

In contrast, immobilizing of materials in a glass (i.e., vitrification) or a ceramic matrix was not considered desirable because of the cost, specialized equipment required, lack of such equipment on the Hanford Site, and lack of site experience. These factors would result in delays in implementing these alternatives. The lack of site experience and anticipated delays would result in additional health and safety risks.

Another alternative would be to mix the plutonium with uranium to produce a mixed oxide fuel suitable for energy production in a nuclear power reactor. Because of the relatively small quantity of plutonium material being considered, it was not considered reasonable to develop the technology at Hanford to support this alternative.

#### IV. Availability of the Immobilization Alternative

Copies of the proposed immobilization alternative may be reviewed at the following locations, or may be obtained by calling DOE at 1-888-946-3700:

U.S. Department of Energy, Headquarters, Freedom of Information Reading Room, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Ave. SW., Room 1E-0190, Washington, DC 20585, 202/586-3142

DOE Public Reading Room, Washington State University, Tri Cities Branch, 100 Sprout Road, Richland, WA 99352, 509/376-8583

University of Washington, Suzzallo Library, Government Publications, 15th Ave N.E. and Campus Parkway, Seattle, WA 98185, 206/543-1937

Gonzaga University, Foley Center, E. 502 Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258, 509/324-5931

Portland State University, Branford Price Millar Library, SW Harrison and Park, Portland, OR 97207, 503/725-3690

Signed in Richland, Washington, this 25th day of April, 1996 for the United States Department of Energy.

Paul F.X. Dunigan, Jr.,  
*NEPA Compliance Officer, Richland Operations Office.*

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#### **Notice of Wetlands Involvement for Refurbishment of Uranium Hexafluoride Cylinder Storage Yards C-745-K, L, M, N, and P and Construction of a New Uranium Hexafluoride Cylinder Storage Yard (C-745-T) at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant Near Paducah, KY**

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy (DOE).

**ACTION:** Notice of wetlands involvement.

**SUMMARY:** DOE proposes to renovate existing storage yards and construct a new storage yard to accommodate

restacking of approximately 19,000 steel cylinders containing uranium hexafluoride at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant (PGDP) in McCracken County, Kentucky. Construction of the new storage yard would result in the loss (filling) of less than one acre of wetlands. In accordance with 10 CFR Part 1022, DOE will prepare a wetlands assessment and will perform the proposed action in a manner so as to avoid or minimize potential harm to or within the affected wetlands.

**DATES:** Comments are due to the address below no later than May 20, 1996.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments should be addressed to: Mr. Jimmie C. Hodges, Paducah Site Manager, U. S. Department of Energy, 5600 Hobbs Road, Paducah, KY 42001. Phone (502) 441-6800.

#### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Further information on the proposed action and wetlands assessment can be obtained from Mr. Jimmie C. Hodges, Paducah Site Manager (see **ADDRESSES** above). Information on general DOE wetlands environmental review requirements is available from: Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-25), U. S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585. Phone (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** PGDP is an operational uranium enrichment facility owned by DOE and operated by the United States Enrichment Corporation. A consequence of the uranium enrichment process is the accumulation of depleted uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>). Depleted UF<sub>6</sub>, a solid at ambient temperatures, is stored in large steel cylinders weighing up to 14 tons each. DOE is responsible for approximately 32,200 cylinders of UF<sub>6</sub> stored at PGDP. Storage conditions are suboptimal and have resulted in accelerated corrosion of cylinders and have increased the potential for a release of hazardous substances. Consequently, DOE has proposed refurbishment of certain existing yards and construction of a new storage yard (C-745-T).

The C-745-T yard would consist of a concrete pad occupying approximately 43,200 m<sup>2</sup> (450,000 ft<sup>2</sup>). The initial construction activities in the storage yard would consist of clearing and grubbing the area and stripping the topsoil. After this excavation, a storm water drainage system would be installed. The excavated area would be filled with soil and gravel to achieve the desired design elevation. A concrete pad would be constructed on top of the fill.

The proposed site for the C-745-T cylinder storage yard is immediately south of existing cylinder yards at the southern end of the plant. Of available sites, DOE considers the proposed site to best meet siting criteria. A different site was initially proposed but was discovered to encompass approximately 1.8 hectares (4.5 acres) of wetlands. In order to minimize impacts to wetlands in accordance with Executive Order 11990, "Protection of Wetlands," and 10 CFR Part 1022, DOE's "Compliance With Floodplain/Wetlands Environmental Review Requirements," DOE selected the current proposed site.

Six small, isolated wetlands are present at the proposed C-745-T yard site. These wetlands are classified as palustrine emergent, palustrine scrub/shrub, and palustrine forested, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wetland classification system. Palustrine wetlands in the vicinity of PGDP are those less than 8 hectares (20 acres) in surface area with a water depth less than 2 m (6.6 ft) during low water. Emergent vegetation is erect, rooted, non-woody; scrub/shrub vegetation is woody not exceeding 6 m (20 ft) in height; and forested vegetation is woody, exceeding 6 m (20 ft) in height.

The total area of wetlands directly impacted by the proposed action would be 0.32 hectare (0.8 acre). Under the worst case scenario, an additional 0.12 hectare (0.3 acre) of wetlands could be impacted by (1) construction equipment accessing the area or materials and equipment staged in wetland areas, if proper precautions (best management practices) are not followed, or (2) diversion of flow away from a man-made drainage ditch which contains wetlands.

In accordance with 10 CFR Part 1022, DOE will prepare a wetlands assessment for the proposed action. The wetlands assessment will be included in the environmental assessment (EA) being prepared for the proposed action in accordance with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Issued in Oak Ridge, Tennessee on April 1, 1996.

James L. Elmore,

*Alternate NEPA Compliance Officer.*

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#### **Morgantown Energy Technology Center; Research Opportunity Announcement (ROA) Applied Research and Development**

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Morgantown Energy Technology Center.