

through the public review process, the Department of Energy has determined that the *Electrometallurgical Treatment Research and Demonstration Project in the Fuel Conditioning Facility at Argonne National Laboratory - West* does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Issued in Washington, D.C., this 15th day of May 1996.

Terry R. Lash,

Director Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology U.S. Department of Energy.
[FR Doc. 96-12861 Filed 5-21-96; 8:45 am]

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Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Plutonium Finishing Plant Stabilization, Hanford Site, Richland, Benton County, Washington

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Richland Operations Office, announces the availability of the *Plutonium Finishing Plant Stabilization Final Environmental Impact Statement* (DOE/EIS-0244-F). The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508), and DOE's Implementing Procedures (10 CFR Part 1021). The continued presence of relatively large quantities of chemically reactive materials in their present form and location within the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) Facility poses an unacceptable long-term risk to workers, the public, and the environment. DOE has identified the need to expeditiously and safely reduce radiation exposure to workers and the risk to the public; reduce future resources needed to safely manage the facility; and remove, stabilize, store, and manage plutonium, pending DOE's future use and disposition decisions.

DOE's preferred alternative is removal of readily retrievable plutonium bearing material in hold-up at the PFP Facility and stabilization of these and other plutonium-bearing materials at the PFP Facility through the following four treatment processes: 1) ion exchange, vertical calcination and thermal stabilization of solutions; 2) thermal

stabilization of oxides, fluorides, and process residues in a continuous furnace; 3) repackaging of metals and alloys; and 4) pyrolysis of polycubes and combustibles. In addition, DOE is evaluating other alternatives for stabilizing or immobilizing these materials as well as a "no action" alternative.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Requests for copies or questions concerning the PFP Stabilization EIS should be directed to: Mr. Ben F. Burton, U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office, Attn: PFP Stabilization EIS, P.O. Box 550, MSIN B1-42, Richland, Washington 99352, (888) 946-3700.

For general information on DOE's EIS process and other matters related to NEPA, please contact: Ms. Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background, Purpose and Need for Agency Action. In the late 1980s, the halt in the production of weapons-grade plutonium froze the existing PFP Facility manufacturing pipeline in a state that was unsuited for long-term storage. On January 24, 1994, the Secretary of Energy commissioned a comprehensive assessment to identify and prioritize the environmental, safety, and health vulnerabilities that arise from the storage of plutonium in DOE facilities and determine which are the most dangerous and urgent. The DOE-wide assessment, commonly referred to as *The Plutonium Vulnerability Study*, identified environmental, safety, and health vulnerabilities at the PFP Facility. These included storage of unstable forms of plutonium, a potential for criticality accidents, and seismic weaknesses.

Scoping. A Notice of Intent to prepare the EIS and hold public scoping meetings in Spokane, Richland, and Bellevue, Washington, and Hood River and Portland, Oregon, was published by DOE in the Federal Register on October 27, 1994. A subsequent Notice of Intent was published by DOE in the Federal Register on November 23, 1994, announcing additional meetings in Portland, Oregon, and Seattle, Washington. The Notice of Intent invited oral and written comments and suggestions on the proposed scope of the EIS, including environmental issues and alternatives, and invited public participation in the NEPA process. Overall, scoping comments were

received that assisted in identifying major issues for subsequent in-depth analysis in the Draft EIS. As a result of the scoping process, an *Implementation Plan for the PFP Stabilization EIS* was developed to provide guidance for preparing the Draft EIS and record the results of the scoping process.

Public Hearing. On December 5, 1995, a Notice of Availability was published in the Federal Register (60 FR 62244) which formally announced the release and availability of the Draft EIS. The public hearing date, time, and location were also published and public comment was requested. A public meeting on the Draft EIS. The public hearing date, time, and location were also published and public comment was requested. A public meeting on the Draft EIS was held in Pasco, Washington, on January 11, 1996. While the comment period officially ended on January 23, 1996, DOE accepted comments through February 15, 1996. Both oral and written comments were received during the comment period.

Notice of Limited Reopening of Public Comment Period. On May 3, 1996, a Notice of Limited Reopening of Public Comment Period was published in the Federal Register (61 FR 19914) which formally announced the release and availability of a supplementary alternative which involves immobilization of a portion of the inventory of the plutonium-bearing materials in cement at the PFP Facility. Comments on the analysis of potential impacts described in the supplementary information have been solicited during a 21-day comment period that will end May 24, 1996. Comments received will be considered in the preparation of the Record of Decision.

AVAILABILITY OF FINALS EIS: Copies of the Final EIS have been distributed to Federal, state, and local officials and agencies, as well as organizations and individuals known to be interested in or affected by the proposed project. Additional copies may be obtained by contacting Mr. Burton as provided in the section of this notice entitled **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT.** Copies of the Final EIS, including appendices and reference material will be available for public review at the locations listed below. Comments received in response to this Federal Register notice will be considered in the preparation of the Record of Decision.

U.S. Department of Energy,
Headquarters, Freedom of Information
Reading Room, Forrestal Building,
1000 Independence Avenue, SW.,
Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586-
3142

U.S. DOE Public Reading Room,
Washington State University, Tri-
Cities Branch, 100 Sprout Road,
Richland, WA 99352, (509) 376-8583,
Government Publications, University of
Washington, Suzzallo Library, Box
352900, 15th Avenue NE., and
Campus Parkway, Seattle, WA 98185-
2900, (206) 543-1937
Gonzaga University, Foley Center, East
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-
4735.

You may also receive a copy of the
Final EIS by calling the Hanford
Cleanup Hotline toll-free at 1-800-321-
2008.

