ACTION: Receipt of application.

SUMMARY: Notice is hereby given that Dr. Daniel Costa, Department of Biology and Institute of marine Sciences, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA 95064, has applied in due form for a permit to take northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*) and import samples from northern and southern elephant seals (*Mirounga leonina*) for purposes of scientific research.

DATES: Written or telefaxed comments must be received on or before August 13, 1998.

ADDRESSES: The application and related documents are available for review upon written request or by appointment in the following office(s):

Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13130, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (301/713–2289); and

Regional Administrator, Southwest Region, National Marine Fisheries Service, NOAA, 501 West Ocean Boulevard, Suite 4200, Long Beach, CA 90802–4213 (562/980–4001).

Written comments or requests for a public hearing on this application should be mailed to the Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, F/PR1, Office of Protected Resources, NMFS, 1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705, Silver Spring, MD 20910. Those individuals requesting a hearing should set forth the specific reasons why a hearing on this particular request would be appropriate.

Comments may also be submitted by facsimile at (301) 713–0376, provided the facsimile is confirmed by hard copy submitted by mail and postmarked no later than the closing date of the comment period. Please note that comments will not be accepted by e-mail or by other electronic media.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Sara Shapiro or Ruth Johnson, 301/713–2289.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The subject permit is requested under the authority of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972, as amended (MMPA; 16 U.S.C. 1361 *et seq.*) and the Regulations Governing the Taking and Importing of Marine Mammals (50 CFR part 216).

The applicant seeks authorization to continue a long-term study on a broad suite of behavioral, physiological, and life history characteristics of northern elephant seals (*Mirounga angustirostris*). The ultimate goal of the proposed research is to understand the animal in its natural habitat, how it makes a living, and how it reproduces optimally.

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), an initial determination has been made that the activity proposed is categorically excluded from the requirement to prepare an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

Concurrent with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register**, NMFS is forwarding copies of this application to the Marine Mammal Commission and its Committee of Scientific Advisors.

Dated: July 7, 1998.

Ann D. Terbush,

Chief, Permits and Documentation Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.

[FR Doc. 98–18735 Filed 7–13–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–22–F

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Technology Administration

[Docket No. 980317064–8064–01]

RIN 0692–ZA01

Announcement of Availability of Funding for Competitions—Experimental Program To Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT)

AGENCY: Office of Technology Policy, Technology Administration, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Technology Administration's Office of Technology Policy (OTP) announces the availability of funding for the following competition to be held in fiscal year 1998 under the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT). The EPSCoT will support technology-based economic growth in eligible jurisdictions by promoting partnerships between state and local governments, universities, community colleges, non-profit organizations and the private sector. This notice provides general information for the competition planned for fiscal year 1998.

DATES: Complete applications for the Fiscal Year 1998 EPSCoT grant program must be mailed or hand-carried to the address indicated below and received by the Technology Administration no later than 9:00 P.M. EST, August 25, 1998. Postmark date is not sufficient. Applications which have been provided to a delivery service will be accepted for review *if the applicant can document that the application was provided to the delivery service by August 24, 1998 with delivery to the address listed below guaranteed prior to the closing date and time.* Applications will not be accepted via facsimile machine transmission or electronic mail.

ADDRESSES: US Dept. of Commerce, Technology Administration, attn: EPSCoT Director, Anita Balachandra, 1401 Constitution Avenue NW, HCHB Room 4418, Washington, DC 20230.

Note: Due to Departmental security policies, hand carried packages must be delivered to Rm. 1874.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Anita Balachandra, Director of the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology, Telephone: (202) 482–1320, Fax: (202) 219–8667, Email: *epscot@ta.doc.gov*

Information on the EPSCoT is also available at: *http://www.ta.doc.gov/epscot*

For fax and email inquiries, please include a name, mailing address, and phone number.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Authority

The statutory authority for the EPSCoT is the Federal Technology Transfer Act (15 U.S.C. 3704(c)(11), (12) and § 3706)

Program Description

The Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSCoT) will support technology-based economic growth in eligible jurisdictions by promoting partnerships between state and local governments, universities, community colleges, non-profit organizations and the private sector.[1] Through these partnerships, EPSCoT seeks to support local efforts to:

- Build state-wide institutional capacity to support technology commercialization
- Create the business climate that is conducive to technology development, deployment and diffusion
- Compete in Federal R&D programs

The EPSCoT parallels the National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR). While EPSCoR's primary emphasis is improving the competitive performance of major research universities of these jurisdictions, EPSCoT seeks to support state efforts to improve the commercial environment for R&D.

