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Phase I Feasibility Study for the Canyon Disposition Initiative (221-U Facility)

U.S. Department of Energy • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • Washington State Department of Ecology

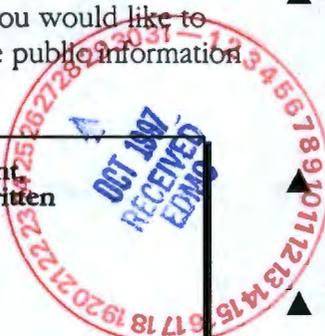
REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), the Tri-Parties, are seeking public comment on the draft Phase I Feasibility Study for the Canyon Disposition Initiative (221-U Facility) (DOE/RL-97-11). Your comments on the proposed alternatives presented in the Phase I Feasibility Study will be used by the decision-makers to determine which alternatives are viable for further analysis.

Public comments will be accepted from October 20 through November 18, 1997. All public comments will be considered and responded to before final decisions are made. Because the feasibility study is consistent with the existing project schedule and expected funding, a public meeting has not been scheduled. Should substantial public interest indicate the need for a meeting, the Tri-Parties will respond accordingly. If you would like to review the document, please visit the public information repository nearest you.

To request a copy of the document, or to submit comments either written or electronically, please contact:

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BACKGROUND

In 1996, the Tri-Parties signed an Agreement in Principle that defined a path forward for evaluating the final disposition of the 221-U Facility. The 221-U Facility is one of five main processing facilities (also known as canyons) located in the 200 Area of the Hanford site. The canyons (221-U Facility, B-Plant, T-Plant, Plutonium Uranium Extraction Facility, and Reduction Oxidation Plant), used for processing spent fuel, will require decontamination and decommissioning as part of the site cleanup program.

As described in the Tri-Party Agreement, the cleanup process includes three phases: 1) transition, 2) surveillance and maintenance, and 3) disposition. The Tri-Parties supported the initiation of a Phase I Feasibility Study to provide decision-makers sufficient information on the remedial alternatives specific to the disposition of the 221-U Facility. The study centered on the possibilities of removing the facilities, leaving all or part of the canyons, and identifying beneficial uses for the canyons. It was concluded that the following alternatives would be technically feasible for remedial action:

- ▲ No Action: Leave the facility in its current condition without modifications. Surveillance and maintenance would not be performed. (Note: the "No Action" alternative was included for comparison purposes as a regulatory requirement and will be included in future analysis for that purpose only.)
- ▲ Full Removal and Disposal: Complete disassembly/demolition of the 221-U Facility and disposal of the resulting debris into the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility (ERDF) leaving the site in "greenfield" condition.
- ▲ Decontaminate and Leave in Place: Decontaminate and seal the facility for long term surveillance and maintenance.
- ▲ Entombment with Internal Waste Disposal. Dispose of Hanford Site remediation wastes inside the facility followed by in place entombment of the waste-filled facility.
- ▲ Entombment with Internal/External Waste Disposal. Dispose Hanford Site remediation waste inside and around the outside of the facility followed by in place entombment. Wastes placed around the exterior of the building create the base for the engineered barrier that would cover the waste-filled complex.
- ▲ Close in Place - Standing Structure. Dispose of Hanford Site noncontaminated materials inside the facility followed by in situ entombment of the facility.
- ▲ Close in Place - Collapsed Structure. Collapse the facility to the canyon deck-level and cover the partially collapsed structure with an engineered barrier. A portion of the building would be used for waste disposal.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

These alternatives will protect human health and the environment. However, only the following alternatives meet the remedial action objectives and are recommended to proceed into the next phase of analysis:

- ▲ Full Removal and Disposal
- ▲ Entombment with Internal Waste Disposal
- ▲ Entombment with Internal/External Waste Disposal
- ▲ Close in Place Collapsed Structure

The following issues have been identified in selecting a preferred alternative: characterization, sources and availability of noncontaminated fill and barrier construction materials that adhere to required regulations, detailed structural analysis, qualitative groundwater modeling for performance assessment, disposal of waste (other than low-level), and overall impact to the Hanford site cleanup mission and 200 Area plateau.

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