

# The Savannah River Site Environmental Bulletin

December 23, 2020

Volume 32, Number 14

## The U.S. Department of Energy National Nuclear Security Administration Announces Its Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Surplus Plutonium Disposition Program and To Announce a Public Scoping Meeting

The Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) published a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register Dec. 16 to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Surplus Plutonium Disposition Program (SPDP), which would dilute and dispose of 34 metric tons of material using the capabilities at multiple sites across the Nation.

The EIS will meet NNSA's obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) as the agency seeks to fulfill two important goals:

- Reduce the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation worldwide by dispositioning surplus plutonium in the United States in a safe and secure manner, ensuring that it can never again be readily used in nuclear weapons.
- Meet NNSA's obligation to the State of South Carolina to securely process and remove plutonium from the State.

The 34 metric tons of material covered by the EIS was intended for disposition in the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (also known as MOX) at the Savannah River Site (SRS) but the project was canceled.

NNSA's preferred alternative, the dilute and dispose approach, also known as "plutonium downblending," includes converting pit and non-pit plutonium to oxide, blending the oxidized plutonium with an adulterant, and emplacing the resulting transuranic waste underground in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The approach will require new, modified, or existing capabilities at SRS, Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Pantex Plant, and WIPP. The SPDP EIS will also analyze the No Action Alternative and any other viable alternatives that may arise from public scoping.

**DATES:** NNSA invites the Federal and state agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes, industry, other organizations, and members of the public to submit comments to assist in identifying environmental issues and determining the appropriate scope of the SPDP EIS from Dec. 16, 2020, through Feb. 1, 2021. Comments received after this date will be considered to the extent practicable.

In light of recent public health concerns, NNSA will be hosting an internet- and telephone-based, virtual public scoping meeting in place of an in-person meeting. The date of the meeting will be provided in a future notice posted on the NNSA NEPA reading room webpage: <https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/nnsa-nepa-reading-room>. NNSA will hold the meeting no earlier than 15 days from the posting of the notice. Public scoping meeting details will also be announced in local media outlets.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the scope of the SPDP EIS, requests to be placed on the SPDP EIS mailing list, and requests for information related to the SPDP EIS should be sent to: Mr. Jeffrey Galan, NNSA NEPA Document Manager, by regular mail at: Mr. Jeffrey Galan, NEPA Document Manager, NNSA Office of Material Management and Minimization, Savannah River Site, P.O. Box A, Bldg. 730-2B, Rm. 328, Aiken, SC 29802; or sent by email to [SPDP-EIS@NNSA.DOE.GOV](mailto:SPDP-EIS@NNSA.DOE.GOV) or phone to 803-952-7434.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personally identifiable information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment—including your personally identifiable information—may be made publicly available. If you wish for NNSA to withhold your name and/or other personally identifiable information, please state this prominently at the beginning of your comment. You may also submit comments anonymously.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information about this Notice, please contact Mr. Jeffrey Galan, NNSA NEPA Document Manager, by regular mail at: Mr. Jeffrey Galan, NEPA Document Manager, NNSA Office of Material Management and Minimization, Savannah River Site, P.O. Box A, Bldg. 730-2B, Rm. 328, Aiken, SC 29802; phone: 803-952-7434; or email to: [SPDP-EIS@NNSA.DOE.GOV](mailto:SPDP-EIS@NNSA.DOE.GOV).

Requests for general information concerning the NNSA NEPA process should be directed to Mrs. Amy Miller, NEPA Compliance Officer, NNSA Office of General Counsel, P.O. Box 5400, Albuquerque, NM 87185-5400; or sent by email to [SPDP-EIS@NNSA.DOE.GOV](mailto:SPDP-EIS@NNSA.DOE.GOV).

The Federal Register Notice of Intent for the SPDP EIS is available here for your review: <https://energy.gov/nepa/downloads/doeeis-0549-notice-intent>

More information on the SPDP EIS is available here: <https://www.energy.gov/nepa/doeeis-0549-surplus-plutonium-disposition-program>

# The SRS Environmental Bulletin

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## The SRS Environmental Bulletin

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