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House Energy Committee Holds Hearing on Agreements and Benefits of Disposal

ECA Staff

July 6, 2016

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The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Environment and the Economy will hold a hearing on Thursday, July 7 at 10am entitled, "Federal, State, and Local Agreements and Associated Benefits for Spent Nuclear Fuel Disposal." The subcommittee will hear from 8 witnesses including Nevada Congressmen Cresent Hardy, Dina Titus, and Mark Amodei, Nevada state senator Joseph Hardy, and Nye County Commissioner and ECA Member Dan Schinhofen. Witness statements and more information on the hearing can be found [here](#).

License application for Andrews nuclear waste site missing key safety, security details

KWES News West

July 1, 2016

[LINK](#)

Federal regulators declined to review a license application submitted by Waste Control Specialists (WCS) for a high-level nuclear waste facility in Andrews County, records revealed.

Local Agreements and Associated Benefits for Spent Nuclear Fuel Disposal

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Save the Date: House Nuclear Cleanup Caucus Capitol Hill

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INVITATION ONLY Save the Date: 2016 Intergovernmental Meeting New Orleans, LA

WCS, a Dallas-based company with a nearly 15,000-acre site in western Andrews County, filed the application with plans to expand its existing low-level radioactive waste site.

The proposed facility would house spent fuel rods from nuclear reactors across the country for at least 40 years.

However, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) officials determined the company's license application lacked "sufficient technical information" and safety-related details, according to a letter dated June 22 from the commission to WCS.

"There may have been some things that we needed to get them," explained Chuck McDonald, a spokesman for the company. "We didn't give them the proper information the first time around, but our technical folks have looked through the NRC's letter and we're confident that we'll be able to get them all the additional information that they need by their July 28th [deadline]."

The application submitted by WCS failed to include appropriate emergency plans and adequate information about how accidents involving radioactive waste storage casks could be prevented, among other safety- and security-related details, according to a 30-page "Request for Supplemental Information and Observations" from regulators.

"Why should we trust a company that can't get its paperwork complete to safely construct and operate a facility that could hold up to 40,000 metric tons of lethal nuclear reactor waste for 40 or more years?" said Tom Smith, regional director for Public Citizen, a non-profit safety advocacy group. "This isn't just a paperwork issue. It's a serious safety issue."

McDonald, an Austin resident, said he "would have no concerns at all" about living near the facility.

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"In 50 years of transporting nuclear waste around the country, there has never - as in zero - been an accident that resulted in the release of radioactive material," he said.

WCS has until late July to respond with the required application materials.

If sufficient information cannot be submitted, officials said, the application ultimately may not be accepted for review.

"The incomplete WCS license application reflects disregard for people around Texas who would be put at radioactive risk," Smith said. "Andrews County should rescind their approval of this project and only reconsider it if and when WCS can prove they can handle this waste safely."

Andrews County officials did not immediately return calls for comment.

DOE Releases Final Request for Proposal for Savannah River Site Liquid Waste Services

DOE

June 30, 2016

[LINK](#)

Cincinnati -- The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today issued a Final Request for Proposal (RFP) for liquid waste services at the Savannah River Site (SRS). The Final RFP primarily includes cost-plus-award-fee contract line items for the purpose of providing liquid waste services at SRS. The Final RFP provides for full and open competition, and includes requirements for meaningful work to be performed by small business concerns.

The total estimated value of the contract is approximately \$4-6 billion over the prospective period of performance of up to ten years, including the option period. Proposals are due 60 days from the date of release of the

Final RFP. The current liquid waste services contract at SRS is held by Savannah River Remediation LLC, and expires on June 30, 2017.

The liquid waste services include but are not limited to: operations of existing radioactive liquid waste facilities for storage, treatment, stabilization, and disposal of waste; waste removal from tanks and tank closures; construction of additional saltstone disposal units; operation of the Salt Waste Processing Facility after facility commissioning, startup, and one year of operation; and liquid waste program and regulatory support.

Additional information is available via the procurement website at: <https://www.emcbc.doe.gov/SEB/SRSLiquidWaste/>

DOE to start toxic waste cleanup at LA Canyon

LA Monitor

July 1, 2016

[LINK](#)

Department of Energy contractors will start removing toxic contaminated soil along the south-facing slopes of Los Alamos Canyon next week, as part of a program to clean up legacy waste sites in Los Alamos.

The contaminated soil is mostly leftover from the Manhattan Project and early Cold War research activities from 1943–1965.

Work is scheduled to begin on the canyon's south-facing slopes near the location of the former Los Alamos Inn, which was located at 2201 Trinity Ave, near the Los Alamos Medical Center. The contaminated soils will be shipped from the site at 2201 Trinity Ave., near the Los Alamos Medical Center, and temporarily stored at Tech Area 21. The soils will be moved to a more permanent area once tested.

Los Alamos National Security LLC and subcontractor TerranearPMC will perform the clean up. The work will include five sites in a one-acre area. About 125 cubic yards of soil is scheduled to be moved.

