

**RECORD SOURCE CATEGORIES:**

Subject individuals, previous employee records, DOE contractors' film badges, whole body counts, bioassays and dosimetry badges.

**SYSTEM EXEMPTED FROM CERTAIN PROVISIONS OF THE ACT:**

None.

Dated: January 21, 1997.

John T. Conway,  
Chairman.

[FR Doc. 97-1943 Filed 1-24-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3670-01-M

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education; Meeting**

**AGENCY:** National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, Education.

**ACTION:** Notice of meeting.

**SUMMARY:** This notice sets forth the proposed agenda of a forthcoming meeting of the National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education. This notice also describes the functions of the Board. Notice of this meeting is required under Section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

**DATES AND TIME:** February 12, 1997 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**ADDRESSES:** Holiday Inn Capitol, 550 C Street, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20024.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Charles Karelis, Director, Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, 7th & D Streets, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202. Telephone: (202) 708-5750.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The National Board of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (National Board) is established under Section 1003 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 1135a-1). The National Board of the Fund is authorized to recommend to the Director of the Fund and the Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education priorities for funding and approval or disapproval of grants submitted to the Fund.

On February 12, 1997 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., the Board will meet in open session. The proposed agenda for the open portion of the meeting will include a review of FIPSE's operating principles, the revision of FIPSE's Comprehensive Program guidelines, an overview of the Comprehensive

Program, the North American Mobility in Higher Education, the European Community/United States of America Joint Consortia for Cooperation in Higher Education and Vocational Education Program, and an orientation for new Board members.

Records are kept of all Board proceedings, and are available for public inspection at the Office of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, Room 3100, Regional Office Building #3, 7th & D Streets, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20202 from the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

David A. Longanecker,

*Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education.*

[FR Doc. 97-1869 Filed 1-24-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-M

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY****Record of Decision: Environmental Impact Statement for the Continued Operation of the Pantex Plant and Associated Storage of Nuclear Weapon Components**

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy.

**ACTION:** Record of decision.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Energy is issuing this Record of Decision for the continued operation of the Pantex Plant and associated storage of nuclear weapon components. This Record of Decision is based on the information, analysis, and public comment contained in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Continued Operation of the Pantex Plant and Associated Storage of Nuclear Weapon Components* (Pantex Plant EIS) (DOE/EIS-0225, November 1996). The Department has decided to implement the preferred alternative by: (1) Continuing nuclear weapon operations involving assembly and disassembly of nuclear weapons at the Pantex Plant; (2) implementing facility projects, including upgrades and construction consistent with conducting these operations; and (3) continuing to provide interim pit storage at the Pantex Plant and increasing the storage level from 12,000 to 20,000 pits.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information on or copies of the Pantex Plant EIS or other information related to this Record of Decision, please call 505-845-4351 or write to: Ms. Nanette D. Founds, Pantex Plant EIS Project Manager, EIS Project Office, U.S. Department of Energy, Albuquerque Operations Office, P.O. Box 5400, Albuquerque, New Mexico 87175-5400.

For information on the Department's National Environmental Policy Act

(NEPA) process, please contact: Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave. SW., Washington, DC 20585, telephone 202-586-4600 or leave a message at 800-472-2756.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Department of Energy has prepared this Record of Decision pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and the Department's NEPA implementing regulations (10 CFR Part 1021). This Record of Decision is based on the *Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Continued Operation of the Pantex Plant and Associated Storage of Nuclear Weapon Components* (DOE/EIS-0225, November 1996), hereafter referred to as the Pantex Plant EIS, and other factors.

