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# DOE NEWS

## DOE ANNOUNCES THREE POTENTIAL SITES FOR PROPOSED MONITORED RETRIEVABLE STORAGE FACILITY

Three potential candidate sites for a facility to handle, package and temporarily store spent nuclear fuel have been identified by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). If approved by Congress, the facility would receive spent fuel from commercial nuclear power plants nationwide and package it for delivery to a permanent repository for final disposal.

The three candidate sites for the facility, called a monitored retrievable storage (MRS) facility, have been identified by DOE following an extensive screening and evaluation process. All three candidate sites are in Tennessee and the preferred one is the former Clinch River Breeder Reactor site. The other two, alternative candidate sites, are on the DOE Oak Ridge Reservation and the former Tennessee Valley Authority reactor site at Hartsville, Tennessee.

"Siting, construction and operation of an MRS can be based on available technologies," said Ben C. Rusche, Director of DOE's Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management. "Facilities essentially identical to the proposed MRS have been built, licensed and operated safely over the last 30 years. For this reason, we are confident that we can adhere to the strictest safety standards."

The process of identifying the candidate sites took into consideration the fact that a large majority of the nation's commercial nuclear reactors are located in the eastern and midwestern portions of the United States. Therefore, DOE searched for sites that would significantly reduce the miles spent fuel must be shipped. An MRS facility at any one of the three candidate sites would achieve this goal.

DOE then evaluated 11 sites where an MRS could be safely located. The final step involved evaluating the differing conditions and the requirements for construction, engineering, environmental control and regulatory compliance.

Basically, spent fuel would be consolidated at the MRS and then shipped to the permanent repository by rail on dedicated trains. Potential sites for a deep geologic permanent repository currently under consideration are located in western states. The MRS is being considered an integral part of the waste management system and not a replacement for the construction of a geologic repository.

WM Record File

Project M-38

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In January, DOE will formally submit to Congress a detailed proposal which will include site-specific designs for an MRS facility. Two alternative designs will be prepared for each candidate site and the six design/site combinations will be included. An environmental assessment will be prepared. The environmental assessment and a needs and feasibility study will accompany the proposal.

The primary focus of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act is the construction of a permanent geologic repository. The act directed DOE to study the need for and feasibility of monitored retrievable storage and submit to the Congress a proposal for the construction of one or more MRS facilities.

DOE has signed contracts with nuclear utilities which obligate DOE to begin accepting spent fuel for final disposal by January 31, 1998. If approved by Congress, the MRS facility would begin operating in the 1996-1997 time frame.

It is the intent of DOE to prepare a proposal which will allow Congress to make an informed decision regarding the MRS and the integrated system; provide full opportunity for affected parties to express their views during proposal development; and provide the states, Indian tribes and public an understanding of the proposal which will allow their informed participation in the congressional decision-making process.

DOE will work closely with the states, Indian tribes and the public to prepare the best supporting documentation possible for the proposal to be delivered to Congress in January 1986. DOE will provide information and technical assistance to these groups so they may gain an understanding of the impacts of siting an MRS and, subsequently, to form independent opinions regarding MRS acceptability.

Although DOE's Richland Operations Office in Richland, Washington, has the lead role in MRS technical development, the Oak Ridge Operations Office, which is physically located in the area of the candidate sites, has established an MRS office to coordinate state, tribal and local interaction. Questions concerning MRS development should be directed to:

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Note: This information is also being issued simultaneously by DOE Headquarters in Washington, DC. The Headquarters News Media Contact is Ginger King, (202) 252-2835.

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