

register through Internet, you may mail or fax your registration information to the Advisory Committee staff office at (202) 401-3467. Also, you may contact the Advisory Committee staff at (202) 708-7439. The registration deadline is Wednesday, January 20, 1999.

The Advisory Committee will meet in Washington, DC on January 26, 1999, from 8:30 a.m. until approximately 5:30 p.m., and on January 27, from 8:30 a.m. until approximately 2:00 p.m.

Records are kept of all Committee proceedings, and are available for public inspection at the Office of the Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance, Portals Building, 1280 Maryland Avenue, SW, Suite 601, Washington, DC from the hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., weekdays, except Federal holidays.

Due to administrative delays caused by the holiday, this notice is published less than 15 days prior to the meeting.

Dated: January 7, 1999.

Barbara L. McFall,

Associate Staff Director, Advisory Committee on Student Financial Assistance.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Savannah River Site (SRS) Spent Nuclear Fuel (SNF) Management, Savannah River Site, South Carolina

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of availability and public meetings.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy announces the availability of the Savannah River Site Spent Nuclear Fuel Management Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0279D). This draft EIS evaluates the potential impacts of reasonable alternatives for the safe and efficient management of spent nuclear fuel and targets stored and scheduled to be received at the Savannah River Site (SRS), including placing these materials in a form suitable for disposition.

DATES: The public comment period began on December 24, 1998 and extends through February 8, 1999. DOE will consider comments postmarked or submitted after February 8, 1999 to the extent practicable. Oral and written comments will be accepted at public meetings on the dates and at the locations given below. The Department will hold two public meetings, with two sessions each, to discuss the Draft EIS and receive comments:

1. Thursday, January 28, 1999, at the Holiday Inn Coliseum, 630 Assembly Street, Columbia, SC, (803) 799-7800. The first session begins at 1:00 p.m. and the second begins at 6:00 p.m.

2. Tuesday, February 2 at the North Augusta Community Center, 495 Brookside Drive, North Augusta, SC, (803) 441-4290. The first session begins at 1:00 p.m. and the second begins at 6:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: Written comments, requests for further information on the draft EIS or public meetings, and requests for copies of the document should be directed to Andrew R. Grainger, NEPA Compliance Officer, Savannah River Site, Building 742-A, Room 185, Aiken, South Carolina 29802; orally by calling (800) 881-7292; or electronically to nepa@srs.gov. Addresses of locations where the Draft EIS is available for public review are listed in this notice under "Availability of Copies of the Draft EIS."

General information on the DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process may be requested from Ms. Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585. Ms. Borgstrom may be contacted by telephone at (202) 586-4600 or by leaving a message at 1-800-472-2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, a DOE predecessor agency, established the SRS in the early 1950s for the production of special radioactive isotopes to support national programs. Historically, the primary Site mission was the production of strategic isotopes (plutonium-239 and tritium) for use in the development and production of nuclear weapons. The SRS produced other isotopes (e.g., californium-252, plutonium-238, and americium-241) to support research in nuclear medicine, space exploration, and commercial applications. DOE produced these isotopes in the five SRS production reactors.

The material used to produce isotopes consisted of nuclear fuel and targets. The nuclear fuel was enriched uranium that was alloyed with aluminum and then clad in aluminum. The targets were either oxides or metallic forms of various isotopes such as neptunium-237 or uranium-238 that were clad with aluminum. Fuel and targets were fabricated at the SRS and placed in the reactors and then the reactors operated to create the neutrons necessary to

transmute the target material. After irradiation, the fuel and targets (collectively referred to as spent nuclear fuel) were removed from the reactors and placed in water-filled basins for short-term storage, about 12 to 18 months, before they were chemically processed in the SRS separations facilities.

SNF was chemically dissolved in F or H Canyon to recover the uranium or transuranic isotopes for future use ("reprocessing"). The remaining residue from the fuel, high-level radioactive waste consisting primarily of fission products and cladding in liquid form, was transferred to large steel tanks for storage. The high-level waste is being vitrified in the Defense Waste Processing Facility at the SRS to prepare it for placement in a geologic repository.