**Background**

Until 1989, Pantex Plant activities were closely coupled with operations at the Rocky Flats Plant, now the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site, near Denver, Colorado. Two of the Rocky Flats Plant's primary missions were: (1) The manufacture of plutonium components (pits) which were eventually transported to the Pantex Plant for final assembly into nuclear weapons, and (2) receipt of pits from the Pantex Plant from disassembled weapons for recovery, reprocessing, and fabrication of the special nuclear material into new pits. In December 1989, plutonium processing and pit fabrication operations at the Rocky Flats Plant were curtailed by the Department of Energy pending resolution of safety and environmental issues. The Pantex Plant continued to disassemble weapons, but shipments of pits from dismantled weapons between Pantex and Rocky Flats were suspended. The pits from those weapons were staged in Zone 4 at the Pantex Plant for later shipment to Rocky Flats. The Department had anticipated that shipments of pits to the Rocky Flats Plant would be reinitiated when processing activities in support of new weapons programs were resumed. Efforts to restart plutonium processing operations continued until January 1992, when they were terminated by the Department because of reduced requirements for nuclear weapons production in support of the national defense.

Because pit transfers were suspended, the Department prepared the *Environmental Assessment for Interim Storage of Plutonium Components at*

*Pantex* (DOE/EA-0812, January 1994) to analyze activities necessary to accommodate the interim storage of up to 20,000 pits from the Pantex Plant disassembly operations. The environmental assessment did not suggest that the environmental impacts from the storage of 20,000 pits would be significant. However, in response to comments received from the State of Texas, local officials, and other stakeholders, the Department committed to store no more than 12,000 pits at the Pantex Plant until an environmental impact statement for the site had been completed. Accordingly, the Department issued a Finding of No Significant Impact for interim storage of up to 12,000 pits at the Pantex Plant (59 FR 3674, January 26, 1994).

In May 1994, the Department published a Notice of Intent (NOI) (59 FR 26635, May 23, 1994) to prepare the Pantex Plant EIS. Among alternatives identified in the NOI for consideration in the Pantex Plant EIS was to continue Pantex Plant nuclear weapon operations and increase onsite storage of pits; a no action alternative continuing Pantex Plant nuclear weapon operations but maintaining the 12,000 pit storage level; and an alternative relocating some Pantex Plant nuclear weapon operations and some or all pit storage activities currently conducted at the Pantex Plant, including relocation of other nuclear component storage from other sites. An amended Notice of Intent (60 FR 32661, June 23, 1995) was issued to redefine the scope of the Pantex Plant EIS based on subsequent preparation of programmatic EISs, analyses of potential interim storage locations, and public scoping comments. Under the revised scope, the Pantex Plant EIS evaluated potential environmental impacts of continued operation of the Pantex Plant, including the interim storage of pits at the Pantex Plant or alternate sites (Nevada Test Site, Savannah River Site, Hanford Site, or Manzano Weapons Storage Facility at Kirtland Air Force Base) over an approximately 10-year period, and alternatives for relocating some or all Pantex Plant pit storage activities. The Pantex Plant EIS also examines cumulative impacts to Pantex by incorporating information from related programmatic EISs (see the discussion below entitled *Other Decisions and Environmental Impact Statements Related to the Pantex Plant*).

In March 1996, the Department published the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Continued Operation of Pantex Plant and Associated Storage of Nuclear Weapon Components* and announced its availability in the Federal Register (61

FR 15232, April 5, 1996). The comment period for the Draft Pantex Plant EIS began on April 5, 1996, and originally would have ended on July 5, 1996, but was extended to July 12, 1996 (61 FR 18726, April 29, 1996). During the comment period, public hearings were held in Amarillo, Texas; North Las Vegas, Nevada; North Augusta, South Carolina; Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Richland, Washington. The meetings held in Amarillo and North Augusta were conducted in concert with the *Draft Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement* (SSM PEIS) (DOE/EIS-0236, February 1996) and the *Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Material Draft Environmental Impact Statement* (S&D PEIS) (DOE/EIS-0229, February 1996). In addition, a Technical Exchange Meeting was held in Amarillo with representatives from the State of Texas and local governments, and the public. All comments received during the public comment period were considered for potential changes or additions to the Final Pantex Plant EIS. Volume III of the Final Pantex Plant EIS contains the comments received and the Department's responses to those comments, and identifies the areas where changes were made to the Pantex Plant EIS.

