

these meetings be announced in the **Federal Register**.

DATES: Thursday, April 22, 1999, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.; and Friday, April 23, 1999, 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: American Geophysical Union, 2000 Florida Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. David Thomassen (301-903-9817; david.thomassen@science.doe.gov), or Ms. Shirley Derflinger (301-903-0044; shirley.derflinger@science.doe.gov), Designated Federal Officers, Biological and Environmental Research Advisory Committee, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Science, Office of Biological and Environmental Research, SC-70, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, Maryland 20874-1290.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Purpose of the Meeting: To provide advice on a continuing basis to the Director, Office of Science of the Department of Energy, on the many complex scientific and technical issues that rise in the development and implementation of the biological and environmental research program.

Tentative Agenda

Thursday, April 22, 1999

8:30 a.m.—Welcoming Remarks
8:40 a.m.—Remarks from Director, Office of Science
9:40 a.m.—Low Dose Radiation Research Program
10:30 a.m.—New Directions in Bioengineering
11:30 a.m.—Science Talk, Medical Imaging
2:00 p.m.—Talk, National Science Foundation in the New Millennium
3:00 p.m.—Carbon Management & Climate Change Technology Initiative
3:15 p.m.—Scientific Simulation Initiative
5:00 p.m.—Public Comments and Adjourn

Friday, April 23, 1999

8:30 a.m.—State of Biological and Environmental Research (BER)/FY2000 Outlook
9:30 a.m.—Human Genome Program Update
10:45 a.m.—BER Structural Biology Program
11:45 a.m.—Public Comments and Adjourn

Public Participation: The day and a half meeting is open to the public. If you would like to file a written statement with the Committee, you may do so either before or after the meeting. If you would like to make oral statements regarding any of the items on the

agenda, you should contact David Thomassen or Shirley Derflinger at the address or telephone numbers listed above. You must make your request for an oral statement at least five business days before the meeting. Reasonable provision will be made to include the scheduled oral statements on the agenda. The Chairperson of the Committee will conduct the meeting to facilitate the orderly conduct of business. Public comment will follow the 10-minute rule.

Minutes: The minutes of this meeting will be available for public review and copying within 30 days at the Freedom of Information Public Reading Room, IE-190, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on March 31, 1999.

Rachel M. Samuel,

Deputy Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 99-8453 Filed 4-5-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board, Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a meeting via telephone conference call of the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB), Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL). The Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92-463, 86 Stat. 770) requires that public notice of these meetings be announced in the **Federal Register**.

DATES: Wednesday, April 21, 1999, 1:30 p.m. (MST).

There will be a full Board telephone conference call beginning at 1:30 p.m. (MST).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Wendy Green Lowe, INEEL Board Facilitator, Jason Associates Corp. (208-522-1662) or visit the Board's Internet homepage at <http://www.ida.net/users/cab>. You may also contact Mr. Charles Rice, INEEL Board Chair, c/o Jason Associates Corporation.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of the Board: The purpose of the Board is to make recommendations to DOE and its regulators in the areas of

environmental restoration, waste management, and related activities.

To participate in the conference call, the Board members, the public, and other interested parties may call Ms. Lowe at the phone number above to get the conference call telephone number and pass code. Following opening comments by the Board chair, Chuck Rice, the Board's facilitator will describe the process and agenda that will be followed during the call. Parties interested in participating in the conference call are encouraged to call in at the beginning of the call.

Tentative Agenda: Discuss, develop consensus on, and finalize a recommendation currently being drafted by the board's Spent Nuclear Fuel Committee (chaired by Board member Jim Bondurant). If achieved through consensus, the recommendation—prepared in response to the Department of Energy's recent Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Electrometallurgical Treatment of Sodium-Bonded Spent Nuclear Fuel in the Conditioning Facility at Argonne National Laboratory-West, INEEL—will transmit the Board's comments on the scope of the EIS.

Public Participation: In compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the public is invited to join the conference call, listen to the Board's deliberations, and provide comment during a specific time segment that will be set aside for public participation. Written statements may be filed with the Committee before the call. Gerald Bowman, the Designated Federal Officer and Assistant Manager for Laboratory Development, is empowered to conduct the meeting in a fashion that will facilitate the orderly conduct of business. Each individual wishing to make public comment will be provided a maximum of 5 minutes to present their comments.

Minutes: The minutes of this conference call will be available for public review and copying at the Freedom of Information Public Reading Room, 1E-190, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585 between 9:00 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday-Friday, except Federal holidays. Minutes will also be available by writing to Charles M. Rice, INEEL Citizens' Advisory Board Chair, 477 Shoup Ave., Suite 205, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83402 or by calling Wendy Green Lowe, the Board Facilitator, at (208) 522-1662.

Issued at Washington, DC on April 1, 1999.

