

0229; December 1996). In that ROD, DOE decided to pursue a strategy that would allow for the possibility of both the immobilization of surplus plutonium and the use of surplus plutonium as mixed oxide (MOX) fuel in existing domestic, commercial reactors. DOE is in the process of completing the Surplus Plutonium Disposition Environmental Impact Statement (SPD Draft EIS) (DOE/EIS-0283D; July 1998) to choose a site(s) for plutonium disposition activities and to determine the technology(ies) that will be used to support this effort.

Related Procurement Action

To support the timely undertaking of the surplus plutonium disposition program, DOE initiated a procurement action to contract for MOX fuel fabrication and reactor irradiation services. The services requested in this procurement process include design, licensing, construction, operation, and eventual deactivation of a MOX facility, as well as irradiation of the MOX fuel in three to eight existing domestic, commercial reactors, should the decision be made by DOE to go forward with the MOX program.

On May 19, 1998, DOE issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) (Solicitation Number DE-RP02-98CH10888) that defined limited activities that may be performed prior to issuance of the SPD EIS ROD. These activities include non-site-specific work primarily associated with the development of the initial conceptual design for the fuel fabrication facility, and plans (paper studies) for outreach, long lead-time procurements, regulatory management, facility quality assurance, safeguards, security, fuel qualifications, and deactivation. No construction would be started on a MOX fuel fabrication facility until the SPD EIS ROD is issued. The MOX facility, if built, would be DOE-owned, licensed by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and located at one of four candidate DOE sites. DOE has designated the Savannah River Site as the preferred alternative for the MOX fuel fabrication facility.

Based on a review of proposals received in response to the RFP, DOE determined in January 1999 that one proposal was in the competitive range. Under this proposal, MOX fuel would be fabricated at a DOE site and then irradiated in one of six domestic commercial nuclear reactors.

Environmental Review During Procurement Action

An environmental critique was prepared in accordance with DOE's National Environmental Policy Act

(NEPA) regulations at 10 CFR 1021.216. Because an EIS is in progress on this action, DOE required offerors to submit reasonably available environmental data and analyses as a part of their proposals. DOE independently evaluated and verified the accuracy of the data provided by the offeror in the competitive range, and prepared an environmental critique for consideration before the selection was made. The Environmental Critique was used by DOE to determine:

- (1) if there are any important environmental issues in the offeror's proposal that may affect the selection process; and
- (2) if the potential environmental impacts of the offeror's proposal were bounded by impacts presented in the S&D PEIS and SPD Draft EIS or whether additional analysis was required in the SPD Final EIS.

As required by Section 216, the Environmental Critique included a discussion of the purpose of the procurement; the salient characteristics of the offeror's proposal; any licenses, permits or approvals needed to support the program; and an evaluation of the potential environmental impacts of the offer. The Environmental Critique is a procurement-sensitive document and subject to all associated restrictions. DOE then prepared a synopsis, which summarizes the Environmental Critique and reduces business-sensitive information to a level that will not compromise the procurement process. The Synopsis will be filed with the Environmental Protection Agency and made available to the public.

Contract Award

As a result of the procurement process described above, in March 1999, the Department of Energy contracted with Duke Engineering & Services, COGEMA, Inc., and Stone & Webster to provide mixed oxide fuel fabrication and reactor irradiation services. The team, known as DUKE COGEMA STONE & WEBSTER or DCS, has its corporate headquarters in Charlotte, NC. Subcontractors to DCS include Duke Power Company, Charlotte, NC and Virginia Power Company, Richmond, VA, who will provide the reactor facilities in which mixed oxide fuel will be used upon receipt of Nuclear Regulatory Commission license amendments. Other major subcontractors include Nuclear Fuel Services, Inc., Erwin, TN; Belgonucleaire, Brussels, Belgium; and Framatome Cogema Fuels of Lynchburg, VA. Under the contract, the team will also modify six existing U.S. commercial light water reactors at three sites to irradiate mixed oxide fuel

assemblies. These reactor sites are Catawba in York, SC; McGuire in Huntersville, NC; and North Anna in Mineral, VA. The team will be responsible for obtaining a license to operate the fuel fabrication facility and the license modifications for the reactors from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Full execution of this contract is contingent on DOE's completion of the SPD EIS, as provided by 40 CFR 1021.216(i).

Supplement to the Surplus Plutonium Disposition Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The purpose of the Supplement to the SPD Draft EIS is to update the Draft by including specific information available as a result of the award of the DCS contract. The Supplement to the SPD Draft EIS will contain background information on the SPD Draft EIS; changes made to the SPD Draft EIS (Section 1.7.2); a description of the reactor sites (Section 3.7); impacts of irradiating mixed oxide fuel in existing light water reactors (Section 4.28); Facility Accidents (Appendix K); Analysis of Environmental Justice (Appendix M); and the Environmental Synopsis (Appendix O).

DOE anticipates that the Supplement to the SPD Draft EIS will be available in April. DOE intends to hold an interactive hearing in Washington, DC in May 1999 to discuss issues and receive oral and written comments on the Supplement to the Draft SPD EIS. The Notice of Availability will provide specific information concerning the date, time and location for the public hearing.

Issued in Washington, DC this 31st day of March 1999, for the United States Department of Energy.

David Michaels,

Assistant Secretary, Environment, Safety and Health.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Office of Science; Biological and Environmental Research Advisory Committee

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a meeting of the Biological and Environmental Research Advisory Committee. 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: 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.