#### Alternatives Considered

The scope of the Pantex Plant EIS included assessing the impacts of operations performed at the Pantex Plant on the natural and physical environment and the relationships of people to that environment. The scope also included issues raised during the scoping and public comment periods. Among the areas of public interest were plant facilities and infrastructure, land resources (particularly agricultural resources), geology and soils (including the current environmental restoration program), water (particularly protection of the Ogallala aquifer), air quality (especially related to burning of high explosives and other material), acoustics, biotic resources, cultural resources, socioeconomics, intrasite transportation, waste management, human health, potential aircraft accidents, intersite transportation of nuclear and hazardous materials, and environmental justice. In addition to these analyses for each site, Pantex Plant potential mitigation measures, unavoidable impacts, irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources, impacts on long-term productivity, and cumulative impacts were assessed.

The Pantex Plant EIS examined impacts across a reasonable range of

activity levels by assessing the operations on 2,000, 1,000, and 500 weapons per year. These levels of weapons operations could involve any mix of nuclear weapons assemblies, disassemblies, retrofits, rebuilds, and quality assurance inspections. The scope also included those areas of the environment that might be impacted at the four candidate sites considered for the possible relocation of interim pit storage activities from the Pantex Plant. These candidate sites were the Nevada Test Site, near Las Vegas, Nevada; the Savannah River Site, near Aiken, South Carolina; the Hanford Site, near Richland, Washington; and Kirtland Air Force Base, near Albuquerque, New Mexico. The Pantex Plant EIS assessed activities over a period of approximately 10 years. The Pantex Plant EIS alternatives were the Proposed Action, No Action Alternative, and Relocation of Interim Pit Storage Alternative, as discussed in the following paragraphs.

*Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative):* The Department proposed to continue nuclear weapon operations at the Pantex Plant, increase the maximum level of interim storage from 12,000 pits to 20,000 pits, and implement necessary facility projects consistent with conducting these operations. Types of operations conducted at the Pantex Plant include the assembly, disassembly, modification, and maintenance of nuclear weapons; surveillance of the weapons stockpile; production of high explosives components for nuclear weapons; quality assurance evaluation and testing of weapon components; and research and development activities supporting nuclear weapons. For the facility projects, only the Hazardous Waste Treatment and Processing Facility involves the construction of a new facility that will add to the overall plant footprint. Although the Pit Reuse Facility will establish a new mission at the Pantex Plant, an existing facility will be modified to incorporate these new operations instead of building a new, separate structure. The remaining four projects will be located within existing structures vacated because of workload reductions. These projects are: the Pit Reuse Facility, Gas Analysis Laboratory, Materials Compatibility and Assurance Facility, Nondestructive Evaluation Facility, and the Metrology and Health Physics Calibration and Acceptance Facility.

*No Action Alternative:* The No Action Alternative is presented to provide a baseline for comparison with the Proposed Action. Under the No Action Alternative, the Department would continue current operations at the

Pantex Plant as described under the Proposed Action, but would cease weapons dismantlement after a storage level of 12,000 pits was reached. Only previously approved and funded projects would be implemented under this alternative. No new facilities would be constructed as described under the Proposed Action. Failure to construct one of these new projects (the Hazardous Waste Treatment and Processing Facility) would limit the Plant's waste treatment and processing capability to a level that would not meet the Department's objectives for improvements in environment, safety, and health conditions and operational efficiency, and would not fulfill an agreement reached with the State of Texas under the Federal Facility Compliance Act.

#### *Relocation of Interim Pit Storage*

*Alternative:* Under this alternative, the Department would transfer pit storage operations to another site. All other operations, upgrades, and new projects would be the same as for the Proposed Action. There are two options under this alternative: the relocation of up to 20,000 pits from the Pantex Plant, or the relocation of up to 8,000 pits from the Pantex Plant, leaving 12,000 pits at the Pantex Plant. The candidate sites, which provided a reasonable range of geographic, operational, and environmental alternatives, were the Nevada Test Site, the Savannah River Site, the Hanford Site, and the Manzano Weapons Storage Facility at Kirtland Air Force Base.

