



NRC NEWS

U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NRC SEEKS PUBLIC COMMENT ON DRAFT STANDARD REVIEW PLAN FOR DOE WASTE DETERMINATIONS

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is seeking public comment on a draft Standard Review Plan for the agency's technical reviews of the Department of Energy's waste determinations regarding cleanup efforts at several DOE sites.

The draft review plan provides guidance to the NRC staff in implementing the agency's role in the waste determination process and the NRC's monitoring activities under the 2005 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). That act gave DOE authority to manage certain wastes, known as "incidental wastes," from reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel at DOE sites in South Carolina and Idaho as low-level wastes provided the NDAA's criteria can be met. The act gave NRC a consultation role in DOE's waste determinations and a monitoring role in waste disposal actions taken by DOE.

Incidental waste is material resulting from the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel that does not need to be disposed of as high-level waste in a geologic repository, because the residual radioactive contamination is sufficiently low that it does not represent a hazard to public health and safety, provided the waste is properly isolated from the environment. Consequently, incidental waste can be managed as low-level waste. DOE uses technical analyses documented in a waste determination to evaluate whether waste is incidental or high-level waste.

The draft review plan includes guidance for NRC staff in evaluating non-high-level waste determinations developed by DOE under the NDAA at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina and the Idaho National Laboratory, as well as similar determinations at the Hanford site in Washington state and the West Valley Demonstration Project in upstate New York. The review plan draws upon NRC's experience in providing technical advice to DOE in earlier waste determinations prior to passage of the NDAA, as well as the agency's technical review of DOE's saltstone determination at the Savannah River Site under the NDAA. That review was completed and issued in December.

In November, the NRC held a public meeting to obtain input on the scope of the Standard Review Plan and published a *Federal Register* notice requesting comments. In December, the NRC published in the *Federal Register* interim guidance for performing concentration averaging for waste determinations. The interim guidance is included in the draft Standard Review Plan and is again open for comment.

The draft Standard Review Plan is available on the NRC Web site at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr1854/> . Public comments will be accepted through July 31. Comments may be submitted to Chief, Rules and Directives Branch, Mail Stop T6-D59, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555-0001; by e-mail to NRCREP@nrc.gov ; or by fax to (301) 415-5397, Attention: Anna Bradford.

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