Funding Availability

In fiscal year 1998,

[1] Eligible jurisdictions are those that are eligible to participate in the National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR): Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

- Approximately $1.6 million is available
- It is anticipated that between four and six grants will be awarded
- Funding for multiple year awards will be contingent on the *achievement of annual milestones.*

Matching Funds Requirements

The Technology Administration seeks to develop a partnership with each EPSCoT jurisdiction. To achieve the objectives of the EPSCoT, both parties must contribute to EPSCoT initiatives.

- Grant recipients under this program are required to provide matching funds toward the total project cost
- For single-jurisdiction proposals TA will provide up to 50% of the total project cost
- For multi-jurisdictional proposals TA will provide up to 75% of the total project cost
- Applicants must document the capacity to supply matching funds
- Matching funds may be in the form of cash
- In-kind match is permissible only when the in-kind contribution is significantly changing the activities that would otherwise be performed by the ''match''
- In-kind match may not exceed 25% of the total project cost
- If an applicant incurs any project costs prior to the start date negotiated at the time the award is made, it does so solely at its own risk of not being reimbursed by the government and will not be allowable as ''match.''
- Federal funds (such as grants) generally may not be used as matching funds, except as provided by federal statute. For information about whether particular federal funds may be used as matching funds, the applicant should contact the federal agency that administers the funds in question.

Type of Funding Instrument

- The funding instrument for awards under this program shall be a grant.

Eligible Organizations

Eligible organizations shall be headquartered in jurisdictions that are eligible to participate in the National Science Foundation's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR): Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

Within these jurisdictions, state, local, or Indian tribal governments, community colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, private (for-profit) organizations, technology business centers, business incubators, industry councils *or any combination of these entities* may submit proposals.

- TA shall not award more than one EPSCoT grant per grant round within a single jurisdiction[2].
- Multi-jurisdictional proposals do not count as projects submitted by an organization from a single jurisdiction.
- Entities that are not headquartered in one of the eligible jurisdictions, such as national or regional organizations or federal laboratories, may participate as partners, but may not serve as lead organizations.
- The lead organization is the organization to which funds will be disbursed—this is the organization that is listed in Box 5 of Standard Form 424.

Award Period

- Awards will be made for between 12 and 36 months.
- Multiple year awards will be contingent on the *achievement of annual milestones.*

Proposal Format

Application forms

A complete proposal will include the following:

- Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance.
- Executive Summary.
- Project Narrative.
  - Optional: Appendices, Timelines, Letters of support.
- Standard Form 424A.
  - Budget Narrative.
  - Statement of Matching Funds.
- Standard Form 424B; Assurances.
- Standard Form CD–511; Certifications.
- Standard Form LLL; Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable).

Pagination

The pages of an EPSCoT application should be numbered consecutively, starting with the first page of the Project Narrative. Please number the Budget Narrative and the Statement of Matching Funds as 424A–1, 424A–2, etc. Applicants may insert a Table of Contents after the Standard Form 424 and before the Project Narrative to assist reviewers in locating information.

Page Formats

The proposal should be typed, single-spaced, on 8½″ x 11″ paper. All text should be prepared using a font of no less than 12 points with margins of no less than one inch (1″).

Total Number of Copies

TA requests that each applicant submit one (1) original signed proposal and two (2) copies. The copy with original signatures should clearly be marked ''Original.'' Each duplicate should be clearly marked ''Copy.'' The copy marked ''Original'' must be clipped with a binder clip. The two copies must each be stapled.

Signatures

Signatures are required in the following places in the application

- Bottom (box 18d) of Standard Form 424, Application for Federal Assistance
- Back page of Standard Form 424B, Assurances
- Bottom of back page of Standard Form CD–511, Certifications
- Bottom of Standard Form LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (if applicable)

Standard Forms 424, 424B, CD–511 and LLL should be signed by someone who is authorized to commit the applicant organization(s), such as the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, President, or Executive Director. Original signatures should be in blue ink so that the original proposal can be easily distinguished from the duplicate copies.