#### Preferred Alternative

Based on its analyses, the Department announced a preferred alternative in the Notice of Availability for the Pantex Plant Draft EIS (61 FR 15232, April 5, 1996) and in the Final Pantex Plant EIS. The Preferred Alternative is the Proposed Action, to continue nuclear weapons operations at the Pantex Plant, to implement facility projects including upgrades and construction consistent with performing these operations, and to provide interim storage for up to 20,000 pits at the Pantex Plant. This Record of Decision selects the Preferred Alternative for implementation.

#### Evaluation of Alternatives

Only the Pantex Plant was analyzed for continued weapons operations; however, four alternative sites (Nevada Test Site, Savannah River Site, Hanford Reservation, and Kirtland Air Force Base) in addition to the Pantex Plant were evaluated for interim storage of up to 20,000 plutonium pits. Each of the alternatives were evaluated for three potential levels of activity (operations

on 2,000, 1,000, and 500 weapons per year) at the Pantex Plant. The principal differences among the alternatives lie in the number of pits that would be stored at the Pantex Plant and the new projects that would be implemented.

#### Environmental Impacts of the Alternatives

Impacts to facilities and infrastructure, land resources, air quality, acoustics, cultural resources, and environmental justice were determined to be similar for each of the alternatives. Water usage and wastewater production were found to be similar (less than 1 percent variation) under each of the alternatives. The main differences in impacts among the alternatives would involve the disturbance to soils and biotic resources due to construction of a new facility, radiation exposure to workers involved in the transfer of pits, and risks associated with aircraft accidents. These differences are generally small.

A suite of accident scenarios was evaluated in detail to encompass the range of accidents at the Pantex Plant that have the potential to affect workers or members of the public. For all alternatives evaluated in the Final Pantex Plant EIS, the dominant accident in terms of risk from radioactive releases to the public involves the crash of an aircraft into a weapons storage magazine, nuclear weapons assembly/disassembly bay or cell, or a special purpose building that results in the detonation of the conventional explosives in the weapons. The estimated risk associated with this potential accident is  $7.2 \times 10^{-6}$  excess cancer fatalities per year to the population within 80 kilometers (50 miles) of the Pantex Plant.

For all alternatives evaluated in the Final Pantex Plant EIS, the dominant accident scenario in terms of release of hazardous chemicals to the public involves the accidental release of up to 408 kilograms (900 pounds) of chlorine gas from the water treatment facilities. Approximately 10 percent of the public within 80 kilometers (50 miles) could be exposed to concentrations of chlorine that, if experienced for over an hour, could cause mild transient adverse health effects.

The potential for accidents that pose risks to worker safety exists at the Pantex Plant. These accidents include normal manufacturing and heavy equipment accidents, fires, and explosions. The types of accidents that could result in release of radioactive or hazardous material are bounded by those accidents discussed above. Although the accident is the same, the

consequences to a worker tends to be more severe than to a member of the public. In the case of an explosion, the consequence to an affected worker is generally a fatality. In the case of a chlorine release, a higher exposure to chlorine is expected for a worker at the Pantex Plant, but no serious or long term health impacts would result.

All alternatives would result in unavoidable worker exposures to radiation from normal handling of plutonium pits during transfer and storage. Under the Preferred Alternative, workers at the Pantex Plant would receive an additional 17 person-rem as a result of storing and handling 20,000 pits instead of the 12,000 pits currently authorized. However, the 20,000-pit Relocation Alternative would result in an additional exposure of up to 283 person-rem due to additional pit handling and loading/unloading of the Safe Secure Tractor Trailers used to transport the pits to the alternative site. The Department will continue to strive to reduce radiological exposures to plant workers. Radiological exposures incurred from future weapons operations will be controlled and minimized by Pantex Plant procedures, administrative controls, and an active As Low As Reasonably Achievable exposure control program that promotes minimizing exposure of workers to radiation. Limits on allowable radiological exposures to workers are given in 10 CFR Part 835, Occupation Radiation Protection and safe radiological worker practices are described in the Pantex Radiological Control Manual. Health studies of Pantex Plant workers to date indicate that there has been no significant excess cancer mortality in the Pantex Plant area attributable to Pantex Plant operations. There have been no verifiable indications of any short-or long-term health impacts to workers at the Pantex Plant. Radiological exposure to non-involved workers and members of the public from Pantex Plant operations is effectively zero.

