

United States Government

Department of Energy

Oak Ridge Operations Office

memorandum

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DATE: April 13, 1999

REPLY TO

ATTN OF: UE-53:Jackson

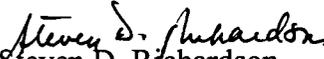
SUBJECT: **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE RECEIPT AND STORAGE OF URANIUM MATERIALS FROM THE FERNALD ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SITE**

TO: George W. Benedict, Assistant Manager for Uranium and Engineering Services, UE-50

The subject Environmental Assessment (EA) dated April 1999 has been reviewed in accordance with our responsibilities under Department of Energy (DOE) Order 451.1A, paragraph 5a(9). Based upon this review, recommendations made by your staff, and after consultation with the Office of Chief Counsel and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Officer, I have determined that within the meaning of NEPA, the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required. The basis for this determination is explained in the attached Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and the supporting final EA.

Please note that your office is responsible for providing public notice of the availability of the EA and FONSI in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.6(b), 10 CFR 1021.322, and DOE Order 451.1A, paragraph 5e(5).

If you need further assistance or have any questions or comments, please contact David R. Allen, ORO NEPA Compliance Officer at (423)576-0411.


Steven D. Richardson
Acting Manager

Attachments (2)

cc w/attachments: See page 2

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

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**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE RECEIPT AND STORAGE OF
URANIUM MATERIALS FROM THE FERNALD ENVIRONMENTAL
MANAGEMENT SITE**

AGENCY: U. S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

ACTION: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

SUMMARY: The U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) has completed an environmental assessment (DOE/EA-1299) for the receipt and storage of uranium materials from the Fernald Environmental Management (FEMP) Site. Based on the results of the impacts analysis reported in EA-1299, DOE has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the context of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary, and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF EA-1299 AND FONSI: The EA-1299 and FONSI may be reviewed at and copies of documents obtained from

U. S. Department of Energy
Public Reading Room
230 Warehouse Road, Suite 300
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830
Phone: (423) 241-4780

Fernald Public Environmental Information Center
10995 Hamilton Cleves Highway
Harrison, Ohio 45030
Phone: (513) 648-7480

Portsmouth Reading Room
U.S. DOE Environmental Information Center
U. S. 23 and Perimeter Road
P.O. Box 693
Piketon, Ohio 45661
Phone: (740) 289-3317

Paducah Reading Room
U.S. DOE Environmental Information Center
175 Freedom Boulevard
Kevil, Kentucky 42053
Phone: (502) 462-2550

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CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE NEPA PROCESS:

David R. Allen
NEPA Compliance Officer
Oak Ridge Operations Office
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P. O. Box 2001
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831
Phone: (423)576-0411

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BACKGROUND: The proposed action is to receive approximately 3800 metric tons of potentially marketable uranium material at an identified Oak Ridge Operations (ORO) site, or a combination of identified ORO sites. Identified ORO sites analyzed include storage area(s) at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Y-12 Plant, and East Tennessee Technology Park. This action is proposed so that the uranium material may be stored, rather than disposed of as waste, until a later time when its market potential can be realized.

The material receipt is needed to facilitate a decision of the U.S. Department of Energy to change the mission of the FEMP site to no longer include nuclear material storage. Removing this nuclear material inventory from the site by the end of fiscal year (FY) 1999 would greatly facilitate FEMP's ability to support commitments made to the state of Ohio regarding site cleanup.

ALTERNATIVES: In addition to the proposed action, impacts were also evaluated for the no-action alternative. Under this alternative, the uranium currently stored at the FEMP site would remain at the site. The uranium is currently stored in various container types including 55-gallon steel drums, T-hoppers, half-high boxes, and sea-land containers.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

No Action--Under normal operations, land use, geology and soils, water resources, cultural resources and the infrastructure would remain unchanged. Air effluents would be minimal and would remain the same as the present. Since there is no new construction and there are no effluents from the stored uranium, impacts to all resources are minimal. Radiological dose rates to facility workers, co-located workers and the public under normal operations are negligible. Under accident conditions, the highest radiological risk to the public is 0.63 rem from a storage fire and 0.84 rem to a co-located worker from an earthquake with aerial dispersion of uranium materials. Since the uranium materials would remain at the FEMP site, there is no change in these exposures or risks.

Proposed Action--Under the proposed action the FEMP uranium materials would be located at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, the East Tennessee Technology Park, the Y-12 Plant or a combination of these sites.

The proposed action has been analyzed for its potential impacts to the following resources at all of the above-mentioned identified sites:

- public and worker risk
- climate and air quality
- water resources

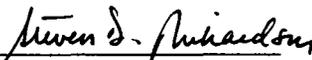
- geology and soils
- ecological resources
- socioeconomics and environmental justice
- land use
- infrastructure
- cultural resources

No significant construction or operational impacts are expected to occur due to the implementation of the proposed action at any of the ORO sites. Selection of plant sites that would or could require construction of storage facilities (Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant and/or the East Tennessee Technology Park) would convert approximately 1 acre of property from open grass habitat to buildings. Construction impacts for this development would be minimal because this area size is small in comparison to other similar available property located at each of these plants. At other sites, existing buildings would be used to store the uranium materials. Operational impacts, as well as routine handling risks, at the identified sites would be negligible.

Radiological risks to humans from all accident scenarios for all areas at all ORO locations are deemed to be low. For all accident scenarios at all sites the uranium metal toxicity to aquatic biota for both acute and chronic exposures would be negligible.

DETERMINATION: Based on the analysis of potential impacts, DOE has been determined that implementation of the proposed action does not constitute a major Federal action affecting the quality of the human environment at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant, the Y-12 Plant, or the East Tennessee Technology Park. Public comments on the Draft EA were fully addressed in the Final EA. An Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

Issued at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, this 13 day of April 1999.


Steven D. Richardson
Acting Manager
U. S. Department of Energy
Oak Ridge Operations
Oak Ridge, Tennessee