

contaminated process residues, sludges, and particulates to satisfy RCRA requirements.

29. *Trace metal removal*—Techniques are needed to meet wastewater discharge permit requirements (e.g. 0.001mg/L cadmium, 0.003 mg/L lead, and 0.004 mg/L silver) while minimizing secondary waste generation.

30. *Supercritical CO₂*—Techniques are needed to minimize pretreatment to adequately prepare the wastes for supercritical CO₂ extraction so that the organics can be removed, and the wastes can be fed and removed from the supercritical environment while maintaining radionuclide containment.

The MWFA desires a list of interested parties who have technology available to address one or more of the technology deficiency areas. This includes technology that may need to be demonstrated in a radioactive environment on DOE mixed waste to verify its applicability. The MWFA also desires a list of parties interested in participating in cooperative research and development leading to demonstration of technologies. A document with more detailed descriptions of the deficiencies can be obtained by accessing the Mixed Waste Focus Area home page on the internet at "<http://wastenot.inel.gov/mwfa>," or by calling the Mixed Waste Focus Area, 208-526-7575. From the MWFA home page, simply push the button for "News and Events." Interested parties are asked to submit a contact name and address plus a brief description of existing technology or of capabilities for conducting research and development (R&D) to Jihad Aljayoushi, U.S. Department of Energy, 850 Energy Drive, MS 1118, Idaho Falls, ID 83401-1563. Written expressions of interest should not include detailed proposals or proprietary data, but should include the name, address, telephone number, and facsimile (fax) number of the primary contact person. Submittals should be as brief as practical (e.g., should not exceed five pages). To assist in the "Organizational Conflicts of Interest" determinations, all submittals are required to disclose business affiliations, partners for proposed teaming arrangements, sister organizations, etc. To assist in the SBA determinations all submittals are required to disclose business size and type. Written expressions of interest should be received on or before February 20, 1996. This announcement is for expressions of interest only, and is not associated with any specific funding opportunity, solicitation, procurement, assistance award, etc.

Procurement Request Number: Not Applicable.

Dated: January 17, 1996.

R. Jeffrey Hoyles,

Director, Procurement Services Division.

[FR Doc. 96-1199 Filed 1-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Advisory Committee on External Regulation of Department of Energy Nuclear Safety

AGENCY: Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Notice of release of Committee's final report.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463, 86 Stat. 770), notice is hereby given of the release of the Final Report of the Advisory Committee on External Regulation of Department of Energy Nuclear Safety entitled *Improving the Regulation of Safety at DOE Nuclear Facilities*, which was submitted to the Secretary of Energy, and to the White House Office of Management and Budget and the Council on Environmental Quality on January 19, 1996.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Copies of the Report are available from the following sources:

- Calling (toll free) 1-800-736-3282 through January 31, 1996
 - Environment, Safety, and Health Information Center, EH-72, CXXI-20030, USDOE, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown MD 20874-1290 (1-800-473-4375) after February 1, 1996.
 - The Internet World Wide Web at: <http://www.em.doe.gov/acd/index.html>
 - The National Technical Information Service, U.S. Department of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, VA 22161 (prices and information available from 703-487-4650)
 - DOE and DOE contractors from the Office of Scientific and Technical Information, P.O. Box 62, Oak Ridge TN 37831 (prices and information available from 615-576-8401).
 - All Department of Energy Freedom of Information Act Reading Rooms.
- SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Committee's Final Report presents a number of recommendations to strengthen both the regulation and the assurance of safety at DOE nuclear facilities. Three recommendations are fundamental: (1) Essentially all aspects of safety at DOE's nuclear facilities and sites should be externally regulated; (2) existing agencies rather than a new one should be responsible for external regulation; and (3) under any regulatory scheme, DOE must maintain a strong

internal safety management system. Along with recommendations for external regulation, the Report contains a summary of the current state of the DOE complex and its missions, recommendations on issues that must be addressed for any successful regulatory scheme, and recommended actions to achieve an effective internal system and a well-managed transition. Additional information is available in the Appendices and References volumes of the Final Report.

The Committee's charter was to provide advice, information, and recommendations on whether and how new and existing Department of Energy (DOE) nuclear facilities and operations, except those operations covered under Executive Order 12344 (Naval Propulsion Program), should be externally regulated to ensure safety. The Department currently self-regulates many aspects of nuclear safety, pursuant to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended. The Committee consisted of 24 members drawn from a cross section of public, Federal, State, Tribal, industrial, and academic sectors, representing a diversity of expertise. The Committee was co-chaired by John F. Ahearne, Lecturer in Public Policy, Duke University and Executive Director of Sigma Xi, The Scientific Research Society, and Gerard F. Scannell, President of the National Safety Council.