#### The Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The environmentally preferable alternative is defined as the alternative that would cause the least impact to the physical environment, and best protect worker and public health. According to the analysis conducted for the Pantex Plant EIS, the Preferred Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative. Under the Preferred Alternative, the Pantex Plant would implement a new project (the Hazardous Waste Treatment and Processing Facility) to improve the efficiency of

low-level radioactive, hazardous, and mixed waste processing, provide greater environmental protection, and improve worker safety and health. For the Pit Reuse Facility, an existing facility would be modified instead of constructing a new facility. For the Gas Analysis Laboratory, Materials Compatibility Assurance Facility, Nondestructive Evaluation Facility, and Metrology and Health Physics Calibration and Acceptance Facility, current activities would be moved into existing facilities instead of constructing new facilities. Moving into existing facilities is environmentally preferred to construction of new facilities and No Action because the impacts of construction are avoided and worker safety is improved, respectively. Retaining interim storage of pits at the Pantex Plant would minimize the radiation exposure to workers and the public because the pits would be handled less than if they had to be shipped to another site for storage.

#### Comments on the Final Pantex Plant EIS

During the 30-day comment period which ended January 13, 1997, the Department received two letters regarding the Pantex Plant Final EIS. The first letter from the Environmental Protection Agency stated that the Agency's previous comments on the Pantex Plant Draft Environmental Impact Statement were addressed and offered no additional comments.

The second letter from the State of Tennessee, Department of Environment and Conservation, Department of Energy Oversight Division, expressed dissatisfaction regarding the Department's response in the Final Pantex Plant EIS to their previous comment regarding the shipment of depleted uranium from Pantex Plant to the Y-12 Plant at the Oak Ridge Reservation. As noted in the Final Pantex Plant EIS, the relocation of storage for nuclear components other than pits is not reasonable during the time period of the Pantex Plant EIS. Accordingly, highly enriched uranium and depleted uranium components must continue to be shipped from the Pantex Plant to the Y-12 Plant. The decisions announced in this Record of Decision will not affect the ongoing depleted uranium operations at the Y-12 Plant. The Y-12 Plant currently has existing storage capacity to accommodate the depleted uranium returns from the Pantex Plant. The amount of depleted uranium to be returned from the Pantex Plant is classified information. However, the amount of depleted uranium returned coupled with the

existing site inventory will not surpass the historical maximum level of depleted uranium stored at the Y-12 Plant. The Department, through the Oak Ridge Operations Office, is working with the State of Tennessee to address their concerns and will provide a briefing to appropriately cleared State of Tennessee representatives on the depleted uranium activities in February 1997.

#### Decisions

The Department is making three decisions regarding continued operation of the Pantex Plant and associated storage of nuclear weapon components. Details of these decisions are as follows:

(1) *Continue current nuclear weapons operations:* The Final Pantex Plant EIS examines three levels of activity for weapons operations conducted at the Pantex Plant over the next 10 years. It is expected that the activity level for the next 3 to 5 years will be less than the 2,000 weapons level, and will then continue to decline to the 500 weapons level until SSM PEIS decisions are implemented.

