 60-day public comment period begins today and will extend through September 25, 2012.

Public comments on the *Draft SPD Supplemental EIS* should be sent to:

Ms. Sachiko McAlhany,
Document Manager,
SPD Supplement EIS
P.O. Box 2324
Germantown, MD 20874-2324

Comments on the *Draft SPD Supplemental EIS* can be also sent via email to spdsupplementaleis@saic.com; by toll-free fax to (887) 865-0277. DOE will give equal weight to written, email, fax, and oral comments.

A link to the *Draft SPD Supplemental EIS* and additional related information can be found at: <http://nnsa.energy.gov/nepa/spdsupplementaleis>.

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