

Department of Energy Considers Comments on Buried Waste Cleanup

The U.S. Department of Energy is evaluating the input it received from the public during the recent public comment period on a proposed plan to cleanup buried waste at DOE's Idaho Site.

"The Agencies are evaluating the input we received from the public," said Mark Arenaz, (WAG 7 Federal Project Director). "We appreciate those people and organizations who took the time to study the proposed plan and give us input. We got some very good suggestions that we will consider carefully."

A total of 227 formal comments were received by DOE regarding the Proposed Plan for the Radioactive Waste Management Complex Operable Unit 7-13/14. The Proposed Plan presented five (5) alternatives to address waste remediation in the Subsurface Disposal Area, ranging from a "do nothing" alternative all the way to a full retrieval option.

The preferred alternative proposed by the agencies, combines targeted waste retrieval from 4.8 acres of pit areas, in-situ grouting, continued vadose zone vapor extraction operation, placement of an evapotranspiration barrier over the SDA, and long-term monitoring, surveillance, maintenance and institutional controls.

Of the comments received stating a preference, 29% supported full retrieval of the wastes from the entire Subsurface Disposal Area, 52% supported the preferred alternative, 5% supported options that would remove less than the 4.8 acres of targeted wastes and the other 14% were miscellaneous or stated no preference.

Stated another way, 57% of the respondents supported either the preferred alternative or retrieval of even less than the 4.8 acres of targeted wastes. The State of Idaho has stated they support the preferred alternative with the singular exception of the amount of targeted waste retrieval. State representatives indicated they would await public review and comment before determining the appropriate acreage for waste retrieval. The Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) provided the DOE with a recommendation supporting the Preferred Alternative in November, 2007.

The Department and its cleanup contractor are currently drafting what is called a Responsiveness Summary that addresses all comments received. The Summary will be included in the Record of Decision document that is currently scheduled to be released as a draft document to the EPA and Idaho's DEQ by March 31, 2008.



Subsurface Disposal Area