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SAVANNAH RIVER OPERATIONS OFFICE
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 27, 1987

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ANNOUNCES AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT EIS ON WASTE MANAGEMENT AT SRP

Aiken, S.C.---The Department of Energy (DOE) announces today the availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on the modification of waste management activities at the Savannah River Plant.

The DEIS, DOE/EIS-0120D, "Waste Management Activities for Groundwater Protection at the Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina," was prepared to provide environmental input into the selection and implementation of modified waste management activities for hazardous, low-level radioactive, and mixed waste for the protection of groundwater, human health and the environment at the Savannah River Plant. The DEIS was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended. It is intended to support broad decisions on future actions on SRP waste management activities, and to provide project-related environmental input and support for project-specific decisions on proceeding with cleanup activities at existing waste sites, establishing new waste disposal facilities, and discharging reactor disassembly basin purge water.

The DEIS also documents and addresses comments received by DOE during a public scoping period in May 1985.

Copies of the DEIS are being distributed to persons who have requested copies and to those who made presentations at the public meetings or provided written comments.

Copies of the DEIS are also available for public inspection at DOE's Public Reading Room in the Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina Aiken Campus, University Parkway, Aiken, S.C., and at the Freedom of Information Reading Room, Room 1E-190, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SE, Washington, D.C.

Additional copies of the DEIS may be obtained by contacting S.R. Wright, Director, Environmental Division, U.S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office, P.O. Box A, Aiken, S.C. 29802, Attention: "Waste Management EIS."

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Public comments concerning the DEIS are invited, and public hearings will be held with respect to the contents of the DEIS. Written comments to the Department of Energy should be postmarked by June 30, 1987, to ensure consideration in preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

DEIS public hearings have been scheduled for June 2, 1987, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Savannah, Ga., at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m., and June 4, 1987, at the Odell Weeks Activity Center, Aiken, S.C., also at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.

The public is invited to provide comments on the DEIS at the hearings. The hearings will not be judicial or evidentiary. Individuals desiring to make oral presentations at the hearings should notify Mr. Wright at the address cited earlier as soon as possible so DOE can arrange a schedule for the presentations. Persons who have not submitted a request to speak in advance may register to speak before each hearing begins.

Individuals and representatives of organizations will be allowed to present comments at the public hearings. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to present comments, five minutes will be allotted to individuals and 10 minutes will be allotted to individuals representing groups. Individuals or representatives of organizations presenting comments are requested to have written copies of their comments available at the hearing. Comments received at the hearings, written or oral, will be considered in the presentation of the final EIS.

A transcript of the hearings will be prepared, and the entire record of the hearings will be compiled for public inspection.

-DOE-

NEWS MEDIA CONTACT: James M. Gaver, (803) 725-2889

SR-87-07



Department of Energy
Savannah River Operations Office
P.O. Box A
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

APR 23 1987

Enclosed is a copy of the Department of Energy (DOE) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), "Waste Management Activities for Groundwater Protection at Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina" (DOE/EIS-012CD). This document was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

The scope of the DEIS for the modification of waste management activities for hazardous, low-level radioactive, and mixed wastes at the Savannah River Plant incorporates comments received during the scoping process and public hearings on May 14 and 16, 1985. The public comment period on the DEIS will be held through June 30, 1987.

Public hearings to receive comments on the DEIS have been scheduled for June 2, 1987, in Savannah, Georgia, at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, and for June 4, 1987, in Aiken, South Carolina, at the Odell Weeks Activity Center located at 1700 Whiskey Road. Two sessions will be conducted beginning at 9 a.m. and 6 p.m.

You are invited to participate in this hearing to provide comments on the DEIS and/or submit written comments by June 30, 1987, to Mr. S. R. Wright, Director, Environmental Division, at the address given in the enclosed Notice of Availability. Envelopes should be marked "Waste Management EIS."