Issued at Washington, DC on January 19, 1996.

Thomas H. Isaacs,

Executive Director.

[FR Doc. 96-1204 Filed 1-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

[FE Docket No. PP-89]

Record of Decision for Issuance of Presidential Permit; Bangor Hydro-Electric Company

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Record of decision: Presidential Permit PP-89, Bangor Hydro-Electric Company; construction of an international electrical interconnection.

SUMMARY: Bangor Hydro applied to the DOE for a Presidential permit to construct a new electric transmission facility at the U.S. border with Canada. That action was determined to be "a major federal action, significantly affecting the quality of the human environment" within the meaning of NEPA. An EIS was issued on August 18, 1995, that considered the environmental impacts associated with granting or denying the Presidential permit. This

ROD determined that allowing construction of the new electric facilities along alternative transmission line corridors and the options for alternative energy supplies discussed in the EIS did not prove preferable to granting the Presidential permit for construction along the proposed route.

DATES: January 25, 1996.

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of Presidential Permit PP-89 or DOE/EIS-0166 may be submitted to: Mr. Anthony J. Como, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Fossil Energy (FE-52), 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-0350.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anthony Como (Program Office) 202-586-5935 or Carol M. Borgstrom (NEPA process) 202-586-4600 or 1-800-472-2756.

Record of Decision

On December 16, 1988, the Bangor Hydro-Electric Company (BHE) filed an application with the Department of Energy (DOE) for a Presidential permit pursuant to Executive Order 10485, as amended by Executive Order 12038, to construct, connect, operate, and maintain a new international transmission line interconnection with New Brunswick, Canada. The proposed new interconnection, referred to as Bangor Hydro-Electric Company's Second 345-kV Transmission Tie Line to New Brunswick, would cross the U.S. International border near Baileyville, Maine, and extend to an existing substation at Orrington, Maine. In the application, the BHE described the U.S. portion of the proposed line as 83.8 miles in length.

The new transmission line is needed to complement and share electrical load with the existing 345-kV interconnection owned and operated by the Maine Electric Power Company. The line is needed to reduce transmission losses on the existing tie line, increase the opportunities for economic power transactions between New England and New Brunswick, help meet projected load growth in the New England region, and increase the capacity benefits of the transmission ties with New Brunswick. This would result in a general increase in electric system reliability for the New England region. Overall, the annual net savings could range from about \$21.6 million (24 MW conserved, 50 MW average increased economy, and 25 MW additional reserves sharing) to more than \$87 million (24 MW conserved, 150 MW average increased economy, and 300 MW additional reserves sharing).

In reviewing this application the DOE determined that granting the Presidential permit for the proposed interconnection would constitute "a major federal action, significantly affecting the quality of the human environment" within the meaning of NEPA. Consequently, the DOE has prepared an EIS to assess the environmental impacts associated with granting or denying the permit.

In October 1993, the DOE published and distributed about 336 copies of a draft EIS to interested individuals and agencies. Following this distribution, public hearings to obtain comments on the draft EIS were held in Bradley and Woodland, Maine, January 10 - 11, 1994. One speaker presented comments at the public hearings, and DOE received 33 written comments from individuals during the 72-day public comment period. Substantive comments and responses associated with the draft EIS are presented in the final EIS. No comments were received on the final EIS.

Basis For Decision

In compliance with the provisions of NEPA, the DOE prepared an EIS to address the environmental impacts associated with the proposed action and its alternatives. The EIS discusses in detail construction activities (including clearing and control of vegetation), loss or alteration of wildlife habitat, displacement and disturbance of wildlife, disturbance of aquatic resources, releases of gaseous pollutants and dust, and disruption of agricultural and forestry activities. The EIS also discusses in detail, the potential environmental impacts resulting from operation and maintenance of the transmission facilities (including the collision of birds with structures), visual impacts of additional lines within the transmission line corridor, and possible health and safety effects in close proximity to the electromagnetic fields associated with the proposed line. To minimize impacts to the extent practicable, BHE has committed to a variety of mitigation actions to protect the environment. These procedures are presented in the EIS. The information presented in the EIS indicates that the issuance of the Presidential permit would result in minor incremental impacts to the environment. Accordingly, based on the analysis in the EIS, the DOE finds that any environmental impacts resulting from construction activities would be minimal and of short duration.