Signed in Richland, Washington, this 10th
day of May 1996, for the United States
Department of Energy.

John D. Wagoner,

Manager, Richland Operations Office.

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Floodplain Statement of Findings for Remedial Action at the Ventron Site and Adjacent Harbor Sediment in Essex County, Massachusetts

AGENCY: Former Sites Restoration
Division, Department of Energy (DOE).

SUBJECT: Floodplain statement of
findings.

SUMMARY: This is a Floodplain
Statement of Findings prepared in
accordance with 10 CFR Part 1022,
Compliance with Floodplain/Wetlands
Environmental Review Requirements.
DOE proposes to remediate sediment
and soil with elevated levels of
uranium-238 from the 100-year
floodplain of the Bass and Danvers
Rivers and from the floodplain buffer
zone adjacent to the 100-year floodplain
at the Ventron site in Essex County,
Massachusetts. DOE prepared a
Floodplain and Wetlands Assessment
describing the effects, alternatives, and
measures designed to avoid or minimize
potential harm to or within the affected
floodplain. DOE would endeavor to
allow 15 days of public review after
publication of the Statement of Findings
before implementation of the proposed
action.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS
PROPOSED ACTION OR TO COMMENT ON THE
ACTION, CONTACT:** Mr. Jim Kopotic,
Ventron Site Manager, Former Sites
Restoration Division, U.S. Department
of Energy, P.O. Box 2001, Oak Ridge, TN
37831-8541, Phone: (423) 576-4991,
FAX: (423) 576-0956.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON GENERAL
DOE FLOODPLAIN AND WETLANDS
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS,
CONTACT:** Carol M. Borgstrom, Director,
Office of NEPA Oversight, EH-42, U.S.
Department of Energy, 1000
Independence Avenue SW.,
Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586-4600
or (800) 472-2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This is a
Floodplain Statement of Findings
prepared in accordance with 10 CFR
Part 1022. A Notice of Floodplain and
Wetland Involvement was published in
the Federal Register (Vol. 61, pp.
11621-11622) on March 21, 1996, and a
Floodplain and Wetlands Assessment
was incorporated in the engineering
evaluation and cost analysis prepared
for the Ventron site. DOE proposes to
remediate sediment and soil with
elevated levels of uranium-238 that are
located in the 100-year floodplain of the
Bass and Danvers Rivers and the 100-yr
floodplain buffer zone adjacent to the
floodplain at the Ventron site in Essex
County, Massachusetts. The entire
Ventron site is also within the
Massachusetts coastal zone. The
proposed action would be in a
floodplain because levels of uranium-
238 in some sediment and soil in the
floodplain at the site exceed guidelines
for residual radioactivity and future use
without radiological restrictions of the
site. DOE has structured potential
cleanup options by affected media:
harbor sediments and on-site soil and
furnace ash. Alternative actions
considered for harbor sediments are no
action or, complete removal of harbor
sediment with levels of uranium-238
over 50 pCi/g. Alternative actions
considered for on-site soil and furnace
ash also include no action or, complete
removal of on-site soil and furnace ash
with levels of uranium-238 over 50 pCi/
g. Access to sediment and soil may
require decontamination and demolition
of structures at the site. There is no
practicable alternative to the proposed
action. The proposed action would
conform to applicable state and local
floodplain protection standards.

The following steps would be taken to
minimize potential harm to or within
the affected floodplain:

1. The design and performance of
excavation activities would incorporate
standard best management practices in
accordance with U.S. Department of
Agriculture Natural Resource
Conservation Service (formerly the Soil
Conservation Service) methods, or the
equivalent, to control erosion and
siltation from excavations.

2. Remediation operations would
confine the areas of sediment and soil

disturbance to the minimum necessary
for successful completion of the project.

3. Care would be exercised to provide
minimum practicable exposure of
sediment and soil to erosion.

4. All erosion and sediment barriers
would remain in place until the
excavation is successfully stabilized by
applicable measures.

5. Disturbed sediment and soil in or
adjacent to the floodplain, waterways,
wetlands, coastal zone, and areas
subject to tidal action and excavations
would be stabilized or otherwise
protected to prevent off-site migration,
as conditions warrant, in accordance
with Massachusetts soil erosion and
sediment control standards or their
equivalent.

6. DOE would not dispose waste
rubble, sediment, or soil in the floodway
or within the tidal zone. Waste mulch
not serving to control erosion or
sediment would also not be disposed of
in channels or on waterway banks.

7. Remediation would not obstruct
any streams or tidal areas and all
streams and tidal zones would retain
their original capacity for storing
floodwaters. The proposed action would
not impede flow or increase flooding.

8. All areas excavated in or adjacent
to the floodplain, wetlands, the
Massachusetts coastal zone, and areas
subject to tidal action would be restored
to grade by the current owner, Morton
International, as required, and the
proposed activities would not subject
lives or property to any increased risk
of flooding.

9. DOE would not use areas within
the floodplain for temporary or
permanent storage of excavated
sediment, soil, or demolition rubble;
however, some areas within the
floodplain and wetland buffer zone, and
the Massachusetts coastal zone may be
used for temporary storage of excavated
materials with appropriate measures in
place to properly contain excavated
materials.

10. The proposed action would
conform to applicable state and local
floodplain, wetland, and coastal zone
protection standards and would be
consistent with Massachusetts' coastal
zone management policies.

11. The proposed action would not
result in the destruction of any
floodplain or wetland and would be
consistent with the President's policy of
"no net loss" of wetlands in the United
States and Executive Orders 11988 and
11990.

DOE will endeavor to allow 15 days
of public review after publication of the
Statement of Findings before
implementation of the proposed action.