Page Limit

The total proposal must not exceed 50 pages, including eight pages for the Project Narrative and a 125 word Executive Summary. The 50-page limit includes all text, tables, illustrations, maps, letters, references, resumes and supporting documents, excluding the Standard Forms and all budget information. Quality, not quantity, is what counts!

Contact Information

Applicants must provide the following contact information on Standard Form 424:

- Legal name (of the organization)
- Complete mailing address
- Telephone number
- Name of a contact individual
- Electronic mail address, if any

If any of this contact information changes after the application is submitted, the applicant must immediately notify EPSCoT in writing.

Narrative Elements

Each proposal must address the following. It is recommended that the project narrative be organized in these five sections.

[2] The Technology Administration reserves the right to make an exception in the event that an organization submits a single jurisdiction proposal and that jurisdiction is implicated in a multi-jurisdictional proposal and both are final candidates for awards.

(1) Scope of Proposed Project

- Describe how the proposed activity was identified
- Describe how the proposed activity will improve the jurisdiction's capacity to support technology-based economic development
- Explain why the proposed activity is a good investment of Federal funds

(2) Project Management

- Describe the qualifications of personnel
- Describe how the project will be managed
- Describe how decisions will be made between and among partners

(3) Coordination within and/or among Jurisdictions

- Describe how the proposed activity relates to, or builds upon, the strategic plans developed for economic development, science & technology and NSF EPSCoR
- Describe how collaborators were identified
- Describe how participating organizations will benefit from the proposed activity

(4) Financial Plan

- Describe how funds will be allocated, given the project timeline and milestones
- Demonstrate your ability to procure matching funds
- Describe the quality of match: while in-kind contributions are allowable, preference will be given to those that are able to procure a cash match

(5) Evaluation

- Describe the appropriate outcome-measures for the proposed activity
- Detail the timeline for the proposed activity (include specific milestones)

Freedom of Information Act

Because of the high level of public interest in projects supported by the EPSCoT, the program anticipates receiving requests for copies of successful applications. Applicants are hereby notified that the applications they submit are subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Applicants may identify sensitive information and label it ''confidential'' to assist TA in making disclosure determinations.

Funding Priorities

EPSCoT's funding priorities are the effective use of partnerships and outreach to underserved areas. EPSCoT funds are not intended for the construction of facilities. Given the central role that technology plays in economic growth, all jurisdictions—federal, state and local—are concerned with creating and maintaining the conditions that are conducive to the development of new technologies, and the adoption and diffusion of existing ones.

EPSCoT is meant to assist jurisdictions in their attempts to promote technology-based economic growth by *improving the commercial environment for R&D.* A strategy for doing so should build on the resources of the state government, research universities, community colleges, vocational schools, business community, finance community and any Federal resources the jurisdiction may have, such as national labs, manufacturing extension centers, or technology transfer centers. To this end, applicants must demonstrate that they are developing robust teaming arrangements between and among participating organizations.

EPSCoT awards will be competitively selected and cost-shared. They will be of a finite duration, ranging from 12 to 36 months, EPSCoT grants must create activities that will become self-sufficient OR create change within the grant life. This way the EPSCoT can support the most innovative projects with the expectation that projects will create new knowledge, develop successful institutional relationships, demonstrate new concepts that can be replicated, or develop concepts that can be sustained by other organizations at the end of the grant life. These grants should either obtain the desired outcome within the life of the grant or should serve as ''seed'' capital to initiatives that will be self-sustaining after the grant. It is intended that EPSCoT projects will serve as models for other jurisdictions.

Multi-jurisdictional Proposals

Recognizing that a regional economy may not always fit within the boundaries of one jurisdiction, the Technology Administration will consider proposals for multi-jurisdiction projects. The requirement of matching funds is reduced for multi-jurisdiction proposals. Applicants will be expected to demonstrate the proposed activity's importance to the stated economic development priorities of the participating jurisdictions. Multi-jurisdiction proposals will not be considered against each jurisdiction's total.

