

Section 101(a)(5)(A) of the MMPA (16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) directs NMFS to allow, on request, the incidental, but not intentional, taking of small numbers of marine mammals by U.S. citizens who engage in a specified activity (other than commercial fishing) within a specified geographical region, if certain findings are made, and regulations are issued. Under the MMPA, the term "taking" means to harass, hunt, capture or kill or to attempt to harass, hunt, capture or kill marine mammals.

Permission may be granted for periods up to 5 years if the Secretary of Commerce finds, after notification and opportunity for public comment, that the taking will have a negligible impact on the species or stock(s) of marine mammals and will not have an unmitigable adverse impact on the availability of the species or stock(s) for subsistence uses. In addition, NMFS must prescribe regulations that include permissible methods of taking and other means effecting the least practicable adverse impact on the species and its habitat, and on the availability of the species for subsistence uses, paying particular attention to rookeries, mating grounds and areas of similar significance. The regulations must include requirements pertaining to the monitoring and reporting of such taking. Regulations governing the taking of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to oil and gas structure removal activities in the Gulf of Mexico were published on October 12, 1995 (60 FR 53139) and remain in effect until November 13, 2000.

#### Summary of Request

NMFS received a request for a letter of authorization on November 8, 1995, from the Murphy Exploration and Production Company. This letter requests a take by harassment of a small number of bottlenose and spotted dolphins incidental to the above mentioned activity. Issuance of the letter of authorization is based on a finding that the total takings will have a negligible impact on the bottlenose and spotted dolphin stocks of the Gulf of Mexico.

Dated: November 27, 1995  
William W. Fox, Jr.,  
*Director, Office of Protected Resources,  
National Marine Fisheries Service.*  
[FR Doc. 95-29515 Filed 12-4-95; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 3510-22-F

#### Modernization Transition Committee (MTC)

**ACTION:** Notice of Public Meeting.

**TIME AND DATE:** December 14, 1995 from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

**PLACE:** This meeting will take place at the Double Tree Hotel, 1750 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD, 20852.

**STATUS:** The meeting will be open to the public. There will be a public comment period from 1:30-2:30 p.m. Seating is available for approximately 50 people.

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:** This meeting will cover: Consultation on the FY 1997 National Implementation Plan (NIP) and proposed Consolidation Certifications for WSOs Helena, MT; Havre, MT; Detroit, MI; Kansas City, MO; Concordia, KS; Worcester, MA; Providence, RI; New York City, NY; Waco, TX; West Palm Beach, FL; Daytona Beach, FL; Knoxville, TX; and Beaumont/Port Arthur, TX.

**CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Mr. Nicholas Scheller, National Weather Service, Modernization Staff, 1325 East-West Highway, SSMC2, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Telephone: (301) 713-0454.

Dated: November 29, 1995.  
Nicholas R. Scheller,  
*Manager, National Implementation Staff.*  
[FR Doc. 95-29488 Filed 12-4-95; 8:45 am]  
BILLING CODE 3510-12-M

#### DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

##### **Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Plutonium Finishing Plant Stabilization, Hanford Site, Richland, Benton County, WA, Notice of Availability and Announcement of Public Hearing**

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy.  
**ACTION:** Notice of Availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Energy (DOE) announces the availability of the Plutonium Finishing Plant Stabilization Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0244-D). The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was prepared pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, and its implementing regulations. The continued presence of relatively large quantities of chemically reactive materials in their present form and location within the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP) Facility poses an unacceptable long-term risk to workers, the public, and the environment. DOE has identified the need to expeditiously and safely reduce radiation exposure to workers and the risk to the public; reduce future resources to safely manage the Facility; and remove, stabilize, store, and manage plutonium, pending DOE's future use and disposition decisions.

**DATES:** DOE invites comments on the Draft PFP Stabilization EIS from all interested parties. Written comments or suggestions regarding the adequacy, accuracy, and completeness of the Draft EIS will be considered in preparing the Final EIS and should be submitted (postmarked) by January 16, 1996. Written comments received after that date will be considered to the degree practicable.

DOE will also hold one public hearing at which agencies, organizations, and the general public will be invited to present oral comments or suggestions on the Draft EIS. Location, date, and time for the public hearing is provided in the section of this notice entitled "PUBLIC HEARING." Written and oral comments will be given equal weight and will be considered in preparing the Final EIS. Requests for copies of the Draft EIS or questions concerning the project should be sent to Mr. Ben F. Burton, DOE, at the address listed in the section of this notice entitled **ADDRESSES**.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the Draft EIS should be submitted (postmarked) by January 16, 1996, for incorporation into the public hearing record. Oral comments will be accepted at the public hearing. Written comments, requests to speak at the hearing, or questions concerning the PFP EIS should be directed to: Mr. Ben F. Burton, U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office, Attn: PFP Stabilization EIS, P.O. Box 550, MSIN B1-42, Richland, Washington 99352, (509) 946-3609, 1-800-249-8181.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information on DOE's EIS process and other matters related to NEPA, please contact: Ms. Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

Background, Purpose and Need for Agency Action

In the late 1980s, a sudden halt in the production of weapons-grade plutonium froze the existing PFP Facility manufacturing pipeline in a state that was unsuited for long-term storage. On January 24, 1994, the Secretary of Energy commissioned a comprehensive assessment to identify and prioritize the environmental, safety, and health vulnerabilities that arise from the storage of plutonium in DOE facilities and determine which are the most dangerous and urgent. The DOE-wide assessment, commonly referred to as

The Plutonium Vulnerability Study, identified 15 environmental, safety, and health vulnerabilities at the PFP Facility. These included storage of unstable forms of plutonium, a potential for criticality accidents, and seismic weaknesses. DOE has determined that a feasible alternative for resolution of the safety issues is removal of readily retrievable plutonium-bearing material in hold-up at the PFP Facility and stabilization of these and other plutonium-bearing materials at the PFP Facility through the following four treatment processes: (1) Ion exchange, vertical calcination and thermal stabilization of plutonium-bearing solutions; (2) thermal stabilization of oxides, fluorides, and process residues in a continuous furnace; (3) repackaging of metals and alloys; and (4) pyrolysis of polycubes and combustibles.

