Department has been committed to giving each alternative location a fair and careful look.

The potential recall of the ACRR for a defense mission also deserves particular comment. When it issued the final EIS, DOE believed that the chance of the ACRR being recalled for defense missions in time of national emergency was sufficiently low so as not to disqualify the ACRR as an alternative. Based on extensive discussions between the Office of Defense Programs and the Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology, DOE continues to believe that the likelihood of a defense-related national emergency occurring that would require the use of the ACRR within the next several years is remote. DOE also believes that the critical need to establish a backup supply of Mo-99 in the shortest possible time far outweighs the minimal risk that this reactor would be recalled for defense-related emergencies.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

With respect to the establishment of a production capability for Mo-99 and related medical isotopes, the No Action alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative. Under the No Action alternative, the U.S. medical community would continue to rely on the single existing supply source for Mo-99, and any environmental impacts would occur primarily outside the United States. The No Action alternative, however, leaves the U.S. medical community vulnerable to a shortage of Mo-99 that could have a significant negative impact on the quality of health care received by thousands of U.S. medical patients each day. Therefore, the No Action alternative was not selected.

Of the alternatives that would satisfy the purpose and need for action, the potential environmental impacts are generally small and of similar magnitude. Each of the action alternatives would use essentially the same technology for the production of Mo-99 and related medical isotopes. Minor differences among the action alternatives relate primarily to the type and status of the existing facilities, the modifications required to prepare the facilities for isotope production, and amounts of low level waste generated and how those wastes would be managed. No single alternative has the least impact in all of the categories analyzed in the EIS. For example, ORNL has the lowest collective radiation dose to the public; however, it could generate the second highest volume of low level waste. Similarly, SNL/NM has the lowest utilization of uranium in fuel, and water usage, of all the sites considered but has a slightly higher worker dose during processing and operation. However, these differences and the others identified in the EIS are very minor and do not provide a basis for selecting an environmentally preferred alternative among those alternatives that satisfy the purpose and need for action.

Decision

DOE has decided to implement the proposed project as specified in the preferred alternative in the EIS, that is, to produce Mo-99 and related isotopes at the ACRR and Hot Cell Facility at SNL/NM and to fabricate targets at the Chemistry and Metallurgy Research Facility at LANL. The basis for this decision rests on DOE's determination that it is essential to address as soon as possible the U.S. vulnerability to the failure of its sole source of supply of Mo-99, an isotope vitally necessary for the medical diagnosis of thousands of patients every day. Failure of the sole Canadian supply would leave the United States with critical shortages of Mo-99 within a week.

The analyses of the alternatives in the EIS demonstrate that the impacts on the environment, involved workers, and the residents in the affected communities would be very small and within applicable regulatory limits and would not provide a basis for discrimination among the alternatives. The ACRR is the only reactor among all of the alternatives that is presently operating, and the ACRR can provide the earliest possible production of Mo-99 in the event that the Canadian supply becomes unavailable. The ACRR also has the most reliable projections of costs and schedules for meeting the planned production goals.

The Department recognizes that the Office of Defense Programs has expressed interest in retaining the capability to use the ACRR in the event of a national emergency. The Department considers the likelihood of such an emergency in the next several years to be highly unlikely. DOE has decided that the critical need to establish a backup supply of Mo-99 in the shortest possible time far outweighs the minimal risk that this reactor would be recalled for defense-related emergencies.

This decision is not affected by the litigation in *Pueblo of Isleta* v. *Dep't of Energy*, No. 96–0508 (D. N.M. filed Apr. 15, 1996). The Medical Isotopes Production Project is based upon its own final EIS that evaluates the cumulative impacts of the proposed action at SNL/NM as well as all of the other proposed alternatives. Neither that EIS nor this decision is dependent in any way upon the 1977 SNL/NM sitewide EA that the plaintiffs seek to enjoin reliance upon. Moreover, DOE believes that this litigation is moot because DOE has already sought congressional funding to begin preparing a sitewide EIS at SNL/NM in 1997.

Use of all Practicable Means To Avoid or Minimize Harm

Implementation of this decision will result in low environmental and health impacts. Mitigation measures typically applied to the operation of small research reactors and to the activities necessary to fabricate, irradiate, and process the Mo-99 targets will be applied throughout the project. These measures include filtration of air emissions from target fabrication, irradiation, and processing activities in accordance with applicable requirements and as low as reasonably achievable principles. Accordingly, no mitigation action plan is necessary.

The Medical Isotopes Production Project: Molybdenum-99 and Related Isotopes will be initiated at the preferred alternative facilities under the program direction of the Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology and the Kirtland Area Office, Albuquerque Operations Office.

Issued in Washington, D.C., this 11th day of September 1996.

Terry R. Lash,

Director, Office of Nuclear Energy, Science and Technology.

[FR Doc. 96–23738 Filed 9–16–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450–01–P

Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board, Pantex Plant, Amarillo, TX

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Public Law 92–463, 86 Stat. 770) notice is hereby given of the following Advisory Committee meeting: Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB), Pantex Plant, Amarillo, Texas.

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, September 24, 1996: 4:00 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

ADDRESS: Amarillo College, 2201 S. Washington, College Union Building, 2nd Floor, Oak-Acorn Room, Amarillo, Texas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Tom Williams, Program Manager,

Department of Energy, Amarillo Area Office, P.O. Box 30030, Amarillo, TX 79120 (806)477–3121.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of the Committee: The Board provides input to the Department of Energy on Environmental Management strategic decisions that impact future use, risk management, economic development, and budget prioritization activities.