Rachel Samuel,

Deputy Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 99-8448 Filed 4-5-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-M

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Energy Information Administration

Agency Activities: Comment Request on Collection and Dissemination of Natural Gas Information.

SUMMARY: The Energy Information Administration (EIA) has undertaken a process to analyze its natural gas information collection and dissemination program to ensure its continuing accuracy, validity, adequacy, and reliability. As part of this process, EIA is soliciting comments from users of natural gas information as well as respondents to EIA's surveys.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted on or before June 7, 1999. If you anticipate that you will be submitting comments, but find it difficult to do so within the period of time allowed by this notice, please advise the contact listed below of your intention to do so as soon as possible.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Ann Ducca, Energy Information Administration, EI-44, Forrestal Building, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, DC 20585. Alternately, Ms. Ducca may be contacted at (202) 586-6137, by e-mail at Ann.Ducca@eia.doe.gov, or by FAX at (202) 586-4420.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Requests for additional information should be directed to Ms. Ducca at the address listed above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

- I. Background
- II. Current Actions
- III. Request for Comments
- IV. Future Actions

I. Background

In order to fulfill its responsibilities under the Federal Energy Administration Act of 1974 (Pub. L. 93-275) and the Department of Energy Organization Act (Pub. L. 95-91), the Energy Information Administration (EIA) is obliged to carry out a central, comprehensive, and unified energy data and information program. As part of this program, EIA collects, evaluates, assembles, analyzes, and disseminates data and information related to energy resource reserves, production, demand, and technology, and related economic and statistical information relevant to

the adequacy of energy resources to meet demands in the near and longer term future for the Nation's economic and social needs.

With respect to natural gas, EIA collects information on reserves, production, processing, transmission, storage, distribution, and consumption. This information is used in EIA data products, analytical reports, and forecasts covering the entire natural gas industry. Appendix A contains information on EIA surveys collecting natural gas information as well as selected products.

The EIA, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden and to ensure the practical utility of information collected (required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)), conducts a consultation program to provide the general public and other Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing reporting forms. This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden is minimized, reporting forms are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. In addition, comments received from this consultation program are an integral component of EIA's program to ensure the accuracy, validity, adequacy, and reliability of information collected.

II. Current Actions

Given changes in Federal laws and regulations (e.g., the Natural Gas Wellhead Decontrol Act of 1989 (Pub. L. 101-60) and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Order 636) as well as changes in the U.S. economy, the natural gas industry has undergone a significant transformation in the past ten years. One example of the effect of this transformation is shown in the chart in Appendix B. The chart illustrates the fact that EIA's published natural gas prices reflect coverage of a decreasing percentage of all natural gas purchases. This has occurred because many natural gas consumers now purchase gas from companies not presently included in EIA's surveys.

Recognizing the changes in the industry, EIA has undertaken a project titled "Next Generation * Natural Gas," also known as (NG)². The project will design and implement a new, comprehensive information program for natural gas to meet customer requirements in the post-2000 time frame. EIA wants to involve both data providers (i.e., respondents to its survey forms) and data users as part of the

(NG)² project. Working together with its stakeholders, EIA can redesign its natural gas information system to be more effective and efficient.

To begin this new project, EIA held ten focus groups and plans to conduct executive interviews to solicit comments from some data users and data providers. That information will be one input for developing a draft outline of natural gas data requirements. EIA is now requesting comments from all interested persons.

III. Request for Comments

Prospective survey respondents, data users, and other interested parties should comment on issues that EIA should address as part its natural gas information system redesign project. Issues may include, but are not limited to: (1) what natural gas information should EIA collect (including the time periods, geographic breakdowns, economic sector breakdowns, and confidentiality treatments); (2) what data are needed to describe and assess wholesale and retail natural gas markets; (3) what natural gas reports, analyses, and forecasts are important to you and why; and (4) any other important topics EIA should consider during this project. Also, persons willing to actively participate with EIA during this process are desired and are encouraged to contact the person listed above.

Comments received in response to this notice may be summarized and/or included in the later requests for Office of Management and Budget approval of EIA's natural gas surveys. They also will become a matter of public record.

IV. Future Actions

EIA will use the comments in response to this notice along with comments received by other methods to help in the development of its natural gas data requirements. Then, draft survey instruments (e.g., forms and instructions) will be designed to collect the data. The survey instruments will be tested using a variety of methods including cognitive testing and small-scale pretests. This process should result in a redesigned natural gas information collection system that will be fully operational around 2002-2003.

To keep interested persons informed of the changing natural gas market and EIA's efforts to redesign its natural gas information system, EIA is developing a page for its Internet site (<http://www.eia.doe.gov>) and an automatic e-mail notification system (<http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/email/index.htm>). Both items should be operational by late June.