

OCRWM

Bulletin

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* If you wish to receive future issues of the OCRWM Bulletin, please send your name and address to Neal Duncan, Office of Policy, Integration and Outreach, Department of Energy, Washington, D.C., 20585, 202/ 252-5722.

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DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS TO BE ISSUED

On December 20, 1984, OCRWM plans to issue draft Environmental Assessments for the nine potentially acceptable sites which will include proposal of sites for characterization. Senior OCRWM staff will personally notify and deliver copies of the draft EAs to Congressional representatives, Governors and Indian tribal leaders of the affected sites. The issuance of the draft EAs will be preceded by the formal publication of the General Guidelines for the Recommendation of Sites for Nuclear Waste Repositories in early December.

Public Participation Strongly Encouraged

State and local governments, Indian tribes and members of the public will be encouraged to participate in the comment process through written comments and a series of briefings and hearings to take place in the vicinity of each potentially acceptable site and in the capital of each affected State. The formal comment period will run for 90 days, beginning December 20, 1984. (Allowance will be made for the year end holidays.) At the close of this period, the draft EAs will be revised and Final Environmental Assessments issued. The nomination and recommendation of sites as suitable for site characterization will follow.

Briefings—Mid-January 1985: DOE will hold public briefings in the affected locations on the structure and content of the draft EAs, followed by an interactive question and answer period.

Hearings: DOE will hold formal public hearings on the draft EAs during February and March to receive comments from the public on the potential sites.

Details on the briefings and hearings will be formally announced in the Federal Register on December 20, 1984 when the draft EAs are released.

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MEETINGS WITH AFFECTED STATES AND INDIAN TRIBES

Highlights of National Meeting

A National Meeting for Affected States and Indian Tribes was held in Atlanta, Georgia on October 3-4, 1984. The meeting provided an opportunity for DOE officials to present updated information, and for the States to discuss defense waste, liability, the Mission Plan and Environmental Assessments.

Meeting Actions- In response to points raised during discussion, DOE agreed that:

The Defense Waste Recommendation Report will include footnotes, and specific reference documents will be provided upon request to David LeClaire, Director, Defense Waste & Byproducts Management, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, D.C. 20595.

--Action: Being implemented; documents are available.

The DOE will consider inviting other Federal agencies to be briefed as part of the environmental assessment interaction activities.

--Action: Being reviewed.

The DOE will consider the request to deliver reference documents in advance of the Environmental Assessments to all first repository States and affected Indian tribes. In any event, reference documents will be "reasonably available" even if States are not sent their own complete collections of reference documents.

--Action: A set of all reference documents will be made available to each affected State and Indian tribe.

DOE will provide an explanation of DOE's decision to issue the Comment Response Document and the final Mission Plan simultaneously.

--Action: Letter has been sent to all participants.

The minutes of the Atlanta meeting have been sent to all participants. Copies are available by contacting Neal Duncan, Outreach Division, 202/252-5722.

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COMMENT PERIOD CLOSED FOR REPORT ON DISPOSAL OF DEFENSE HIGH-LEVEL WASTE

Section 8 of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 requires that DOE evaluate the use of commercial waste disposal repositories for the disposal of high-level defense waste. The Act, which makes a presumption that commercial and defense high-level waste will be commingled unless the evaluation determines that a defense-only repository is required, spells out six criteria for determining the feasibility of this method of defense waste disposal. In a draft report issued in July 1984, DOE concluded that there is no requirement for a defense waste repository.

The original comment period was extended through September 24, 1984. About 30 organizations and individuals commented; all agreed with the prescription of the report, but some took exception to the way in which the data was presented. Appropriate revisions in the report are being made, and the final document is expected to be sent to the President in early December.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

State of Washington Receives Two Financial Assistance Awards

- o The Department of Ecology, State of Washington was awarded \$1.4 million for:
 - Policy and technical reviews such as commenting on OCRWM Environmental Assessments, reviewing Site Characterization Progress Reports, and monitoring Site Characterization activities.
 - Increasing public involvement with outreach efforts such as developing media materials, a newsletter, fact sheets, slide shows, and conducting workshops and hearings.
- o The Washington State Legislature received \$200,000 to create a staff and information resource that will enable relevant standing committees, members of the Washington State Nuclear Waste Board, and the leadership of the Legislature to receive timely and accurate information on high-level radioactive waste.

