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Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

June 24, 2005



Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed for your information and review is a copy of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Consolidation of Nuclear Operations Related to Production of Radioisotope Power Systems (Consolidation EIS) (DOE/EIS-0373D). Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, DOE prepared the Draft Consolidation EIS to assess the potential environmental impacts associated with each of the alternatives.

DOE proposes to consolidate nuclear operations related to production of radioisotope power systems (RPS) required for Government space exploration and national security missions at a single site. Currently, DOE's ongoing RPS-related nuclear production operations are located or planned at three geographically separate and distant DOE sites: the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), Tennessee; Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), New Mexico; and the Idaho National Laboratory (INL), Idaho. The proposed consolidation of these operations, which include production, purification, and encapsulation of plutonium-238 (Pu-238), would be consistent with DOE's approach to consolidating nuclear materials, increasing their security, and reducing risks associated with their transportation.

The Draft Consolidation EIS evaluates potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed consolidation of RPS nuclear production operations at INL and transferring planned operations from ORNL and existing operations from LANL (the Consolidation Alternative, which is identified as the preferred alternative). Under the No Action Alternative, DOE would not consolidate activities at a single site but would continue RPS nuclear production operations and plans at the three sites. A Consolidation with Bridge Alternative, which would allow for a limited production of Pu-238 at ORNL until consolidation facilities at INL are completed and operational, was also evaluated.

During the 60-day review period, which extends through August 29, 2005, DOE will hold public meetings to provide information on the Draft Consolidation EIS and invite you to provide comments on the Draft Consolidation EIS. Seven public meetings will be held during the last two weeks of July 2005 at seven locations as follows: Boise, Twin Falls, Fort Hall, and Idaho Falls, Idaho; Jackson, Wyoming; Los Alamos, New Mexico; and Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Dates, locations, and times of these meetings will be announced in local newspapers and on the internet at <http://ConsolidationEIS.DOE.GOV>.

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Comments, requests for further information, and requests for additional copies of the *Draft Consolidation EIS* may be directed to Mr. Timothy A. Frazier, Document Manager, U.S. Department of Energy, NE-50/GTN Building, Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20585-1290; by telephone at 1-800-919-3706; by fax at 1-800-919-3765; or via email at ConsolidationEIS@nuclear.energy.gov. The *Draft Consolidation EIS* is available in hard copy and CD-ROM. An electronic version is available on the internet at <http://ConsolidationEIS.DOE.GOV>.

DOE will consider all comments on the *Draft Consolidation EIS* transmitted or postmarked by August 29, 2005, in preparing the Final EIS. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

Thank you for your interest in this process. We look forward to receiving your comments.

Sincerely,



R. Shane Johnson, Acting Director
Office of Nuclear Energy, Science
and Technology

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