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From: Lutz, Karen [Karen_Lutz@RL.gov]
Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2006 2:14 PM
To: HANFORD-INFO@LISTSERV.WA.GOV
Subject: TPA: Public Comment Period on the Proposed Amendment to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility Record of Decision

This is a message from the Tri-Party Agencies

Proposed Amendment to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility Record of Decision

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Washington State Department of Ecology and the U.S. Department of Energy (Tri-Party agencies) want your comments on the *Proposed Plan for an Amendment to the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility Record of Decision*, DOE/RL-2006-48. **A 30-day public comment period on the proposed amendment to the ERDF ROD is August 28 - September 26, 2006.**

The purpose of the Record of Decision (ROD) amendment is to accommodate the disposal in the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) of other Hanford-only wastes, including those from surveillance, maintenance, and deactivation of facilities; research and development; waste storage and treatment activities; infrastructure support, and environmental monitoring programs at Hanford.

Background

ERDF began operation in 1996. The facility, which is located in the center of the Hanford Site, currently comprises four enormous areas, or cells, with construction of two more cells complete and ready for operation in 2005. Each cell is 500 feet square and 70 feet deep and constructed with a multiple barrier liner system to provide an impermeable layer of protection. Each pair of cells is large enough to hold 2.8 million tons of waste material.

Since operation began in 1996, more than five million tons of Hanford cleanup wastes have been disposed at ERDF. Most of the wastes have come from waste sites and burial grounds associated with the former plutonium production facilities in the 100, 200 and 300 areas.

On January 20, 1995, the Tri-Party agencies signed the ERDF ROD. An Explanation of Significant Difference was issued in 1996. The ROD also has been amended three times. The ROD as it exists, provides the overall plan for construction, operation and expansion of the facility, as well as disposal of specific Hanford wastes, primarily from the cleanup of areas along the Columbia River.

However, additional wastes are generated routinely from other Hanford activities not identified within any specific cleanup action. Those wastes are currently stored in containers, left in the facility, or disposed to unlined trenches. Modification of the ROD would allow disposal at ERDF of the wastes, which include those from surveillance and maintenance of Hanford facilities, environmental research and development activities, sample analyses, liquid effluent waste treatment, waste storage and existing waste inventory, infrastructure support, and environmental monitoring programs.

What is a Record of Decision?

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A ROD is the formal document in which a regulatory agency sets forth the selected remedial measure and the reasons for its selection. The proposed amendment to the ERDF ROD is intended to allow the disposal of some Hanford-generated wastes not covered under existing agreements.

What alternatives were evaluated?

Two alternatives were evaluated: no action and the preferred alternative. The no-action alternative consists of continued onsite storage of wastes without disposal. Continued storage could pose a threat of release to the environment.

The preferred alternative would authorize the disposal of specific Hanford-only waste for treatment and/or disposal at ERDF that are not covered in other existing Hanford agreements. The preferred alternative also would likely increase efficiency and reduce costs of disposal at ERDF.

Why was the preferred alternative selected?

The preferred alternative was selected because the similarity of contaminants and waste types from Hanford operations not included in the ROD has made it apparent that ERDF disposal is an option that should be available for this type of waste. In addition to identified wastes, the preferred alternative contains a provision that would allow for the disposal of additional Hanford-only generated wastes that meet certain criteria. This process is known as the plug-in approach and is intended to promote cleanup activities, provide secure and safe waste disposal, and save time and money.

Based on available information, the Tri-Party agencies believe the preferred alternative would protect public health and the environment, would comply with applicable or relevant cleanup standards and requirements, would be cost effective, and would use permanent solutions and alternative treatment technologies to the maximum extent practicable.

How you can become involved

A 30-day public comment period on the proposed amendment to the ERDF ROD is August 28 – September 26, 2006.

At this time, no public meeting has been scheduled. To request the Tri-Party agencies to arrange a public meeting in your area on the amendment to the ERDF ROD, please contact David Einan, above, on or before September 6, 2006.

The Tri-Party agencies would like your comments on this document and will consider all comments before finalizing it. Please submit your comments to:

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
309 Bradley Blvd., Suite 115
Richland, Washington 99352
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