Comments presented at the public hearing or postmarked by June 30, 1987, will be considered by DOE in preparing the final EIS. Comments postmarked after June 30, 1987, will be considered to the extent practicable.

Sincerely,


R. L. Morgan
Manager

Enclosures: DEIS (2 volumes)
NOA
DOE Press Release

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Waste Management Activities for Groundwater Protection at the Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina

AGENCY: Department of Energy

ACTION: Notice of availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and notice to conduct a public hearing on the DEIS.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) announces the availability of a draft environmental impact statement, "Waste Management Activities for Groundwater Protection at the Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina," (DOE/EIS-0120D), on the modification of waste management activities at the Savannah River Plant for hazardous, low-level radioactive, and mixed wastes for the protection of human health and the environment. Modifications will be based on compliance with applicable regulatory requirements and DOE orders.

Public comments are invited and a public hearing will be held with respect to the DEIS.

DATES: Written comments to the Department of Energy should be postmarked by June 30, 1987, to ensure consideration in preparation of the final environmental impact statement. Public hearings will be held on June 2 and 4, 1987, as described in this notice. Individuals desiring to make oral statements at the hearings should notify Mr. S. R. Wright at the address below by May 26, 1987, so that the Department may arrange a schedule for presentations.

ADDRESS: Requests for copies of the DEIS, written comments on the DEIS, requests to present oral comments at the hearings, and requests for further information should be directed to Mr. S. R. Wright, Director, Environmental Division, U.S. Department of Energy, Savannah River Operations Office, P.O. Box A, Aiken, South Carolina 29802. Attention: "Waste Management EIS." For further information on the NEPA process contact: Ms. Carol Borgstrom, Acting Director, Office of NEPA Project Assistance, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC 20585, telephone 202/586-4600.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. PREVIOUS NOTICE OF INTENT

The Department of Energy published a Notice of Intent (50 FR 16534) on April 26, 1985, regarding the preparation of a draft EIS on the waste management modifications at the Savannah River Plant.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Savannah River Plant (SRP) is a controlled access, major DOE installation established in the early 1950s for the production of nuclear materials for national defense. SRP operations generate hazardous, radioactive, and mixed (radioactive and hazardous) wastes.

Previously acceptable waste management practices (e.g., the use of unlined seepage basins) conducted at some SRP sites has caused occasional cases of groundwater contamination, mostly in water-table aquifers. Groundwater contaminants include volatile organic compounds, heavy metals, radionuclides, and other chemicals.

As a result of legislative actions, DOE Administrative Orders, and institutional concerns for continued environmental and human health protection, many remedial actions, waste treatment facilities, and demonstration programs are already underway. Examples of these actions are the storage of buried wastes and soils from the Chemicals, Metals, and Pesticides (CMP) Pits; the design, construction, and operation of liquid effluent treatment facilities for M-, F-, H-, and TNX-Areas; the use of recovery wells and an air stripper to remove volatile organic compounds from groundwater in M-Area; the design of a two-stage, rotary-kiln incinerator to detoxify hazardous wastes; and waste disposal demonstration programs.

Current demonstration programs that affect waste management activities include the "ashcrete" facility, which solidifies sludge from the effluent treatment facilities; a "beta-gamma" incinerator; a box/drum compactor; and a greater confinement disposal (GCD) demonstration. DOE expects these programs to result in improved methods of disposal for mixed and low-level radioactive waste and/or reduction in waste volumes to meet regulatory requirements.

DOE plans to close those sites which are receiving or may have received hazardous, low-level radioactive, or mixed waste. DOE is also planning the construction of new storage/disposal facilities at SRP for hazardous, low-level radioactive, and mixed waste. The new storage/disposal facilities would be used to accommodate wastes from ongoing operations, wastes from interim storage, wastes from planned waste treatment facilities, and could also be used for wastes from closure and/or remedial actions at existing waste sites if such actions become necessary. In addition, DOE is also considering alternatives for the continued management of filtered, deionized reactor disassembly-basin purge water discharges. These discharges contain very low concentrations of radionuclides, principally tritium, and are discharged to ensure that occupational exposure guidelines are achieved.

