



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

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Mr. James Shaffner
Project Manager
Low-Level Waste Branch
Environmental Protection and Performance Assessment Directorate
Office of Federal and State Materials and Environmental Management Programs
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
11545 Rockville Pike
Rockville, Maryland 20852

Dear Mr. Shaffner:

This letter transmits a full printed copy with a CD-ROM of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Draft *Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal of Greater-Than-Class C (GTCC) Low-Level Radioactive Waste and GTCC-Like Waste* (Draft EIS, DOE/EIS-375D). DOE prepared this Draft EIS in accordance with the regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR Part 1021). The Draft EIS is available on the Department's NEPA website at: http://nepa.energy.gov/draft_environmental_impact_statements.htm and on the GTCC website at <http://www.gtccis.anl.gov/>. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a cooperating agency in the preparation of this EIS.

The Low-Level Radioactive Waste Policy Amendments Act of 1985 makes the Federal Government responsible for the disposal of GTCC low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) that results from Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Agreement State licensed activities. DOE is the Federal agency responsible for disposal of GTCC LLRW. In addition to GTCC LLRW, this Draft EIS also addresses DOE generated or owned LLRW and potential non-defense-generated transuranic waste, referred to as "GTCC-like waste," having characteristics similar to GTCC LLRW and for which there may be no path to disposal.

In this Draft EIS, DOE proposes to construct and operate a new facility or facilities, or use an existing facility or facilities, for the disposal of GTCC LLRW and GTCC-like waste. DOE analyzes the potential environmental impacts of using a new or existing facility for the disposal of these wastes and evaluates alternative disposal methods and locations. Alternative methods of disposal analyzed are: deep geologic repository; intermediate depth boreholes; enhanced near surface trenches; and above grade vaults. Alternative disposal locations analyzed are: the Idaho National Laboratory in Idaho; the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP), and the WIPP vicinity in New Mexico; the Nevada National Security Site (formerly the Nevada Test Site) in Nevada; the Savannah River Site in South Carolina; and the Hanford Site in Washington. The Draft EIS also evaluates generic commercial disposal sites in four regions of the U.S., recognizing that additional review under NEPA may be required should one or more commercial facilities be proposed in the future. DOE also analyzed a No Action Alternative as required under NEPA.



DOE does not have, and therefore has not identified, a preferred alternative in the Draft EIS, but will do so in the Final EIS based on further consideration and public comment. Pursuant to Section 631 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, before DOE makes a final decision on the disposal alternative, DOE will submit a report to Congress that includes a description of the disposal alternatives under consideration, and all of the information required in the comprehensive report on ensuring the safe disposal of GTCC LLRW that was submitted by the Secretary to Congress in February 1987. Section 631 also requires DOE to await Congressional action on the submitted report.

DOE is inviting public comment on this Draft EIS during a 120-day public comment period that commences with the publication of EPA's notice of its availability in the *Federal Register*. During the comment period, DOE will hold public hearings, to be announced in the *Federal Register* and via other media. Written comments and oral comments may be provided at these hearings, or written comments may be provided via the GTCC EIS website. DOE will consider all comments received or postmarked by the end of the public comment period and will consider late comments to the extent practicable in preparing the Final EIS.

Individual names and addresses (including e-mail addresses) received as part of comment documents on this Draft EIS normally are part of the public record. DOE plans to reproduce comment documents in their entirety in the Final EIS, as appropriate, and to post all comment documents received in their entirety on the website for this EIS at the close of the public comment period. Any person wishing to have his/her name, address, or other identifying information withheld from the public record must state this request prominently at the beginning of any comment document. DOE will honor the request to the extent allowable by law. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be included in the public record and open to public inspection in their entirety.

For further information on the Draft EIS or to request additional paper copies, please contact Mr. Arnold Edelman, at (301) 903-5145. For further information on DOE's NEPA process, please contact me at (202) 586-4600.

Sincerely,



Carol M. Borgstrom
Director
Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance

Enclosures:

1. Draft *Environmental Impact Statement for the Disposal of Greater-Than-Class C (GTCC) Low-Level Radioactive Waste and GTCC-Like Waste*
2. CD-ROM of Summary and Draft EIS Volumes 1 and 2