(2) *Implement facility projects consistent with performing current Pantex Plant operations:* Six facilities were analyzed in the Final Pantex Plant EIS. For each facility, a proposed action, an alternative action, and no action were examined. The following describes the alternative selected for each facility:

*Hazardous Waste Treatment and Processing Facility:* The Department has selected the Proposed Action, to construct this facility, as described in Appendix H of the Pantex Plant EIS. Construction of the facility will enhance Pantex Plant low-level radioactive, hazardous, and mixed waste operations and will comply with an agreement reached with the State of Texas under the Federal Facility Compliance Act. This decision will be reviewed based on future decisions resulting from the Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to assure consistency with those programmatic decisions (see discussion below under *Other Decisions and Environmental Impact Statements*). The engineering design for this facility will proceed while the Department is completing the Waste Management PEIS process.

*Pit Reuse Facility:* The Department has selected the Proposed Action, to modify an existing Pantex Plant Zone 12 facility (Building 12-104) as described in Appendix H of the Pantex Plant EIS. This decision is consistent with the SSM PEIS Record of Decision (61 FR 68014, December 26, 1996).

*Gas Analysis Laboratory, Materials Compatibility Assurance Facility, Nondestructive Evaluation Facility, and Metrology and Health Physics Calibration and Acceptance Facility:* The Department has selected the Move to an Existing Facility Alternative at the Pantex Plant as described in Appendix H of the Pantex Plant EIS rather than constructing a new facility. This decision is consistent with the SSM PEIS Record of Decision.

The decision to move into existing facilities rather than build new ones will result in reduced environmental impacts because construction activities will be minimized. In addition, modifying existing facilities rather than constructing new facilities will reduce costs.

(3) *Continue providing interim pit storage at Pantex Plant and increase the authorized storage level to 20,000 pits:* This decision will allow the Pantex Plant to continue nuclear weapon dismantlement operations scheduled over the next 10 years until disposition decisions are made and implemented.

#### Mitigation Measures

Due to ongoing quality assurance, industrial hygiene, safety analysis, and other programs at the Pantex Plant and the level of impacts identified in the Pantex Plant EIS, no additional mitigation measures will be adopted for continued operations or storage activities at the Pantex Plant. However, because of a high level of public interest, activities associated with reducing the risk from aircraft accidents are worth special consideration here. Due to public concern regarding the risk of an aircraft crash at the Pantex Plant, an Overflight Working Group was formed, consisting of representatives of the Department of Energy, the Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. Air Force, the State of Texas and the public, to address ways to reduce the number of aircraft flying over the Pantex Plant. Recommendations included such actions as modifying the path of approaching and departing aircraft from the Amarillo Airport to avoid flying over the Pantex Plant boundary, and installing additional equipment at the airport to aid in vectoring aircraft away from areas where nuclear material is kept. The Department has committed to implement the risk reduction measures recommended by this Overflight Working Group.

During preparation of the Pantex Plant EIS, the Pantex Plant also undertook mitigation measures to afford the public greater protection from a plutonium dispersal accident should such an accident occur. Physical

modifications to assembly cell doors were started to significantly reduce the amount of radioactive material that could leak from a cell in case of an accident. These modifications are projected to be completed by 1998.

#### Future Analytical Activities

The aircraft crash accident analysis of the Final EIS was based upon the Draft *Department of Energy Standard, Accident Analysis for Aircraft Crash into Hazardous Facilities* (July 1996). The Department will further refine the analysis of potential aircraft crash scenarios through Safety Analysis Reports, which will be prepared in accordance with the Final Standard, which was published in October 1996. The *Basis for Interim Operation* is the current safety authorization document for Pantex until formal Safety Analysis Reports can be completed and approved. This document will incorporate by reference the aircraft crash analyses. The analysis in the Final Pantex Plant EIS substantiates prior analyses that aircraft crashes at the Pantex Plant do not present a significant risk to Pantex workers or the surrounding communities. The Department, through the Safety Analysis Reports, will prepare more detailed, building-specific analyses for aircraft crash accidents. During this process, the Department will continue to apprise the State of Texas of our progress. Once complete, the Department will provide the State of Texas with the opportunity to thoroughly review all facets of the aircraft crash analyses, including evaluation, safety standards, and implementation of mitigation measures. The Department will encourage the Amarillo National Resource Center for Plutonium to provide the necessary resources to the State of Texas for this effort.