#### Environmental Impact Statement Preparation

The Draft EIS has been prepared in accordance with Section 102(2)(C) of the NEPA, as implemented in regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508) and by DOE's Implementing Procedures (10 CFR Part 1021). The Draft EIS has been prepared to assess the potential impacts of both the proposed action, and reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, on the human and natural environment.

A Notice of Intent (Notice) to prepare the PFP EIS and hold public scoping meetings in Spokane, Richland, and Bellevue, Washington, and Hood River and Portland, Oregon, was published by DOE in the Federal Register on October 27, 1994. A subsequent Notice was published by DOE in the Federal Register on November 23, 1994, announcing additional meetings in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington. The Notice invited oral and written comments and suggestions on the proposed scope of the EIS, including environmental issues and alternatives, and invited public participation in the NEPA process. Overall, scoping comments were received that assisted in identifying major issues for subsequent in-depth analysis in the Draft EIS. As a result of the scoping process, an Implementation Plan for the PFP Stabilization EIS was developed to define the scope and provide further guidance for preparing the Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS considers the proposed action, other reasonable alternatives, and the no action alternative.

#### Comment Procedures

##### *Availability of Draft EIS*

Copies of the Draft PFP Stabilization EIS are being distributed to federal, state, tribal and local officials and agencies, as well as organizations and individuals known to be interested in or affected by the proposed project. Additional copies may be obtained by contacting Mr. Burton as provided in the section of this notice entitled **ADDRESSES**. Copies of the Draft PFP Stabilization EIS, including appendices and reference material will be available for public review at the locations listed below.

- (1) U.S. Department of Energy, Headquarters, Freedom of Information Reading Room, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington D.C. 20585, (202) 586-3142
- (2) U.S. DOE Public Reading Room, 100 Sprout Road, Room 130 West, Richland, WA 99352, (509) 376-8583
- (3) Government Publications, University of Washington Library, Box 352900, Seattle, WA 98185-2900, (206) 543-1937
- (4) Gonzaga University, Foley Center, East 502 Boone Avenue, Spokane, WA 99258, (509) 328-4220
- (5) Portland State University, Branford Price Millar Library, SW Harrison and Park, Portland, OR 97207, (503) 725-3690

You may also receive a copy of the Draft EIS by calling the PFP Stabilization EIS toll-free line at 1-800-249-8181.

##### *Written Comment*

Interested parties are invited to provide comments to DOE on the content of the Draft EIS as indicated in the section of this notice entitled **ADDRESSES**. Comments submitted (postmarked) after January 16, 1996, will be considered to the extent practicable.

#### Public Hearing

##### *Procedures*

The public is invited to provide oral comments to DOE on the Draft EIS at the scheduled public hearing. Advance registration for the presentation of oral comments at the hearing will be accepted up to the day prior to the scheduled meeting by calling 1-800-249-8181 (prior to 3:00 p.m. Pacific Time). Requests to speak at a specific time will be honored, if possible. Registrants are only allowed to register themselves to speak and must confirm

the time they are scheduled to speak at the registration desk the day of the hearing. Persons who have not registered in advance may register to speak when they arrive at the hearing to the extent that time is available. To ensure that as many persons as possible have the opportunity to present comments, five minutes will be allotted to each speaker. Persons presenting comments at the hearing are requested to provide DOE with written copies of their comments at the hearing, if possible. Written comments sent by mail to the office listed in the **ADDRESSES** section above, must be submitted (postmarked) no later than January 16, 1996.

##### *Hearing Schedule and Location*

A public hearing will be held at the following location, date and time: Red Lion Inn—Pasco, 2525 N. 20th, Pasco, Washington 99301, (509) 547-0701  
Thursday, January 11, 1996, 6:00 p.m.—9:00 p.m.

##### *Conduct of Hearing*

DOE's rules and procedures for the orderly conduct of the hearing will be announced by the presiding officer at the start of the hearing. The hearing will not be of an adjudicatory or evidentiary nature. Speakers will not be cross-examined, although the presiding officer and the DOE hearing panel members will respond to comments and questions from the public. In addition, DOE representatives will be available to discuss the project in informal conversations. A transcript of the hearing will be prepared, and the entire record of the hearing, including the transcript, will be placed on file by DOE for inspection at the public locations given above in the "COMMENT PROCEDURES" section.

Signed in Richland, WA this 21st day of November 1995, for the United States Department of Energy.

John D. Wagoner,

*Manager, U.S. Department of Energy,  
Richland Operations Office.*

[FR Doc. 95-29578 Filed 12-4-95; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

## Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP96-79-000]

### Texas Gas Transmission Corporation; Notice of Request Under Blanket Authorization

November 29, 1995.

Take notice that on November 20, 1995, Texas Gas Transmission