Description of Alternatives and Their Environmental Impacts

On August 18, 1995, DOE issued a final EIS titled, "Environmental Impact Statement for Construction and Operation of the Proposed Bangor Hydro-Electric Company's Second 345-kV Transmission Tie Line to New Brunswick," DOE/EIS-0166. Section 2 of this document contains analyses of the following alternatives considered by DOE in reaching its decision to grant Presidential Permit PP-89:

1. Grant the Presidential permit as requested.
2. Grant the Presidential permit but require the use of alternative transmission corridors and designs (three alternative transmission line corridors were considered).
3. Take no action — deny the Presidential permit request. Under this alternative, it is assumed that the applicant would have two additional alternatives:

(a) Do not implement alternative supply or demand measures (maintain the status quo).

(b) Implement energy supply alternatives, such as: hydroelectric, natural gas, nuclear, solar, wind, fuel conversion, cogeneration, conservation and load management, and utility purchases and exchanges.

The DOE evaluated two alternative transmission line routes: the Proposed Route and the Existing-line Route. The Proposed Route was found to be environmentally preferable to the Existing-line Route. Two other alternatives, the Straight-line Route and the Route 9 Route, were considered but eliminated as viable alternatives.

Proposed Route: The proposed route is also referred to as the Stud Mill Road route because much of the line would be located near Stud Mill Road, an existing timber haul road jointly owned and maintained by Georgia-Pacific Corporation and Champion International Incorporated. The first 71.6 miles of the proposed line (starting at the crossing of the St. Croix River) would be in a new 170-ft-wide right-of-way. For the remaining 12.2 miles of the route, the new line would share right-of-way space with the Maine Electric Power Company's existing 345-kV interconnection and other lines.

For the proposed route, the estimated amount of existing vegetation directly impacted is 1,623 acres. The unavoidable adverse impacts would include: (1) Conversion of 1,450 acres of forest to areas with small trees, shrubs, and grassland for the duration of the operation of the transmission line, thereby preventing one or two

commercial cycles of timber cutting within the corridor; (2) about 1,185 acres of existing upland forest habitat would be cleared; (3) most of about 268 acres of forested wetlands within the proposed right-of-way would be modified to scrub/shrub wetlands; and (4) visual interruption at river crossings.

Existing-Line Route: The Existing-Line Route is 106 miles in length and would generally parallel the existing 345-kV line right-of-way, crossing the international border at Orient, Maine, extending parallel to the existing route to Chester, Maine, and then to the Orrington substation. Because of the presence of several sensitive environmental areas (e.g., extensive wetlands), this route would require several diversions from the existing right-of-way. The six staging areas required for this route include Bradley, Enfield, T2/R8 N.W.P., Mattawamkeag, Glenwood, and Orient.

Unavoidable adverse impacts associated with the Existing-Line Route would include: (1) About 1,845 acres of forest would be cleared; (2) an estimated 2,081 acres of existing vegetation would be directly impacted; (3) a total of 150 houses would be located within 600 ft of the centerline of the route, about 1.5 times greater than those of the proposed route; (4) construction areas would be closer to a larger population; (5) the likelihood of bald eagles colliding with the transmission lines would be greater because there would be two crossings of the Penobscot River, as compared with only one crossing of the St. Croix River by the proposed route.

Straight-Line Route: The Straight-Line Route would be 115 miles, crossing the international border just north of Kellyland, Maine, and the Grand Falls Flowage in Fowler Township, Maine. The route would travel northwest to the Topsfield, Maine, area and then west to Lee, Maine. The line would then proceed northwest to Chester, where it would parallel the existing 345-kV line to the Orrington substation.

The Straight-Line Route was eliminated from consideration as a viable alternative because the route would (1) cross extensive areas of wetlands, including Dead Man Stream; (2) pass through more populated areas along Routes 2 and 6; (3) cross Route 6 in several places and be more visually intrusive than the other routes; (4) pass through relatively undisturbed areas of forest that contain few roads; (5) pass near or through a series of white cedar swamps in Lee, Springfield, and Carroll that contain rare plants; (6) pass the southern edge of the large flowage area at Baskahegan Stream called Middle Deadwater; (7) cross the Grand Falls

Flowage on the St. Croix River in an area of active bald eagle nesting; and (8) likely be the cause of a number of landowner constraints along the length of the corridor.

