

the moon's landscape. The Cassini Orbiter would then continue its Saturn orbital tour, providing opportunities for ring imaging, magnetospheric coverage, and radio (Earth), solar, and stellar occultations of Saturn, Titan, and the ring system. A total of 35 close Titan flybys have also been planned for the 4-year tour, along with 4 close flybys of selected icy satellites, and 29 more distant satellite encounters. The scientific information gathered by the Cassini mission could help provide clues to the evolution of the solar system and the origin of life on Earth.

The Cassini spacecraft would carry three RTG's that use the heat of decay of plutonium dioxide to generate electric power for the spacecraft and its instruments. The spacecraft would also use up to 157 RHU's, each containing a small amount of plutonium dioxide, to generate heat for controlling the thermal environment of the spacecraft and several of its instruments.

The Cassini FEIS was made available to Federal, state, and local agencies, the public, and other interested parties on July 21, 1995. In addition to the No-Action alternative, the FEIS addressed in detail three alternatives for completing preparations for, and operating the Cassini mission to Saturn and its moons. On October 20, 1995, utilizing the analyses in the FEIS along with other important considerations such as programmatic, technical, economic, international relations, and other factors, the Record of Decision selecting the Proposed Action was rendered.

The Proposed Action consists of completing preparations for and implementing the Cassini mission to Saturn and its moons, with a launch of the Cassini spacecraft onboard a Titan IV(SRMU)/Centaur. The launch would take place at CCAS during the primary launch opportunity in October 1997. A secondary launch opportunity occurs in December 1997, with a backup opportunity in March 1999, both using the Titan IV(SRMU)/Centaur. The primary launch opportunity would employ a Venus-Venus-Earth-Jupiter-Gravity-Assist trajectory to Saturn; the secondary and backup opportunities would both employ a Venus-Earth-Earth-Gravity-Assist (VEEGA) trajectory. The Proposed Action would allow the Cassini spacecraft to gather the full science return desired to accomplish mission objectives.

Along with the No-Action alternative (ceasing preparations and not implementing the Cassini mission), the FEIS evaluated in detail two other mission alternatives. The March 1999 alternative would have used two Shuttle

flights with on-orbit integration of the spacecraft and upper stage, followed by injection of the spacecraft into a VEEGA trajectory to Saturn. Due to the long lead-time in developing and certifying the new upper stage that would be needed to implement it, this alternative is no longer considered reasonable. Also, this alternative would have returned less science than the primary launch opportunity of the Proposed Action. The other mission alternative considered in the FEIS was the 2001 alternative, which would use a Titan IV(SRMU)/Centaur to launch the spacecraft from CCAS in March 2001 on a Venus-Venus-Venus-Gravity-Assist trajectory. A backup opportunity in May 2002 would use a VEEGA trajectory. The 2001 alternative would require completing development and testing of a new high-performance rhenium engine for the spacecraft, as well as adding about 20 percent more propellant to the spacecraft. Science returns from this alternative would meet the minimum acceptable level for the mission.

The FEIS analyses demonstrated that completing preparations for and implementing a normal Cassini mission would not significantly impact the human environment. The principal concern associated with all mission alternatives (except No-Action) was with accidents during launch and operation of the mission that have the potential to result in a release of plutonium dioxide from the RTG's and/or RHU's onboard the spacecraft. In response, NASA and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), using the best information available at that time, developed an array of representative accident scenarios that could potentially result in a release of plutonium dioxide from the RTG's. NASA and DOE analyzed the representative accident scenarios with respect to the consequences and risks. The results of those analyses were presented in the Cassini FEIS.

Updated results from the continuing tests and analysis have recently become available for NASA review. This updated data indicates that there is new information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the impacts of the Proposed Action. NASA has determined that the purposes of NEPA will be furthered by preparation and issuance of an SEIS.

The SEIS will address NASA's consideration of the updated data resulting from the ongoing analysis. The SEIS will compare the updated data with those in the FEIS and will focus on the areas where the largest differences in risk are estimated. The SEIS will

address the Proposed Action, the No Action alternative, and the 2001 mission alternative which is still available to NASA.

Benita A. Cooper,
Associate Administrator for Management Systems and Facilities.

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[Notice (97-027)]

NASA Advisory Council, Life and Microgravity Sciences and Applications Advisory Committee, Microgravity Science and Applications Advisory Subcommittee; Meeting

AGENCY: National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

ACTION: Notice of meeting cancellation.

FEDERAL REGISTER CITATION OF PREVIOUS ANNOUNCEMENT: 62 FR 7072, Notice Number 97-014, February 14, 1997.

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED DATES OF MEETING: March 5, 1997, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Meeting has been canceled.

CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION: Dr. Bradley M. Carpenter, Code UG, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Washington, DC 20546, 202-358-0813.

Dated: March 4, 1997.

Leslie M. Nolan,

*Advisory Committee Management Officer,
National Aeronautics and Space Administration.*

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NATIONAL CREDIT UNION ADMINISTRATION

Sunshine Act Meeting; Notice of Change in Subject of Meeting

The National Credit Union Administration Board determined that its business requires the deletion of the following item from the previously announced open meeting (Federal Register, 62 FR 10086, March 5, 1997) scheduled for 8:10 a.m., Friday, March 7, 1997.

3. Charter Application from the Proposed First Combined Community Federal Credit Union.

The Board voted (2-to-0, Vice Chairman Bowné was unavailable) that Agency business required that this item be deleted from the open agenda. Earlier announcement of this change was not possible.

The previously announced items were:

1. Approval of Minutes of Previous Open Meeting.