

## Department of Energy Releases Final EIS on Hanford's Spent Nuclear Fuel

RICHLAND, Wash., February 2, 1996 -- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has published its final environmental impact statement (EIS) evaluating the potential impacts of managing spent nuclear fuel currently stored in the Hanford K Basins. The EIS entitled "Management of Spent Nuclear Fuel From the K Basins at the Hanford Site, Richland, Washington," addresses alternative ways to provide for the safe management and storage of more than 2,300 tons of spent nuclear fuel.

The preferred alternative recommended within the EIS is to remove the spent nuclear fuel from the K Basins, condition the fuel (i.e., dry to remove free and bound water, and oxidize exposed reactive areas of the fuel under controlled conditions), seal in canisters filled with an inert gas, and provide for up to 40 years of dry storage in a vault facility to be constructed at the Hanford Site on the 200 Areas plateau.

The final EIS has been distributed to interested members of the public, and federal and state agencies. It is available for viewing at the DOE Public Reading Room in Richland, 100 Sprout Road, Room 130W, Richland, WA 99352 as well as information repositories located in Washington and Oregon.

The final EIS evaluated six other alternatives including (1) continuing to store the spent nuclear fuel wet in the K Basins; (2) consolidation of the fuel for storage in the KW Basin; (3) removal of the spent nuclear fuel for storage in a new wet storage facility; (4) removal followed by calcination and dry storage at Hanford; (5) removal followed by processing at Hanford and dry storage of the recovered uranium and plutonium at Hanford; and (6) removal followed by foreign processing and dry storage of the recovered uranium and plutonium at Hanford.

The spent fuel, produced mainly by the retired N Reactor, contains metallic uranium, plutonium and radioactive fission products and is stored in unlined concrete basins at the K East and K West reactors in the 100-K Area of Hanford, a former plutonium production site located in Southeastern Washington State. The basins are approximately 1,400 feet from the Columbia River.

Copies of the final EIS are available by contacting:

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