Tentative Agenda

4:00 pm—Welcome—Introductions—Approval of Minutes
4:10 pm—Co-Chairs' Comments
4:20 pm—Subcommittee Reports
—Policy and Personnel, by-laws review
—Nominations, 2nd reading for Stella Devers' nomination
4:40 pm—Task Force Reports
—Environmental Restoration
4:45 pm—Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry Update
Rick Collins, Sr. Scientist
5:00 pm—Updates
—Occurrence Reports
—Vulnerability Update
6:00 pm—Break
6:30 pm—MOX Fuel Discussion Panel
Dr. K. L. Peddicord, Texas A&M University
Dr. Bill Weida, Colorado College
Perspectives from local residents who travelled to MOX facilities:
Mr. Ronald W. Zerm
Mr. Bob Juba
Representative from nuclear power industry, BNFL or Cogema
Mr. Paul Leventhal, Nuclear Control Institute
7:45 pm—Question and Answer Session
8:25 pm—Closing Comments
8:30 pm—Adjourn

Public Participation: The meeting is open to the public, and public comment will be invited throughout the meeting. Written statements may be filed with the Committee either before or after the meeting. Written comments will be accepted at the address above for 15 days after the date of the meeting. Individuals who wish to make oral statements pertaining to agenda items should contact Tom Williams' office at the address or telephone number listed above. Requests must be received 5 days prior to the meeting and reasonable provision will be made to include the presentation in the agenda. The Designated Federal Official is empowered to conduct the meeting in a fashion that will facilitate the orderly conduct of business. Each individual wishing to make public comment will be provided a maximum of 5 minutes to present their comments. This notice is being published less than 15 days before the date of the meeting due to programmatic issues that had to be resolved.

Minutes: The minutes of this meeting will be available for public review and copying at the Pantex Public Reading Rooms located at the Amarillo College Lynn Library and Learning Center, 2201 South Washington, Amarillo, TX phone (806) 371–5400. Hours of operation are from 7:45 am to 10:00 pm, Monday through Thursday; 7:45 am to 5:00 pm on Friday; 8:30 am to 12:00 noon on Saturday; and 2:00 pm to 6:00 pm on Sunday, except for Federal holidays. Additionally, there is a Public Reading Room located at the Carson County Public Library, 401 Main Street, Panhandle, TX phone (806) 537–3742. Hours of operation are from 9:00 am to 7:00 pm on Monday; 9:00 am to 5:00 pm, Tuesday through Friday; and closed Saturday and Sunday as well as Federal Holidays. Minutes will also be available by writing or calling Tom Williams at the address or telephone number listed above.

Issued at Washington, DC on September 11, 1996.

Rachel M. Samuel,

Acting Deputy Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 96–23732 Filed 9–16–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450–01–P

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. PR96–14–000]

Bridgeline Gas Distribution LLC; Notice of Petition for Rate Approval

September 11, 1996.

Take notice that on August 27, 1996, Bridgeline Gas Distribution LLC (Bridgeline) filed pursuant to section 284.123(b)(2) of the Commission's regulations, a petition for rate approval requesting that the Commission approve the proposed rates as fair and equitable for transportation and storage services performed under section 311 of the Natural Gas Policy Act of 1978 (NGPA).

Bridgeline states that it is a local distribution company with a blanket certificate issued in Docket No. CP93–190 authorizing it to engage in NGPA Section 311 services as if it were an intrastate pipeline. Bridgeline owns and operates transportation and storage facilities in the State of Louisiana.

Bridgeline proposes an effective date of September 1, 1996.

Pursuant to section 284.123(b)(2)(ii), if the Commission does not act within 150 days of the filing date, the rates will be deemed to be fair and equitable and not in excess of an amount which interstate pipelines would be permitted to charge for similar transportation service. The Commission may, prior to the expiration of the 150-day period, extend the time for action or institute a proceeding to afford parties an opportunity for written comments and for the oral presentation of views, data, and arguments.

Any person desiring to participate in this rate proceeding must file a motion to intervene or protest in accordance with sections 385.211 and 385.214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. All motions or protests must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission on or before September 26, 1996. The petition for rate approval is on file with the Commission and is available for public inspection.

Lois D. Cashell,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 96–23683 Filed 9–16–96; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717–01–M

[Docket No. TM97–1–110–001]

Iroquois Gas Transmission System, L.P.; Notice of Annual Charge Adjustment Filing

September 11, 1996.

Take notice that on September 6, 1996 Iroquois Gas Transmission System, L.P. (Iroquois) tendered for filing to become part of its FERC Gas Tariff, First Revised Volume No. 1, Thirteenth Revised Sheet No. 4. The proposed effective date of the tariff sheet is October 1, 1996.

Iroquois states that, pursuant to Section 154.402 of the Commission's regulations and Section 12.2 of the General Terms and Conditions of its tariff, Iroquois is making its Annual Charge Adjustment (ACA) filing to reflect a decrease of $0.0003 per Dth (from $0.0023 to $0.0020 per Dth) in its ACA surcharge.

Iroquois states that copies of the filing were served upon all jurisdictional customers and interested state regulatory commissions.

Any person desiring to protest this filing should file a protest with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20426, in accordance with 18 CFR 385.211 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations. All such protests must be filed as provided in Section 154.210 of the Commission's Regulations. Protests will be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceeding. Copies of this filing are on file with the