In 1992, the Secretary of Energy directed that reprocessing operations to produce strategic nuclear materials be phased out throughout the DOE complex. However, unprocessed SNF and targets remained in storage. SRS also has accepted SNF from foreign and domestic research reactors. In the past, most of this material was reprocessed. With the end of the Site's strategic nuclear materials production mission, SNF from research reactors has been accumulating in the Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuels and the L-Reactor Disassembly Basin.

Stabilization

DOE has taken action to stabilize about 175 MTHM of the 195 MTHM of aluminum-based SNF that was in storage at SRS in 1995. DOE decided to stabilize this material following completion of the Interim Management of Nuclear Materials Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0220). The primary purpose of the actions described in that environmental impact statement (EIS) was to correct or eliminate potential health and safety vulnerabilities related to some of the methods used to store nuclear materials (including SNF) at SRS. In that EIS, DOE identified the remaining 20 MTHM (out of 195 MTHM) of aluminum-based SNF at SRS as "stable" (i.e., the SNF likely could be safely stored for about 10 more years, pending decisions on final disposition). Thus, that 20 MTHM of aluminum-based SNF is included in this EIS.

On June 1, 1995, DOE decided (60 FR 28680) under the Department of Energy Programmatic Spent Nuclear Fuel Management and Idaho National Engineering Laboratory Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Programs Final Environmental Impact Statement to consolidate existing and

newly generated SNF at three existing Departmental sites (including SRS) based on the fuel type, pending future decisions on ultimate disposition. DOE designated the SRS as the site that would manage aluminum-based SNF. As a result, DOE will transfer 20 MTHM of non-aluminum-based SNF from SRS to Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) and will transfer about 5 MTHM of aluminum-based SNF at INEEL to SRS. Additionally, SRS could receive about 5 MTHM of aluminum-based SNF from domestic research reactors.

In May 1996, DOE announced a decision (61 FR 25092) under the Final Environmental Impact Statement on a Proposed Nuclear Weapons Nonproliferation Policy Concerning Foreign Research Reactor Spent Nuclear Fuel to accept about 18 MTHM of aluminum-based SNF containing uranium of U.S. origin from foreign research reactors for management in the United States at the SRS. The receipt of foreign research reactor SNF at SRS is now underway and receipts are scheduled to be completed by 2009. The 18 MTHM of foreign research reactor SNF that could be received at SRS is included in the scope of this EIS. (Recent decisions by some foreign research reactor operators have reduced the quantity of SNF expected to be shipped to SRS from about 18 MTHM to about 14 MTHM; however, for this EIS the 18 MTHM projection is used because foreign research reactor operators still have the option to ship to the United States.) Table S-1 summarizes the amount of SNF to be managed at SRS that is considered in this EIS.

TABLE 1.—QUANTITY OF SNF DISCUSSED IN THIS EIS

Aluminum-based SNF stored at SRS	20 MTHM
Domestic and DOE aluminum-based research reactor SNF to be received at SRS	10 MTHM
Foreign Research Reactor aluminum-based SNF to be received at SRS	18 MTHM
Non-aluminum-based SNF at SRS (to be shipped to INEEL)	20 MTHM

Purpose and Need for Action

DOE anticipates that it eventually will place most of its aluminum-based SNF inventory in a geologic repository after treatment or repackaging. DOE currently is conducting analysis leading to a decision whether to recommend the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada as the site of this nation's first geologic repository. Even if the Nuclear

Regulatory Commission eventually were to license such a site, DOE does not expect a geologic repository to be available until at least 2010 and it is unclear when shipments from DOE sites could begin. Regardless of when a repository is available, the Department intends to develop and implement a safe and efficient SNF management strategy that includes preparing for ultimate disposition the aluminum-based SNF stored at SRS or expected to be shipped to SRS. DOE is committed to avoiding indefinite storage at the SRS of this nuclear fuel in a form that is unsuitable for final disposition. Therefore, DOE needs to identify management technologies and facilities for storing and treating this SNF in preparation for final disposition.

Scope

In this EIS, DOE is evaluating the treatment and storage of about 48 MTHM of aluminum-based SNF pending shipment to a geologic repository, including impacts from the construction and operation of facilities (either new or modified existing facilities) that would be used to receive, store, treat, and package SNF in preparation for ultimate disposition.

Onsite transportation impacts are considered; however, no impacts associated with transporting SNF to SRS are included, because these impacts have been assessed in other EISs.