Jurisdictional Coordination

Coordination within jurisdictions is a principal priority of the EPSCoT. Multiple proposals from the same jurisdiction will be scrutinized carefully, not only for redundancy, but also to determine whether the proposed activities will be carried out in isolation. Single proposals representing collaboration between stakeholders in a particular jurisdiction will be reviewed more favorably.

Applicants are required to demonstrate familiarity with the strategic plans developed by the jurisdiction's EPSCoR Committee, economic development agency and/or science & technology council. The proposed activity should clearly build on the stated priorities of these plans.

Examples of Eligible Project Ideas

The EPSCoT aims to foster innovative, collaborative approaches to improve competitiveness; examples of eligible project ideas include, *but are not limited to,* the following:

Technology Access Database

In order to assist small firms in accessing the technological resources of local universities, a jurisdiction could establish a comprehensive database of research areas and contact information. Such an effort would involve significant research to identify and categorize research areas, construct a database that is easily searchable, and then make the database widely available.

Technology Access Workshops

In order to assist small firms in accessing the technological resources of local universities, a jurisdiction could conduct outreach workshops. Such an effort would involve a cluster analysis of the small business community, an inventory of the technological resources available in the local universities, and then a series of workshops.

Increasing Participation in Federal R&D Programs

A jurisdiction could develop mechanisms to increase its participation in Federal R&D programs such as the Small Business Innovation Research Program (SBIR) or the Advanced Technology Program (ATP). Such an effort might involve assistance programs that conduct outreach workshops to small businesses, as well as other service providers, to provide information about these programs and/or commercialization assistance for firms after participation in the program.

Technology Transfer

Several jurisdictions have investigated and identified barriers to university-industry collaboration. Eliminating these barriers can facilitate technology transfer. Such an effort might begin with altering the risk-reward structure to create a climate, or

''market,'' for technology transfer within universities, and go on to include harmonizing technology transfer mechanisms across universities.

Business Incubators

A jurisdiction could establish a virtual business incubator to foster the growth of small technology-intensive businesses in underserved areas. Such an effort might involve a variety of partnerships; for example, between faculty and students from a university's business administration and engineering programs, between existing business incubators and universities, or between universities, community colleges and economic development agencies. Among other things, a virtual incubator could provide online entrepreneurship training, including assistance with business planning and market development.

Co-op Opportunities

A jurisdiction could develop co-op opportunities between universities and businesses to increase interactions between students and private-sector companies. Such an effort might involve cross-placement of engineering and business students.

Strategic Planning

A jurisdiction could apply for a planning grant. A planning effort involving the research community, economic development agencies, private sector, science & technology councils, community colleges, and/or vocational schools, would ideally build on previous plans and integrate the complementary but distinct missions of the participating organizations toward common goals.

Consortia

Having conducted a comprehensive cluster analysis, a jurisdiction may conclude that seemingly disparate nascent clusters in fact have common interests and needs. When no single industry cluster is large enough to sustain an exclusive effort, companies, university researchers and public agencies might form a consortium to address issues of common interest.

Reaping the Investment in Human Capital

A jurisdiction might seek to retain a greater share of its skilled labor. This might involve developing a manufacturing strategy that ties together the jurisdiction's industrial base and the jurisdiction's universities and community colleges so that there are more local employment opportunities for graduates in science and technology fields.

Industry Councils

Having undertaken an analysis to identify industry clusters and key industries, a jurisdiction could work with resident companies to set up industry councils bringing together producers, suppliers, and university researchers. With a minimum of overhead, such councils could serve as fora for identifying and addressing issues of common interest, host networking events, and, as appropriate, conduct outreach activities or implement apprenticeship programs.

Regional Cooperative Efforts

Any of the projects described above could be launched on a regional scale. A group of jurisdictions could work together to identify industry clusters and develop strategies to support those clusters. For example, such an initiative could improve technology access for microenterprises by harmonizing the technology licensing practices among the universities in participating jurisdictions. A group of jurisdictions could also cooperate to link and leverage their efforts in a specific area, such as support for SBIR applicants, in order to provide a more seamless regional infrastructure.