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CURRENTLY SCHEDULED OCRWM SHORT TERM PROGRAM MILESTONES

12/84*	Issue final Siting Guidelines.
12/84	Issue Regional Characterization Report for second repository.
12/84	Issue draft Project Decision Schedule.
12/84	Issue draft EAs for public comment and begin public comment period.
12/84	Issue Region to Area Screening Report for second repository.
1/85	Defense waste recommendations to Congress by President.
1/85	Fee adequacy report.
2/85	End of comment period for Regional Characterization Report for Second Repository.
2/85	Issue OCRWM Annual Report.
2/85	Issue Project Decision Schedule.
3/85*	Submit Mission Plan to Congress.
5/85	Issue final Regional Characterization Report for Second Repository.
6/85	Submit Monitored Retrievable Storage Report to Congress.

* Updated Milestone Date

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NEW PUBLICATIONS AND DOCUMENTS

<u>Title and Description</u>	<u>Scheduled Release Date</u>
<u>Status of Department of Energy's Implementation of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982 as of September 30, 1984</u> General Accounting Office first annual audit covering siting, financial cost, and the establishment of OCRWM. Contact: U.S. GAO Document Handling and Information Services Facility, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, MD 20877, 301/ 275-6241.	Released
<u>General Guidelines for the Recommendation of Sites for Nuclear Waste Repositories</u> NWPA required siting guidelines. Contact: Carol Hanlon, OGR, DOE Headquarters Forrestal Bldg. 1000 Independence Ave., SW. RW-24 7F-088, Washington, DC 20585, 202/252-1224.	December 1984
<u>Crystalline Program Regional Characterization Reports</u> Geologic and environmental regional characterization. Contact: Sally Mann DOE Chicago Operations Office, 9800 Cass Ave. Argonne, Ill. 60439, 312/972-2257.	Early December, 1984

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RECENT POLICY STATEMENTS

*EXCERPTS FROM REMARKS MADE BY BEN C. RUSCHE
AT ATOMIC INDUSTRIAL FORUM MEETING
NOVEMBER 12, 1984, WASHINGTON, D.C.*

Although permanent disposal in a geologic repository is, and will continue to be, the ultimate objective of our program, it has become clear that the total waste management process requires an integrated systems approach. Such an approach needs to span functions from acceptance of spent fuel from the various utility storage pools to final disposal in a geologic repository.

It is important to optimize this waste system to the extent practical in terms of safety, cost-effectiveness and schedule, taking into account transportation, packaging, system reliability, overall costs and the logistics and interface problems associated with serving over a hundred different "customers." We are tentatively concluding that certain functions, such as packaging, handling and lag storage, should be carried out at locations other than the repository in a way that would increase our ability to achieve the safety and environmental objectives on the mandated target repository schedule in a cost-effective manner.

Under this concept, a Monitored Retrievable Storage capability, which the Act requires us to consider, would become an integral part -- or subsystem of -- the waste disposal system. The other principal subsystems would be transportation and the repository. Let me now share with you our present thinking -- and the status of -- each of these subsystems.

In evaluating possible MRS roles, several factors are being considered. First and foremost is the need for a practical operating system of high reliability and predictability consistent with guidance provided in the Nuclear Waste Policy Act of 1982. Congress, through the Act, directed a "detailed study of the need for and feasibility of" the construction of one or more MRS facilities and directed that the Secretary propose a "plan for integrating [these facilities with] other storage and disposal facilities."

(Continued)

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We do not consider MRS a substitute for final disposal. Neither is it being considered as an alternative for solving utilities' short-term interim storage problems. The Act indicated that those "owning and operating civilian nuclear power reactors have the primary responsibility for providing interim storage of spent nuclear fuel." We interpret the term "interim" as meaning prior to Federal acceptance of spent fuel for disposal beginning when the Federal waste management system becomes operational.

In the draft Mission Plan, which we issued last spring, the MRS was described as a backup to the repository in the event of major delays. We continue to believe this to be an appropriate role for an MRS facility, but we have also concluded that this may not be the only appropriate role for an MRS. There are other integrated system functions that are being evaluated, particularly those functions of the total Federal waste management system that can or should take place away from the repository.