The potential impacts of transporting SNF to a geologic repository are discussed for completeness but no decisions related to transporting SNF offsite will be made under this EIS. Transportation of SNF to a federal repository will be addressed in the EIS for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada (Notice of Intent published in 60 FR 40164 on August 7, 1995). The Yucca Mountain EIS is being prepared in the event DOE decides to recommend Yucca Mountain as the site of the Nation's first geologic repository for SNF and high-level radioactive waste.

DOE also evaluates transferring 20 MTHM of non-aluminum-clad spent nuclear fuel currently stored in the Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuel at SRS to a new dry storage facility at SRS. This transfer would occur only if a dry storage facility were built as part of the implementation of a treatment technology to prepare aluminum-based spent nuclear fuel for disposition and if the dry storage facility became operational before the non-aluminum-clad fuel was transferred to the INEEL. The transfer to dry storage would occur

after the fuel had been relocated from the Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuel to the L-Reactor Disassembly Basin in support of activities necessary to phase out the use of the Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuel by 2006.

This EIS does not evaluate the impacts of managing the non-aluminum-clad fuel at INEEL or of transporting the fuel to INEEL. These impacts were considered in the SNF programmatic EIS which served as the basis for DOE's decision to consolidate the storage of non-aluminum-clad spent nuclear fuel at the INEEL.

Additionally, in this EIS DOE evaluates alternative storage arrangements for Mark-51 and "other" targets currently located in the Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuel at the SRS. In addition to evaluating the continued use of wet storage, DOE considers transferring the targets to dry storage to provide flexibility in material management operations. The targets contain americium and curium isotopes that have potential programmatic use.

Decisions To Be Based on This EIS

DOE expects to make the following decisions on the management of SNF and preparation of SNF for ultimate disposition.

- Select the appropriate treatment or packaging technology to prepare for ultimate disposal of the aluminum-based SNF that is to be managed at SRS.
- Determine whether DOE should construct new facilities or use existing facilities to store and treat or package aluminum-based SNF that is expected to be managed at SRS in preparation for its ultimate disposition.
- Determine whether DOE should repackage and dry-store stainless-steel and zirconium-clad SNF pending shipment to INEEL, and whether DOE should repackage and dry-store americium/curium targets pending decisions on programmatic use. Repackaging and dry-storing these fuels would further DOE's plan to phase out the use of the Receiving Basin for Offsite Fuel at the SRS.

Proposed Action

DOE's proposed action is to safely manage SNF that is currently located or expected to be received at SRS, including treating or packaging aluminum-based fuel for offsite shipment and placement in a monitored geologic repository, and packaging non-aluminum-clad fuel and programmatic material for dry storage.

In the Record of Decision for the Foreign Research Reactor EIS (61 FR 25092—May 17, 1996), DOE stated that it would embark on an accelerated

program at SRS to identify, develop, and demonstrate one or more non-reprocessing, cost effective treatment or packaging technologies to prepare aluminum-based foreign research reactor spent nuclear fuel for ultimate disposition.

Based on that decision, DOE's strategy is to select a new non-chemical processing technology or a new packaging technology that would put aluminum-based foreign research reactor SNF into a form or container suitable for direct placement in a monitored geologic repository. The SNF would be treated or conditioned to address potential repository acceptance criteria or safety concerns. After implementing the new non-chemical processing treatment or packaging technology, DOE would manage the SNF in a road-ready condition at SRS in dry storage pending shipment to a geologic repository.

Because of the similarity of the materials, DOE proposes to manage the other aluminum-alloy SNF that is the subject of this EIS (domestic research reactor and DOE reactor fuels) in the same manner as the foreign research reactor fuels.

DOE has included chemical processing as a management alternative in this EIS. However, DOE's strategy and preference is to use non-chemical separations processes when practical. DOE proposes to use chemical separation processes when a potential health or safety vulnerability exists for aluminum-based SNF that DOE considers should be alleviated before a non-chemical separations process is in operation in about 2005. Additionally, such SNF in its current form would likely not be acceptable in a geologic repository.