The purpose of the environmental impact statement is to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed modification of waste management activities for hazardous, low-level radioactive, and mixed wastes for the protection of groundwater, human health, and the environment at the Savannah River Plant. DOE does not intend the EIS to be a permit application for existing SRP facilities or a vehicle to resolve the applicability of Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) requirements, as amended, to existing SRP facilities or waste sites. Regulatory activities and the expanded SRP groundwater monitoring and characterization program will provide the bases for the application of requirements to existing facilities and waste sites.

III. SCOPE OF DEIS

The scope of the DEIS was developed using comments received during a public scoping period (April 29 through May 28, 1985) and public hearings in Aiken, South Carolina on May 14, 1985, and in Beaufort, South Carolina on May 16, 1985.

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has prepared the dual purpose (programmatic and project-specific) DEIS to provide environmental input into the selection and implementation of modified waste management activities for hazardous, low-level radioactive, and mixed wastes for the protection of groundwater, human health, and the environment at its Savannah River Plant (SRP) in Aiken, South Carolina. The DEIS was prepared in accordance with Section 102(2)(C) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended; it is intended to support broad decisions on future actions on SRP waste management activities, and to provide project-related environmental input and support for project-specific decisions on proceeding with cleanup activities at existing waste sites, establishing new waste disposal facilities, and discharging disassembly-basin purge water.

DOE could use several alternative strategies to implement modifications to the SRP waste management program for hazardous, low-level radioactive, and mixed wastes. These strategies differ in the concepts proposed for existing waste sites, new disposal facilities, and discharge of disassembly-basin purge water, and in the degree to which they require dedication of land areas and long-term monitoring and oversight to ensure that groundwater resources, human health, and the environment are adequately protected.

The No-Action strategy - continued protection of the offsite environment - consists of

- no removal of waste or remedial or closure actions at existing waste sites
- no establishment of new facilities for storage of wastes
- continued discharge of disassembly basin purge water to active reactor seepage basins
- some dedication of land for waste management purposes

The Dedication strategy - compliance through dedication of existing and new disposal areas - includes

- no waste removal, but closure and remedial actions as required at existing waste sites
- construction of new aboveground and belowground disposal facilities
- continued discharge of disassembly basin purge water as in the no-action strategy
- some dedication of land for waste management purposes

The Elimination strategy - compliance through elimination of existing waste sites and storage of wastes - consists of

- removing wastes from all sites and remedial and closure actions as required
- construction of new retrievable storage facilities
- direct discharge of disassembly basin purge water to onsite surface streams or evaporation of the purge water with commercially available equipment
- no dedication of land for waste management purposes following the end of the institutional control period

The Combination strategy (DOE's preferred strategy) - compliance through a combination of dedication and elimination of existing waste sites and the construction of new storage and disposal facilities - includes

- removal of wastes at selected sites, plus remedial and closure actions as required
- construction of combinations of retrievable storage and above- and belowground disposal facilities
- continued discharge of disassembly basin purge water to reactor seepage basins, plus continued evaluation of tritium mitigation measures
- dedication of some land for waste management purposes

IV. COMMENT PROCEDURES

A. AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT EIS

Copies of the DEIS have been distributed to Federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, environmental groups, and individuals known to be interested in the waste management activities at the Savannah River Plant. Additional copies may be obtained by contacting Mr. S. R. Wright at the address given above.