Other Requirements

Each successful applicant will be required to travel to Washington and participate in a 2-day networking meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to brief the Technology Administration on the progress of the funded projects and to provide awardees with an opportunity to compare notes with one another.

In addition, awardees will be required to provide the Technology Administration with quarterly progress reports, consisting of a 1–2 page activity summary and a 1 page budget summary. At the end of the grant period, a final project report is required before the final disbursement of funds. This report must explain the contribution of the funded activity to the jurisdiction's competitiveness and measures of its success.

Selection Process

Each eligible application will first be reviewed by outside reviewers. Each reviewer will evaluate applications according to the *evaluation criteria* below.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to selection criteria that match the required format. These criteria will be weighted equally.

(1) Scope of Proposed Project

Proposals will be evaluated on the clarity with which they:

- Identify/define a specific problem or issue that the proposed activity is to address:
- Identify stakeholders and partners.
- Propose a solution—and specify the process for identifying this particular solution.
- Explain why the proposed activity is a good investment of public funds.
- Demonstrate that the proposed activity does in fact increase a jurisdiction or region's capacity to support technology-based economic development.
- Address the needs of underserved areas.
- Identify specific, quantifiable measurable outcomes of the proposed activity. *Outcomes should reflect benefits that are measurable on an annual basis.*

(2) Project Management

- Proposals will be evaluated for the:
- Adequacy of the personnel—their expertise and ability to carry out the proposed activity.
- Capabilities of the applicant (lead) organization.
- Clarity of the management plan, including the identification of partners.
- Likelihood that the proposed activity will be completed within the grant life, or become self-sustaining afterward.

(3) Coordination within and/or among Jurisdictions

Proposals will be evaluated for the:

- Emphasis on robust teaming arrangements between disparate organizations.
- Degree to which the proposed activity builds upon the complementary missions of the participating organizations.
- Strength and diversity of support for the project within the jurisdiction.
- Partnerships involved—they must be clearly defined, mutually beneficial, and the commitments well documented.
- Demonstrated understanding of the strategic plans developed by the jurisdiction's EPSCoR committee, economic development agency and/or science and technology council. The proposed activity should reflect or build upon the stated priorities of these plans.

(4) Financial Plan

Proposed will be evaluated for the:

- Budget plan—it should be sufficiently detailed so that the

relationship between budget items and milestones in the project narrative is clear. Also, the budget should allow sufficient funds for evaluation, dissemination of results and participation in one networking meeting in Washington, DC.

- Reasonableness of costs.
- Demonstrated ability to provide or procure matching funds.
- Quality of match: while in-kind contributions are allowable, preference will be given to those that are able to (deliver) a cash match.

(5) Evaluation

Each proposal must include a plan for evaluating the project and a plan for disseminating knowledge gained from the project. The evaluation plan should include both quantitative and qualitative indicators and must identify specific evaluation methods. The evaluation plan should also capture the lessons learned during the project that will serve as pragmatic tips for others interested in replicating or adapting the project in other regions. Applications must include the qualifications of any proposed evaluators and sufficient funds in the budget to perform a thorough and useful evaluation of the project.

Finally, applicants must demonstrate a willingness to share information about their projects with interested parties, to host site visits, and to participate in demonstrations.

Each reviewer will make non-building recommendations to a committee of Federal officials, chaired by the EPSCoT Director. This committee will prepare and present a set of recommended grant awards to the Selecting Official, the Under Secretary for Technology. The Committee's recommendations and the Under Secretary's review and approval will take into account the following:

- The evaluations of the outside reviewers.
- The degree to which the slate of applications, taken as a whole, satisfies the program's stated purposes.
- The variety of the proposed activities.
- The availability of funds.
- The geographic distribution of the proposed grant awards.
- Avoidance of redundancy and conflicts with the initiatives of other federal agencies.