Alternatives Considered

For analysis in this EIS, DOE has categorized the SNF at SRS into six groups based on characteristics such as fuel size, physical or chemical properties, and radionuclide inventories. To manage this SNF and prepare it for disposition, DOE identified six reasonable new technologies and one existing technology (conventional chemical processing) for analysis. Because of the differences in the characteristics of the SNF and the capabilities of the technologies, no single technology could be applied to all the SNF. Although there are many possible combinations of technologies and fuel groups, DOE evaluated a limited number of configurations as alternatives. The alternatives were chosen to illustrate the range of impacts

that could occur and consist of: Preferred Alternative, Minimum Impact Alternative, Direct Disposal Alternative, Maximum Impact Alternative, and the No Action Alternative.

In the Preferred Alternative, DOE proposes to implement several technologies to manage the SNF at SRS. These include Melt and Dilute, Conventional Processing, and Repackage and Prepare to Ship. The Melt and Dilute option is the preferred method for treating most (about 97 percent by volume and 60 percent by mass) of the spent nuclear fuel. Conventional processing would be used for the remaining 3 percent by volume (40 percent by mass) because of the potential health and safety vulnerability of continuing wet storage of those fuels while awaiting the availability of Melt and Dilute technology and uncertainties associated with repository acceptance. DOE would continue to wet store the Higher Actinide Targets and the non-aluminum clad SNF. If this material has not been transferred offsite by the time a dry storage facility is in operation at the SRS, DOE could repackage this material and transfer it to dry storage.

Availability of Copies of the Draft EIS

Copies of the Draft EIS are being distributed to Federal, State and local officials and agencies; Tribes; and organizations and individuals that have indicated an interest in SRS or the Draft EIS. In addition, the Draft EIS is available on the Internet at the following address: <http://www.eh.doe.gov/nepa/docs/docs.htm>. Addresses of DOE Public Reading Rooms and libraries where the Draft EIS will be available for public review are listed below:

Freedom of Information Public Document Room, University of South Carolina at Aiken, SC, Gregg-Graniteville Library, 471 University Parkway, Aiken, SC 29801
Freedom of Information Reading Room, U.S. Department of Energy, Room 1E-190, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585
Battelle-Pacific Northwest Laboratories, Technical Library, P.O. Box 999, Richland, WA 99352
Pullen Public Library, 100 Decatur Street, SE, Atlanta, GA 30303
Reese Library, Augusta College, 2500 Walton Way, Augusta, GA 30904
Georgia Institute of Technology, Bobby Dodd Way, Atlanta, GA 30332
Chatham-Effingham-Liberty Regional Library, 2002 Bull Street, Savannah, GA 31499-4301
Los Alamos Technical Association, 1200 Trinity Drive, Los Alamos, NM 87544

U.S. Department of Energy, FOIA Reading Room, 4700 Morris NE, Albuquerque, NM 87111
U.S. Department of Energy, Albuquerque Operations Office, National Atomic Museum, 20358 Wyoming Boulevard SE, Kirtland Air Force Base, P.O. Box 5400, Albuquerque, NM 87185
The Libraries, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523
Erskine College, McCain Library, One Depot Street, Due West, SC 29639
Parsons Brinckerhoff Library, 1660 Lincoln Street, Suite 2000, Denver, CO 80264
Public Reading Room, Chicago Operations Office, 9800 South Cass Avenue, Argonne, IL 60439
Argonne National Laboratory, Technical Library, P.O. Box 2528, Idaho Falls, ID 83403
Library of Congress, CRS-STR-LM413, Washington, DC 20540-7490
South Carolina State Library, 1500 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29211
County Library, 404 King Street, Charleston, SC 29403
Savannah River Site Library, Savannah River Technology Center, 773-A, Savannah River Site, Aiken, SC 29808
Westinghouse Savannah River Site Company Library, 766-H, Savannah River Site, Aiken, SC 29808
U.S. Department of Energy, Public Reading Room, Oak Ridge Operations Office, 55 Jefferson Circle, Room 1123, Oak Ridge, TN 37831

Issued in Washington, DC on January 7, 1999.

David G. Huizenga,

Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Material and Facility Stabilization, Office of Environmental Management.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Opportunity for Leadership Entity: Beijing Energy-Efficiency and Renewable Energy Demonstration Building

AGENCY: Office of Policy and International Affairs, Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of extension of date for responses.

SUMMARY: The Department published a notice of opportunity on December 16, 1998 (63FR69267), to identify an entity to lead future activities for the Beijing Energy-Efficiency and Renewable Energy Demonstration Building, assuming the Department decides to proceed with this demonstration