Copies of the DEIS and copies of the documents referenced in the DEIS are available for public inspection at the U.S. Department of Energy's Reading Room at the University of South Carolina's Aiken Campus, Aiken, South Carolina, and the Freedom of Information Reading Room, Room 1E-190, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC. Copies of the DEIS are also available for public inspection at the following locations:

Augusta Regional Library, 902 Greene Street, Augusta, Georgia 30901,
(404) 724-1871

Richland County Public Library, 1400 Sumter Street, Columbia, South Carolina
29201, (803) 779-9084

South Carolina State Library, 1500 Senate Street, Columbia, South Carolina
29201, (803) 758-3181

Aiken-Bamberg-Barnwell-Edgefield Regional Library, 1307 Georgia Avenue,
North Augusta, South Carolina 29841, (803) 648-9961

Allendale-Hampton-Jasper Regional Library, War Memorial Building, Court House
Square, Allendale, South Carolina 29810, (803) 584-3513

Warren C. Gibbs Memorial Library, 326 North Bel Air Road, Evans, Georgia 30809,
(404) 863-1946

Aiken County Public Library, 435 Newberry Street, Aiken, South Carolina 29801,
(803) 649-2352

B. WRITTEN COMMENTS

Interested parties are invited to provide comments on the DEIS to Mr. S. R. Wright at the above address. Comments should be identified on the outside of the envelope with the designation "Waste Management EIS." All comments and related information should be postmarked by June 30, 1987, to ensure consideration in preparing the final EIS. Comments postmarked after June 30, 1987, will be considered to the extent practicable.

C. PUBLIC HEARING

1. Participation procedure. Public hearings have been scheduled on the DEIS as follows:

Tuesday June 2, 1987, at the Hyatt Regency, Savannah, Georgia, at 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.; and Thursday June 4, 1987, at the Odell Weeks Activity Center, Aiken, South Carolina, at 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

The public is invited to provide comments on the DEIS at the hearing. The hearing will not be a judicial or evidentiary-type hearing. Individuals desiring to make an oral presentation at the hearing should notify Mr. S. R. Wright at the address above as soon as possible after the appearance of this notice in the Federal Register so that the Department may arrange a schedule for the presentations. Persons who have not submitted a request to speak in advance may register to speak at the hearing before each hearing commences. Individuals and representatives of organizations will be called on to present comments as time permits. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to present comments, 5 minutes will be allotted to individuals and 10 minutes will be allotted to individuals representing groups. Comments received at the hearing will be considered in the preparation of the final EIS. Individuals or representatives of organizations presenting comments at the hearing are requested to have written copies of their comments available at the hearing.

2. Conduct of hearing. The Department of Energy will arrange the schedule of commentors and will establish basic rules and procedures for conducting the hearing. Questions may be asked only by those conducting the hearing and there will be no cross-examination of persons presenting statements. Any participant who wishes to ask a question at the hearing may submit the question, in writing, to the presiding officer. Any further procedural rules needed for the proper conduct of the hearing will be announced by the presiding officer at the start of the hearing. A transcript of the hearing will be prepared, and the entire record of the hearing, including the transcript, will be retained by the Department of Energy for inspection at the Department's Freedom of Information Reading Room, Room 1E-190, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585, and the U.S. Department of Energy's Reading Room at the University of South Carolina's Aiken Campus, Aiken, South Carolina.

Issued in Washington, DC _____, 1987.

Mary L. Walker
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health



Department of Energy
Savannah River Operations Office
P.O. Box A
Aiken, South Carolina 29802

APR 23 1987

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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. L. Morgan".

R. L. Morgan
Manager

Enclosures: DEIS (2 volumes)
NOA
DOE Press Release

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Waste Management Activities for Groundwater Protection at the Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina

AGENCY: Department of Energy

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SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) announces the availability of a draft environmental impact statement, "Waste Management Activities for Groundwater Protection at the Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina," (DOE/EIS-0120D), on the modification of waste management activities at the Savannah River Plant for hazardous, low-level radioactive, and mixed wastes for the protection of human health and the environment. Modifications will be based on compliance with applicable regulatory requirements and DOE orders.

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The Combination strategy (DOE's preferred strategy) - compliance through a combination of dedication and elimination of existing waste sites and the construction of new storage and disposal facilities - includes

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Issued in Washington, DC _____, 1987.

Mary L. Walker
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health