Route 9 Route: The Route 9 Route would be 83 miles in length and would cross the international border in Woodland, Maine. It would generally parallel the major east-west highway between Bangor and Calais. This route was eliminated as a viable alternative because: (1) Several major crossings of Route 9 would be required, possibly in sections designated as scenic highway; (2) river crossings of the south-flowing St. Croix, Machias, Narraguagus, and Union rivers would be more difficult and extensive because these locations are the widest (as compared with other alternative routes); (3) the Maine Department of Transportation is planning significant reconstruction of Route 9, possibly involving substantial rerouting of the road, thus, making it more difficult to locate the transmission line; (4) several lakes and large wetlands would probably have to be traversed or would likely force significant route changes, especially at Whalesback (Union River), Mopang Lake, Crawford Lake, and Meddybemps Lake; (5) the corridor is more hilly and rugged (particularly west of the Machias River) than the other alternative routes, making (for example) construction more difficult and increasing the potential for erosion; and (6) more individual property owners (as compared with the other alternative routes) would be involved, thereby complicating the routing of the corridor.

Take No Action: Under the No Action Alternative, the DOE would not issue a Presidential permit for the proposed interconnection, and the transmission line would not be constructed. BHE would have to develop other sources of energy to meet increases in demand for electricity. The "no action" alternative would not provide the needed generating capacity and would result in greater degradation of air quality as a result of the continued use of fossil fuels for generation of electricity.

Energy Supply Alternatives: If the DOE were to deny the Presidential permit, BHE could take other actions to meet future demand for electricity, such as identifying supply alternatives and/or implementing demand-side options. However, among the alternatives available to BHE, none were considered viable alternatives to the proposed action.

One alternative would be construction of a new central-station, non-oil-fired generating plant. Candidate plant types would be hydroelectric, natural gas,

nuclear, and coal-fired. BHE is currently attempting to license several hydroelectric projects within its service territory. Additional hydroelectric development beyond that currently proposed would not be viable because of the limited number of sites remaining for such development. The availability of natural gas for generating facilities is quite limited in Maine. Natural gas is being imported from Canada, but not in sufficient quantities to generate power at a utility scale.

The time required to license and build a new nuclear plant is 10–15 years and the average lead time for a new coal-fired plant is 8 years. Therefore, such alternative facilities could not be placed in service until the year 2003 or later. In addition, these alternatives would have similar environmental impacts as the proposed action because construction of additional domestic transmission lines would be required in order to deliver energy to the region.

The use of nonconventional generating facilities such as fuel substitution, solar-, wind-, and biomass-powered facilities of the size required to meet the energy supply level of the proposed interconnection are not considered reasonable alternatives. Commercial-scale developments of the size comparable to the proposed project are not feasible for the near future.

The increased use of cogeneration and small power production (CSPP) was not considered to be a viable alternative to the proposed action because reliability of supply, operational problems, and financial stability make reliance on these sources undesirable over the long-term. CSPP's are generally nondispatchable (i.e., BHE does not have the contractual option to shut down those resources when it is economical to do so). Furthermore, BHE does not have complete control over when, where, or if these alternative supply sources are developed.

In some cases, BHE's transmission system would need upgrading to handle the interconnection with the CSPPs.

In evaluating the suitability of energy conservation and load management (shifting of energy consumption from on-peak to off-peak hours), BHE estimates an 11% peak reduction by the year 2000. While load management will continue to reduce energy demand, expected growth rates for electricity consumption are projected to be high enough to require additional generating capacity in the New England region within the next 5 to 10 years.

Several members of the New England Power Pool (NEPOOL) already purchase power from other sources; however, to be considered a viable alternative, a

potential source must be able to provide NEPOOL with energy and/or capacity benefits which are comparable to those provided by the proposed tie-line. Such purchases would not be possible from existing sources. In addition, the New York Power Pool (NYPP), a contiguous utility system that is a potential source of purchased power for NEPOOL members, is a competitor of NEPOOL for the energy available in Canada and the coal-fired energy in the midwestern United States. Therefore, purchase of power from NYPP was not considered a viable alternative to the proposed project.

The Midwest is another potential source of purchased power because of its surplus of non-oil-fired capacity. Factors that precluded consideration of this source as a viable alternative to the proposed action are as follows:

- Load and capacity projections indicate that the present capacity surpluses would not last long enough to sustain a firm energy sale to NEPOOL through the 1990s.

