



Focus

324 Sodium Removal Pilot Plant

Background

The U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) proposes to terminate interim status and close the 324 Sodium Removal Pilot Plant in the 300 Area located just north of Richland, Washington. USDOE filed a Part A permit application on November 1, 1985, based on the possibility that sodium waste might be brought to the facility for treatment. This did not occur, and USDOE has no intent to operate the facility for that purpose.

Since the early 1970's, the 324 Sodium Removal Pilot Plant was used as a cleaning and decontamination facility for materials contaminated with small amounts of alkali metals. Until 1983, the 324 Pilot Plant was also used to process small amounts of radioactive alkali metals for research and development. After 1983, the facility was then used to clean and decontaminate test equipment, reactor components, and reusable parts contaminated with sodium. Some of the sodium was also radioactively contaminated with small quantities of isotopes of sodium and cesium. Inside pressurized vessels, in an argon-nitrogen atmosphere, the sodium is cleaned by reaction with steam creating sodium hydroxide. This material was then neutralized before disposal at Hanford. Under some circumstances sodium was removed, repackaged, and reused and the equipment cleaned as stated above.

Issue

In June 1989, USDOE submitted a request to Washington State Department of Ecology to close the facility under terms of the Hanford Tri-Party Agreement's procedural closure provisions (Section 6.3.3). If this procedural closure is approved, the unit would no longer be managed as a treatment, storage and disposal (TSD) facility according to hazardous waste facility regulations. All components related to the 324 Sodium Removal Pilot Plant have been dismantled, removed, and managed according to the Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 173-303 guidance for disposal or re-use.

How you can be involved

Ecology has tentatively decided to approve this procedural closure, but would like to hear your issues or concerns before making a final decision. A 45-day public comment period will start March 12 and end April 28, 1997.

No public hearing is planned, but a hearing will be scheduled if requested. Requests for public hearings or meetings should be submitted by April 1, 1997, to allow for timely notice to other interested Hanford stakeholders.

All comments will be considered and responded to by Ecology.

For more information

For more information, to submit written comments, or to request a hearing contact Greta Davis, Department of Ecology, Nuclear Waste Program, 1315 W. 4th Ave., Kennewick, WA 99336-6018, (509) 736-3025 or call Hanford Cleanup toll-free at 1-800-328-3008.

Information on the procedural closure and supporting documents are available for review and copying at the following Information Repositories:

Portland
Portland State University
Branford Price Millar Library
Science and Engineering Floor
SW Harrison and Park
(503) 725-3690

Seattle
University of Washington
Suzzallo Library
Government Publications Room
(206) 543-4664

Richland
Washington State University Tri-Cities
Public Reading Room, Room 130 West
100 Sprout Road
(509) 376-8583

Spokane
Gonzaga University
Foley Center
East 502 Boone
(509) 528-4220 ext. 3829

If you have special accommodation needs or require this material in an alternative format, please contact Michelle Davis at (360) 407-7126 (Voice) or (360) 407-6206 (TDD).

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