We expect to arrive at tentative conclusions regarding our proposed role for the MRS in the next few months when the MRS need, feasibility and integration studies will be nearing completion. At this time, we will be prepared to discuss preliminary findings regarding services and functions which an MRS facility could provide. Subsequently, we plan to submit to Congress the resulting MRS proposal.

My views on MRS as part of an integrated system are not driven by what might be perceived by others as a lack of progress to date on geological repositories. In fact, I believe remarkable progress has been made in repository development, especially since enactment of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act. I have yet to discern any insurmountable technical obstacles to establishment of a repository and I believe the institutional obstacles can be overcome with time, openness, high technical standards of performance and a commitment to ensuring public safety and protecting the environment.

I believe that an integrated disposal system that includes geologic repositories, MRS, and the necessary transportation systems and infrastructure will likely provide the best means for achieving the objective of safe, environmentally acceptable disposal in a cost-effective manner and on a reliable schedule. It is operational pragmatism and the opportunity to optimize and minimize transportation impacts that dominate my views. Schedule predictability is a valuable adjunct but not the driving force.

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OCRWM/PROJECT OFFICE SELECTED EVENTS CALENDAR (as of 11/30/84)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
December 4-6	National Conference of State Legislators Meeting on High Level Transportation and the OCRWM program. Las Vegas, NV. <i>Julie Jordan, 303/292-6600 NCSL.</i>
December 9-10	Governor's Task Force Tour and Briefing, Richland, WA.
December 10-11	NRC site visit to discuss DOE's quality assurance program at Basalt Waste Isolation Project, Richland, WA.
December 12	State of Washington Science and Technology Committee Tour and Briefing. Richland, WA.
December 13-14	NRC site visit to discuss DOE's quality assurance program at the Nevada Nuclear Waste Storage Investigations Office, Las Vegas, NV.
December 18-19	NRC site visit to discuss DOE's quality assurance program at Battelle Memorial Institute, Columbus, Ohio.
Late-January	Briefings on Environmental Assessments in Washington, Nevada, Utah, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Washington D.C. <i>DOE contact is Barry Gale, 202/252-1116.</i>
January 28-29	First Repository States and Affected Indian Tribes Meeting, San Diego, CA. <i>DOE contact is Neal Duncan, 202/252-5722.</i>
Jan.31-Feb.1	Western Interstate Energy Board Meeting on Transportation. San Diego, CA.
Jan.31-Feb.1	National Association of Attorneys General High-Level Waste Task Force Meeting, San Diego, CA.
February 1-2	OCRWM National Meeting, San Diego, CA. <i>DOE contact is Neal Duncan, 202/252-5722. (tentative date)</i>
February 18-28	Hearings on Draft Environmental Assessments in Washington, Nevada, Utah, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Washington, D.C. <i>DOE contact is Barry Gale, 202/252-1116.</i>
February	Tentative meetings include workshops on the Crystalline Repository Project.

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- March 12-15 Atomic Industrial Forum Annual Fuel Cycle Conference, '85 in New Orleans, LA at the Hyatt. Contact *Joan Joffe* at AIF at 301/654- 9260.
- March 24-28 Waste Management '85. Tucson, AZ. Talks will be given at the Tuscon Community Center, Hotel reservations should be made at the Holiday Inn Broadway. Contact *Dr. Morton E. Wacks*, or *Dr. Roy Post* at University of Arizona, 602/621-6160.
- Late March State of Illinois workshop on experience in monitoring high-level waste shipments. (tentative)

For details on late scheduled DOE/NRC meetings call DOE toll-free 1-800-368-2265 except for Maryland. The Maryland number is 1-800-492-4610. The NRC nationwide number is 1-800-368-5642. For the District of Columbia, the NRC number is 427-9002.

Most of the information in this Bulletin is from DOE. We will also want to include events of general information that occur in the potential repository States and affected Indian tribes, so that the communication flow will be in both directions. Readers with information they want included in forthcoming issues of the Bulletin should contact Neal Duncan, Office of Policy, Integration and Outreach, Department of Energy, Washington, D.C. 20585, 202/252-5722.

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For Environmental Assessments

ERRATA: THE FORMAL COMMENT PERIOD WILL RUN FOR NINETY DAYS;
NO ALLOWANCE WILL MADE FOR THE YEAR END HOLIDAYS.

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