- Any available surpluses are likely to be purchased by utilities in regions with existing direct transmission connections.

- Any power purchased must flow through the central New York State and Pennsylvania-New Jersey-Maryland (PJM) systems. The transmission systems in these areas are already heavily used and could not readily withstand the additional load imposed by transmitting midwestern energy to New England.

- The construction of additional transmission lines through New York or the states of the PJM systems could encounter various regulatory, legal, and environmental obstacles that could prevent or delay implementation and raise the final cost of the energy.

Installing the transmission line underground and alternative structure designs were also considered. The environmental impacts and construction costs of installing the transmission line underground would be greater than those for the proposed project, and the reliability would be lower than that of an overhead system. The wood H-frame structure was chosen largely because of economic considerations, and because the impacts caused by most structure types would be similar. The primary impacts associated with an underground system that precluded it from consideration as a viable alternative included (1) extensive excavation, grading, and backfilling; (2) potential for oil contamination of soils; (3) disruption of land use patterns along the entire length of the route; (4) limitation on land uses allowed over or near the

route; (5) instream disturbance of all waterways crossed by the route; (6) potential for oil spills or leaks into surface water and wetlands; (7) potential for oil contamination of groundwater; (8) decreased habitat diversity along the route because the area would have to be maintained as grasses; (9) increased potential for damage to surface and subsurface archaeological sites; and (10) increased worker safety concerns because of the increased construction and maintenance activities that would be required.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Upon completion of a thorough review of all proposed alternatives, DOE has concluded that construction of the Stud Mill Road route is the environmentally preferred alternative and that adequate safeguards of the environment can be accomplished using mitigation measures identified in the EIS as well as the standard practices of utility companies constructing and maintaining ROW. With approximately 83 miles of transmission line to be sited within Maine, the Stud Mill Road route is the shortest when compared to the 106 mile Existing Line and 115 mile Straight-Line routes. The preferred route would require the fewest transmission structures with the greatest spacing. The preferred route would require the least amount of forest clearing, stream crossings and new service road construction due to use of existing service roads and timber haul roads that traverse the route. Construction of the transmission line along the preferred route will have the least impact to wildlife species due to the reduced amount of vegetation clearing. Where the proposed alternative will parallel existing 345-kV transmission facilities, interactions between the phases (conductors) of the existing and proposed line will decrease magnetic field exposure to residents located near the two-line corridor. Application of the No Action alternative would likely have a negative impact on air quality in the region as a result of continued or increased fossil fuel use in the New England region. The technology for use of nonconventional generation sources in place of the proposed facilities is not considered to have advanced sufficiently to provide the energy resources required today. Construction of a new, non-oil-fired generating plant, would require an extensive design and construction phase and would clearly have significant negative environmental impacts especially in terms of air emissions.

Decision

DOE will issue Presidential Permit PP-89 to BHE for the construction, connection, operation, and maintenance of a 345-kV transmission line across the international border between the United States, at Baileyville, Maine, and Canada for interconnection with facilities of the New Brunswick Power Commission in New Brunswick, Canada. In the United States, the transmission line will follow the Stud Mill Road route, as described in Presidential Permit PP-89. As a condition of granting the Presidential permit, BHE will be required to implement all mitigative measures to which BHE has committed, as presented in the EIS. This conditional requirement shall be deemed adequate mitigation protection to satisfy the requirements for a Mitigation Action Plan (10 CFR 1021.331).

Copies of this Record of Decision will be made available upon request, for public inspection and copying at the Department of Energy, Room 3F-090, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Issued in Washington, D.C. on January 18, 1996.

Anthony J. Como,

Director, Office of Coal & Electricity, Office of Fuels Programs, Office of Fossil Energy.
[FR Doc. 96-1070 Filed 1-24-96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

Privatization of Isotope Activities; Comment Request

AGENCY: Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Notice of rescheduling of public meeting.

SUMMARY: DOE published a Notice in the December 5, 1995 Commerce Business Daily and December 11, 1995 Federal Register seeking Expressions of Interest concerning the possible privatization of DOE isotope activities. The Notice was to remain effective until February 23, 1996, responses were due by February 23, 1996, and an information meeting was to be held at the DOE facility auditorium in Germantown, Maryland, on January 10, 1996. Due to severe weather, the information meeting was not held. This Notice announces a change in public meeting dates.

DATES: The Notice seeking Expressions of Interest concerning the possible privatization of DOE isotope activities will now remain effective until March 29, 1996. Responses may be submitted