



## **Recommendation No. 61**

**July 28, 1998**

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### **Draft Surplus Plutonium Disposition Environmental Impact Statement**

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#### **Background:**

The Draft Surplus Plutonium Disposition (SPD) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) identifies reasonable alternatives and potential environmental impacts for the proposed siting, construction, and operation of three facilities for plutonium disposition. After the Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials programmatic EIS was completed, former Secretary of Energy Hazel O'Leary announced in January 1997 that DOE would pursue a dual track for plutonium disposition—immobilization and mixed oxide. The draft SPD EIS tiers from the Storage and Disposition programmatic EIS.

The alternatives in the draft SPD EIS include three disposition facilities designed to collectively disposition up to 50 metric tons of surplus plutonium. A facility to disassemble and convert pits into plutonium oxide is proposed with SRS and Pantex designated as equally preferred sites. DOE also has announced that SRS is the preferred site for both the immobilization and MOX fuel fabrication facilities. The immobilization facility includes a collocated capability to convert non-pit plutonium materials into a form suitable for immobilization. The MOX facility will fabricate plutonium oxide into MOX fuel. The fuel would be used in existing commercial reactors in the United States.

#### **Recommendation:**

The SRS CAB has reviewed the Draft SPD EIS in which DOE states SRS is the preferred location for immobilization and MOX and one of two locations for pit disassembly operations. Based on this information just released, the SRS CAB initially concurs with the DOE statement that SRS is a reasonable site for some or all of the proposed missions for the following reasons:

1. We support site integration activities when the selected sites are best able to perform those activities that are part of their core function.

2. Incremental risks presented in the draft summary appear to be minimal and acceptable.

Concerning pit disassembly activities, the SRS CAB asks DOE to consider that, should Pantex be chosen to conduct the pit conversion mission, this decision would create a new plutonium processing site within a system endeavoring to consolidate operations for cost effectiveness, but most importantly, would increase the amount of environmental cleanup that ultimately will be required. We also acknowledge that the missions would add economic benefit to the local community.

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### **Agency Responses**

[Department of Energy-SR](#)