One site contains arsenic and the other four contain Plutonium 2399240. The sites are within or directly adjacent to DOE property.

Los Alamos National Laboratory have determined the concentrations of waste scheduled to be removed to be between “residential” risk-level and “recreational” risk-level. That means, while it was OK to hike in the area, residents should not live there, said LANL Spokesman Peter Hyde.

The goal of the project is to do as thorough a job as possible removing the waste so they won’t have to go back, Hyde said.

“We’re cleaning up to residential level, which is the most conservative level,” Hyde said. “Now that we’re in there, we want to do these clean-ups and be done. We don’t want to go back in there under more stringent requirements and clean up again.”

The waste will be temporarily stored at LANL Tech Area 21, which is at the end of DP Road in Los Alamos. Traffic on Trinity Drive should not be affected during the work, officials said. The clean up is expected to continue through September.

Before the waste leaves the excavation area, it will be prepared and approved for transport.

“When we excavate that waste from the site, it’s kept in a contained area and put in a bag that’s completely sealed up,” Hyde said. “We then have radiological control technicians who use monitoring equipment to confirm that the bag has no outside contamination on it. So all the contaminated soil is inside a sealed up bag, and is then screened before that bag even leaves DOE property.”

From TA-21, the waste will be transported to a private waste disposal firm called Energy Solutions in Clive Utah.

The Los Alamos Canyon cleanup is one of many included in a 2016 consent order signed June 24 between the New Mexico Environment Department and the U.S. Department of Energy.

The settlement agreement governs the cleanup process of legacy waste for projects going all the way back to the Manhattan Project.

“The new Consent Order will accelerate the pace of environmental restoration activities in and around Los Alamos,” said NMED Secretary Ryan Flynn. “While the previous version of the Consent Order allowed valuable investigative work to be accomplished, the revised Consent Order will now prioritize cleanup activities.”

NMED officials estimate the entire cleanup of all the lab sites will take about 19 years under current funding levels and cost up to \$3.8 billion.

New Mexico plant's standards revised after accident

The Augusta Chronicle

July 3, 2016

[LINK](#)

The Department of Energy has issued new criteria for the acceptance of transuranic waste at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, N.M.

According to a news release, the changes are being made in response to an accident investigation board’s report on a radiological release at the plant in February 2014. The repository stopped taking all waste shipments after an underground truck caught fire and, nine days later, a radiation release contaminated workers.

Transuranic waste is a form of low-level waste that includes tools, lab coats, debris and other items contaminated with radiation.

The revision goes into effect July 5, and transuranic waste generator site programs, including Savannah River Site, will temporarily suspend certification of such waste pending a determination that they comply with the revised criteria.

The Energy Department is also implementing Environmental Protection Agency standards to evaluate and identify treatment for waste containing oxidizers.

All previously certified waste containers not currently disposed at the New Mexico site will need to be validated to ensure the revised requirements are met before shipment there. Some waste might need to be treated and repackaged before shipment, but it will take the Energy Department several months to determine which, if any, wastes might be affected.

About 1,000 drums across the country meet this new standard. Although some waste might need to be retreated and repackaged, it isn't expected to affect the reopening of the New Mexico site.

At SRS, the Energy Department and its contractors will establish a path forward to meet the new requirements, according to the release.

SRS pump transfer touted as cost savings move

The Augusta Chronicle

July 4, 2016

[LINK](#)

Savannah River Remediation is touting the recent relocation and reuse of two operable tank mixing pumps at Savannah River Site as a big cost-saving move. The amount: possibly more than \$2 million.

Savannah River Remediation, the liquid waste contractor at Savannah River Site, recently moved two mixing pumps to put them into use in another part of the site.

Savannah River Remediation, the liquid waste contractor at SRS, redeployed two existing mixing pumps from the F Tank Farm to the H Tank Farm instead of purchasing new ones, which can cost more than \$1 million each, according to a Department of Energy media release.

The SRS tank farms store about 36 million gallons of Cold War-era radioactive liquid waste in 43 underground tanks.

Jim Folk, an Energy Department assistant manager for waste disposition, said this pump transfer is the first of its kind for SRS.

“While this redeployment and reuse of waste removal equipment has been considered for years in the liquid waste program, I commend SRR on finding a way to safely make this process work,” Folk said in the release.

The highly contaminated pumps mixed waste in Tank 7 in the F Tank Farm for years. When the old mixing pumps failed in Tank 22, the decision was made to move the two operational pumps to the H Tank Farm, the release states.

The transfer of the pumps was one of the highest potential radiological jobs in recent history in the tank farms, said Chris Myers, the field operations lead for the project.

“Numerous planning meetings and hazard-eliminating actions were planned and implemented by the team,” Myers said. “The planning and hazard reduction methods used made these jobs successful.”

Tank 22 is the receipt tank for the Defense Waste Processing Facility waste stream. The waste contains highly radioactive sludge, which accumulates in the tank. The new pumps in Tank 22 will be used to remove the recycled sludge from the tank.

Reassembly of the pumps is currently in progress, and they are expected to soon be operational.