#### Other Decisions and Environmental Impact Statements Related to the Pantex Plant

*Final Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (SSM PEIS)*: The SSM PEIS Record of Decision determined that there will be over time a downsizing of the weapons assembly/disassembly and high explosive component fabrication missions at the Pantex Plant. The decisions made today in this Record of Decision for the operation of the Pantex Plant over the next 10 years are consistent with those determinations. The SSM PEIS also evaluated storage alternatives for strategic reserve material (plutonium and highly enriched uranium that has not been declared surplus to national

security needs). However, decisions on storage of strategic reserve materials are being made in the Record of Decision for the S&D PEIS regarding the storage of surplus materials (see below). In these documents, the preferred alternative is Zone 12 at the Pantex Plant for strategic reserve storage of plutonium pits and the Y-12 Plant at the Oak Ridge Reservation in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, for strategic reserve storage of highly enriched uranium.

*Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (S&D PEIS)*: The S&D PEIS Record of Decision (signed January 14, 1997) selected among alternatives for safe and secure storage of weapons-usable fissile materials and a strategy for the disposition of surplus weapons-usable plutonium. The Pantex Plant was selected for the storage of strategic reserve pits and surplus pits resulting from dismantlement operations in upgraded facilities in Zone 12. This decision included the transfer of pits from the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site to the Pantex Plant (as early as 1997) for storage in Zone 4 until upgraded facilities are available for consolidated storage in Zone 12. The Pantex Plant is also a potential site for disposition alternatives including a Federal government-owned mixed oxide fuel fabrication facility and a pit disassembly/conversion facility. Additional NEPA review will be completed before site selections are made.

*Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)*: The Waste Management PEIS provides a Department-wide evaluation of management alternatives for where to treat, store or dispose of radioactive and hazardous wastes. Pantex is one of 17 sites considered for treatment and disposal of low-level and mixed waste, as well as one of 11 sites evaluated for hazardous waste treatment. Under all options, Pantex would either manage only its own wastes or ship some or all of its waste to another site. The Final Waste Management PEIS, which will be issued shortly, will identify the Department's preferred alternatives for management of these wastes and the role of Pantex in these configurations.

Issued in Washington, DC, on January 17, 1997.

Hazel R. O'Leary,  
Secretary.

[FR Doc. 97-1865 Filed 1-24-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

#### Office of Energy Research

#### Energy Research Financial Assistance Program Notice 97-07; Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) Program

**AGENCY:** U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

**ACTION:** Notice inviting grant applications.

**SUMMARY:** The Office of Health and Environmental Research (OHER) of the Office of Energy Research, U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), hereby announces its interest in receiving applications to support the experimental and theoretical study of radiation and clouds in conjunction with the Atmospheric Radiation Measurement (ARM) Program as part of the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP).

**DATES:** Formal applications submitted in response to this notice must be received by 4:30 p.m., EDT, April 29, 1997, to permit timely consideration for award in fiscal year 1998.

**ADDRESSES:** Formal applications should be forwarded to: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Research, Grants and Contracts Division, ER-64, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874-1290, ATTN: Program Notice 97-07. This address also must be used when submitting applications by U.S. Postal Service Express Mail, any commercial mail delivery service, or when hand-carried by the applicant.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Patrick A. Crowley, Office of Health and Environmental Research, Environmental Sciences Division, ER-74, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874-1290. Telephone: (301) 903-3069, fax (301) 903-8519, or by Internet e-mail address, p.crowley@oer.doe.gov. Program information is available on the ARM WWW page: <http://www.arm.gov>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** This notice requests applications for grants to support the following four efforts:

(1) Continuation and enhancement of activities previously funded by DOE under the auspices of the ARM program via responses to earlier announcements.

(2) The modeling of clouds and radiation including aerosol effects for use in General Circulation Models (GCMs) and related models. Analysis of ARM and other data for refining, supporting, and validating model development are key aspects of research sought in this category. These activities should be closely tied to the analysis and use of data from the current and