



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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DRAFT HANFORD TANK CLOSURE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC REVIEW

Washington, D.C. - The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced that the Draft Tank Closure and Waste Management Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Hanford Site has been filed with the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Agency's Notice of Availability of the EIS is expected to appear in the *Federal Register* on October 30, 2009. This will initiate a public comment period extending to March 19, 2010. The Washington State Department of Ecology is a cooperating agency on the Draft EIS.

The National Environmental Policy Act and its implementing regulations require federal agencies to integrate environmental values into their decision-making process by considering the environmental impacts of their proposed actions and reasonable alternatives for implementing those actions. This Draft EIS analyzes alternatives for three types of actions: retrieving, and managing waste from 177 underground storage tanks at Hanford and closure of the single-shell tanks (SST); decommissioning of the Fast Flux Test Facility and its auxiliary facilities; and continued and expanded solid waste management operations on site, including the disposal of Hanford's low-level radioactive waste (LLW) and mixed low-level radioactive waste (MLLW) and limited volumes of LLW and MLLW from other DOE sites in an Integrated Disposal Facility at Hanford.

The Draft EIS includes several preferred alternatives for the actions analyzed, including:

- Disposal of Hanford's LLW and MLLW onsite and deferral of the importation of offsite waste to Hanford at least until the Waste Treatment Plant is operational, consistent with DOE's proposed Settlement Agreement with the State of Washington;
- Retrieving waste from the 149 SSTs consistent with the Tri-Party Agreement and landfill closure of the tanks;
- The down-selection of a range of treatment alternatives that will provide for chemical separations and supplemental low-activity waste treatment capability; and
- Entombment of the Fast Flux Test Facility at Hanford, with some special case waste going to DOE's Idaho National Laboratory for treatment and return to Hanford for disposal.

The Hanford Site is located in southeastern Washington State along the Columbia River, and is approximately 586 square miles in size. From early 1940 through 1980's Hanford's mission included defense-related nuclear research, development, and weapons production. DOE's mission now is focused

on the environmental cleanup of the Hanford Site.

Additional information about the Draft Tank Closure and Waste Management EIS can be found at <http://www.hanford.gov/orp/?page=146&parent=0>. Information about the ongoing cleanup mission at the Hanford Site can be found at <http://www.hanford.gov>.

DOE will hold public hearings on the Draft EIS in Washington State, Oregon, Idaho and New Mexico during the public comment period and will announce dates, times and locations for the public hearings in the *Federal Register* and in local news media at a later date. DOE will accept written and oral comments at the public hearings.

Written comments on the Draft EIS can also be mailed to Mary Beth Burandt, EIS Document Manager, DOE Draft TC&WM EIS Comments, Office of River Protection, P.O. Box 1178, Richland, Washington 99352. Comments can also be submitted via email at TC&WMEIS@saic.com, or by faxing to (1-888) 785-2865. In preparing the Final EIS, DOE will consider all comments received or postmarked by March 19, 2010 and will consider comments received after that date to the extent practicable.

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