Department of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

AUG 2 3 1996

Dr. Carl J. Paperiello, Director
Office of Nuclear Materials Safety and Safeguards
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
P.O. Box 2890, Mail Stop T8A 23
Washington, D.C. 20555

Dear Dr. Paperiello:

Please find enclosed the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Hanford Site Tank Waste Remediation System (TWRS). The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Washington State Department of Ecology have cooperatively prepared this document in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the Washington State Environmental Policy Act.

This Final EIS analyzes 10 alternatives for the management and disposal of radioactive, hazardous, and mixed waste currently, or projected to be stored in 177 large underground storage tanks and approximately 60 smaller miscellaneous underground storage tanks, in Hanford's tank farm system, located near Richland, Washington. The Final EIS also analyzes 4 alternatives for the management and disposal of approximately 1,930 radioactive cesium and strontium capsules located at the Hanford Site. The purpose of the proposed action is to reduce risks to the public, site workers, and the environment posed by continued storage of these materials.

The preferred alternative for the management and disposal of the Hanford tank waste is the Phased Implementation alternative, which includes retrieving all wastes practicable from the tanks and is consistent with the Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order (Tri-Party Agreement). This alternative would be implemented in two phases, a demonstration phase and full scale operations. The preferred alternative for management and disposal of cesium and strontium capsules is No Action, which continues current operation and maintenance practices at the Waste Encapsulation Storage Facility.

The public comment period on the Draft TWRS EIS began on April 12, 1996, and extended through May 28, 1996. Five public hearings and workshops were held during the 45-day public comment period. Written and oral comments on the Draft EIS were considered during the preparation of the Final EIS. Comments and agency responses are contained in Appendix L of the Final EIS.

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DOE requested the National Academy of Science to review and comment on the TWRS Draft EIS. DOE will carefully consider all comments provided by the National Academy of Science and the public in the Record of Decision. DOE will issue a Record of Decision on the TWRS action no sooner than 30 days after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes a Notice of Availability in the Federal Register for the Final EIS.

A copy of this Final EIS and reference documents are available in DOE Public Reading Rooms and Information Repositories. The addresses of those reading rooms and repositories are shown in the Summary. Copies can also be obtained by calling the Hanford Information Line at 1-800-321-2008 or, for Internet Electronic-Mail access, send a message to TWRSEIS@KEN01.jacobs.COM.

If you require additional information, please contact Jackson Kinzer, Assistant Manager, TWRS, at 509-376-7591, or me at 202-586-4600.

Thank you for your interest in Hanford Site activities.

Sincerely,

Carol Borgstrom

Carol Borgstrom
Director
Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance

Enclosure