Additional Requirements

Primary Application Certifications

All primary applicant institutions must submit a completed form CD–511, ''Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension and Other Responsibility Matters; Drug-Free Workplace Requirements and Lobbying,'' and the following explanations must be provided:

(1) *Non-procurement Debarment and Suspension.* Prospective participants (as defined at 15 CFR Part 26, Section 105) are subject to 15 CFR Part 26, ''Non-procurement Debarment and Suspension'' and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

(2) *Drug-Free Workplace.* Grantees (as defined at 15 CFR Part 26, Section 605) are subject to 15 CFR Part 26, Subpart F, ''Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)'' and the related section of the certification form prescribed above applies;

(3) *Anti-Lobbying.* Persons (as defined at 15 CFR Part 28, Section 105) are subject to the lobbying provisions of 31 U.S.C. 1352, ''Limitation on use of appropriated funds to influence certain Federal contracting and financial transactions,'' and the lobbying section of the certification form prescribed above applies to applications/bids for grants, cooperative agreements, and contracts for more than $100,000, and loans and loan guarantees for more than $150,000, or the single family maximum mortgage limit for affected programs, whichever is greater.

(4) *Anti-Lobbying Disclosure.* Any applicant institution that has paid or will pay for lobbying using any funds must submit an SF–LLL, ''Disclosure of Lobbying Activities,'' as required under 15 CFR Part 28, Appendix B.

(5) *Lower-Tier Certifications.* Recipients shall require applicant/bidder institutions for subgrants, contracts, subcontracts, or other lower tier covered transactions at any tier under the award to submit, if applicable, a completed Form CD–512, ''Certifications Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion—Lower Tier Covered Transactions and Lobbying'' and disclosure form, SF–LLL, ''Disclosure of Lobbying Activities.'' Form CD–512 is intended for the use of recipients and should not be transmitted to TA. SF–LLL submitted by any tier recipient or subrecipient should be submitted to TA in accordance with the instructions contained in the award document.

Name Check Reviews

All for-profit and non-profit applicants will be subject to a name check review process. Name checks are intended to reveal if any individuals associated with the applicant have been convicted of or are presently facing, criminal charges such as fraud, theft, perjury, or other matters which significantly reflect on the applicant's management honesty or financial integrity.

Preaward Activities

Applicants (or their institutions) who incur any costs prior to an award being made do so solely at their own risk of not being reimbursed by the Government. Notwithstanding any verbal assurance that may have been provided, there is no obligation on the part of TA to cover pre-award costs.

No Obligation for Future Funding

If an application is accepted for funding, TA has no obligation to provide any additional future funding in connection with that award. Renewal of an award to increase funding or extend the period of performance is at the total discretion of TA.

Past Performance

Unsatisfactory performance under prior Federal awards may result in an application not being considered for funding.

False Statements

A false statement on an application is grounds for denial or termination of funds, and grounds for possible punishment by a fine or imprisonment as provided in 18 U.S.C. 1001.

Waiver Authority

It is the general intent of TA not to waive any of the provisions set forth in this Notice. However, under extraordinary circumstances and when it is in the best interests of the federal government, TA, upon its own initiative or when requested, may waive the provisions in this Notice. Waivers may only be granted for requirements that are discretionary and not mandated by statute. Any request for a waiver must set forth the extraordinary circumstances for the request and be included in the application or sent to the address provided in the ''Addresses'' section above. The final determination will be made by the Selecting Official, the Under Secretary for Technology. TA will not consider a request to waive the application deadline for an application until the application has been received.

Delinquent Federal Debts

No award of Federal funds shall be made to an applicant who has an outstanding delinquent Federal debt until either:

(1) The delinquent account is paid in full,

(2) A negotiated repayment schedule is established and at least one payment is received, or

(3) Other arrangements satisfactory to DoC are made.

Indirect Costs

No Federal funds will be authorized for Indirect Costs (IDC); however, an applicant may provide for IDC under their portion of Cost Sharing.

The total dollar amount of the indirect costs proposed in an application under this program must not exceed the indirect cost rate negotiated and approved by a cognizant Federal agency prior to the proposed effective date of the award or 100 percent of the total proposed direct costs dollar amount in the application, whichever is less.

Purchase of American-Made Equipment and Products

Applicants are hereby notified that they are encouraged, to the greatest practicable extent, to purchase American-made equipment and products with funding provided under this program.

Paperwork Reduction Act

This notice involves collections of information subject to the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA), which have been approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) under OMB Control Numbers 0348–0043, 0348–0044, 0348–0040 and 0348–0046. Notwithstanding any other provision of law no person is required to respond to nor shall a person be subject to a penalty for failure to comply with a collection of information subject to the requirements of the PRA unless that collection displays a current valid OMB control number.

Federal Policies and Procedures

Recipients and subrecipients under the Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Technology (EPSoT) shall be subject to all Federal laws and Federal and Departmental regulations, policies, and procedures applicable to financial assistance awards.

Intergovernmenal Review

Applicants are reminded of the applicability of Executive Order 12372, ''Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.''

Executive Order Statement

This funding notice was determined to be ''significant'' for purposes of Executive Order 12866.

Gary R. Bachula,

Acting Under Secretary for Technology.

[FR Doc. 98–18660 Filed 7–13–98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–18–M

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army

Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank Heavy Armor System

AGENCY: U.S. Army Program Executive Office, Ground Combat & Support Systems, Warren, MI.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 and Army Regulation (AR) 200–2, the proposed FONSI for the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank Heavy Armor System is being published for comment.

The U.S. Army Program Executive Office, Ground Combat & Support Systems (PEO–GCSS) has prepared a draft Environmental Assessment for the M1 Abrams Main Battle Tank (MBT) Heavy Armor System. The current use of the depleted uranium (DU) armor package on the Abrams MBT has been re-evaluated to determine whether the environmental impacts of its continued use remain insignificant, taking into consideration the current use of the tank and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC's) reduction in allowable radiation exposure from 500 mrem/year to 100 mrem/year for tank and maintenance crews (individual members of the public).

As in already-fielded weapon system, M1 MBTs have been in production and in the field since the early 1980s. During that time, many technical, environmental and health assessments have been completed. These documents have addressed and minimized environmental impacts. As part of the continuing analysis effort, this EA focuses specifically on the assembly, use, repair and disposal of the heavy armor package.

DATES: Comments must be received not later than August 28, 1998.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Questions concerning this proposed action should be submitted within 45 days of the date of this publication and directed to Mr. Dennis Sweers, Abrams Program Management Office, Program Executive Office, Ground Combat and Support Systems, ATTN: SFAE–GCSS–W–AB–SM, Warren, MI 48397–5000. Telephone number: (810) 574–7895, E-mail address: sweersd@cc.tacom.army.mil

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

1. Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

The Abrams Tank System Program (Abrams), administered by the Project Manager, Abrams Tank System (PM Abrams) with support from the U.S. Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command (TACOM), has been using Depleted Uranium (DU) armor on the Abrams Tank since 1988. In 1996, a design change to the armor package was made by the Army and cut-in to production by General Dynamics Land Systems (GDLS) via Change Request XMPP–2083 in Oct 96 and effective with Job #1 M1A2 Phase II AUT. The purpose of this revision to the Environmental Assessment (EA) is to assess the environmental impact of the change from the original DU armor design to this modified design. Additionally, although unrelated to this armor design change, since the last EA, the NRC's maximum radiation dose limits for individual members of the public has been change from 500 mrem per year to 100 mrem per year. This revision assesses the new design against these new dose limits.

B. The findings of the draft EA of the M1 Abrams MBT Heavy Army System support this FONSI. The assessment was conducted in keeping with the Army's environmental stewardship policy, to ensure that any potential environmental impacts are fully mitigated. The EA supports all related M1 Abrams MBT programs reviewed by the Defense Acquisition Board.

2. General Description of Action

A. Under the proposed action, the use of the current depleted uranium (DU) armor package on the Abrams tank would be evaluated to determine whether the environmental impacts of its continued use remain insignificant, taking into consideration the current use of the tank, the armor package design change instituted in 1996 and changes in the NRC's radiation dose limits for individual members of the public. If it is determined that the environmental impacts of use of the DU armor package remain insignificant, PM Abrams will continue to produce the armor package through 2005.

B. The draft Heavy Armor System EA evaluates the following: tank assembly activities at Lima Army Tank Plant (LATP); field operations including crew maintenance, field support maintenance and depot maintenance; and demilitarization. All DU issues which are not the direct responsibility of PM Abrams are not covered in the EA, but have been covered in previous assessments.

C. In summary, the DU is fabricated into armor packages by a contractor to the Department of Energy. The contractor ships the assembled armor packages to LATP for installation in the