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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Laurel Dygowski, EPA Region VIII, (303) 312-6144.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: See the information provided in the Direct Final rule of the same title which is located in the Rules and Regulations section of this **Federal Register**.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*

Dated: April 15, 2002.

Jack W. McGraw,

Acting Regional Administrator, Region VIII.
[FR Doc. 02-12412 Filed 5-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Part 194

[FRL-7214-1]

RIN 2060-AG85

Waste Characterization Program Documents Applicable to Transuranic Radioactive Waste From the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site for Disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency.

ACTION: Notice of availability; opening of public comment period.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing the availability of, and soliciting public comments for 30 days on, Department of Energy (DOE) documents applicable to characterization of transuranic (TRU) radioactive waste at the Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (RFETS) proposed for disposal at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP). The documents (Item II-A2-39, Docket A-98-49) are available for review in the public dockets listed in **ADDRESSES**. EPA will conduct an inspection of waste streams, characterization systems and processes at RFETS to verify that the site can characterize transuranic waste in accordance with EPA's WIPP compliance criteria. EPA will perform this inspection the week of June 3, 2002.

DATES: EPA is requesting public comment on the documents. Comments must be received by EPA's official Air Docket on or before June 19, 2002.

ADDRESSES: Comments should be submitted to: Docket No. A-98-49, Air Docket, Room M-1500, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 401 M Street, SW, Mail Code 6102, Washington, DC 20460. The DOE

documents are available for review in the official EPA Air Docket in Washington, DC, Docket No. A-98-49, Category II-A2, and at the following three EPA WIPP informational docket locations in New Mexico: in Carlsbad at the Municipal Library, Hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-9 p.m., Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and Sunday 1 a.m.-5 p.m.; in Albuquerque at the Government Publications Department, Zimmerman Library, University of New Mexico, Hours: vary by semester; and in Santa Fe at the New Mexico State Library, Hours: Monday-Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

As provided in EPA's regulations at 40 CFR part 2, and in accordance with normal EPA docket procedures, if copies of any docket materials are requested, a reasonable fee may be charged for photocopying. Air Docket A-98-49 in Washington, DC, accepts comments sent electronically or by fax (fax: 202-260-4400; e-mail: a-and-r-docket@epa.gov).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ed Feltcorn, Office of Radiation and Indoor Air, (202) 564-9422. You can also call EPA's toll-free WIPP Information Line, 1-800-331-WIPP or visit our website at <http://www.epa.gov/radiation/wipp>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

DOE is developing the WIPP near Carlsbad in southeastern New Mexico as a deep geologic repository for disposal of TRU radioactive waste. As defined by the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act (LWA) of 1992 (Pub. L. 102-579), as amended (Pub. L. 104-201), TRU waste consists of materials containing elements having atomic numbers greater than 92 (with half-lives greater than twenty years), in concentrations greater than 100 nanocuries of alpha-emitting TRU isotopes per gram of waste. Much of the existing TRU waste consists of items contaminated during the production of nuclear weapons, such as rags, equipment, tools, and sludges.

On May 13, 1998, EPA announced its final compliance certification decision to the Secretary of Energy (published May 18, 1998, 63 FR 27354). This decision stated that the WIPP will comply with EPA's radioactive waste disposal regulations at 40 CFR part 191, subparts B and C.

The final WIPP certification decision includes conditions that (1) prohibit shipment of TRU waste for disposal at WIPP from any site other than the Los Alamos National Laboratories (LANL) until the EPA determines that the site has established and executed a quality assurance program, in accordance with

§§ 194.22(a)(2)(i), 194.24(c)(3), and 194.24(c)(5) for waste characterization activities and assumptions (Condition 2 of appendix A to 40 CFR part 194); and (2) (with the exception of specific, limited waste streams and equipment at LANL) prohibit shipment of TRU waste for disposal at WIPP (from LANL or any other site) until EPA has approved the procedures developed to comply with the waste characterization requirements of § 194.22(c)(4) (Condition 3 of appendix A to 40 CFR part 194). The EPA's approval process for waste generator sites is described in § 194.8. As part of EPA's decision-making process, DOE is required to submit to EPA appropriate documentation of quality assurance and waste characterization programs at each DOE waste generator site seeking approval for shipment of TRU radioactive waste to WIPP. In accordance with § 194.8, EPA will place such documentation in the official Air Docket in Washington, DC, and informational dockets in the State of New Mexico for public review and comment.

EPA will perform an inspection of the waste characterization systems and processes for TRU waste at RFETS in accordance with Conditions 2 and 3 of the WIPP certification. Specifically, we will be inspecting new equipment—a mobile real-time radiography unit and the Multi Purpose Crate Counter for gamma and neutron analysis. We will also evaluate acceptable knowledge (AK) and batch data reports for newly generated waste. The inspection is scheduled to take place the week of June 3, 2002.

EPA has placed a number of documents pertinent to the inspection in the public docket described in **ADDRESSES**. The documents are listed as Item II-A2-39 in Docket A-98-49. In accordance with 40 CFR 194.8, as amended by the final certification decision, EPA is providing the public 30 days to comment on these documents.

If EPA determines as a result of the inspection that the proposed waste streams, processes, systems, and equipment at RFETS adequately control the characterization of transuranic waste, we will notify DOE by letter and place the letter in the official Air Docket in Washington, DC, as well as in the informational docket locations in New Mexico. A letter of approval will allow DOE to ship TRU waste to WIPP using the approved characterization processes. The EPA will not make a determination of compliance prior to the inspection or before the 30-day comment period has closed.

Information on the certification decision is filed in the official EPA Air

Docket, Docket No. A-93-02 and is available for review in Washington, DC, and at three EPA WIPP informational docket locations in New Mexico. The dockets in New Mexico contain only

major items from the official Air Docket in Washington, DC, plus those documents added to the official Air Docket since the October 1992 enactment of the WIPP LWA.

Dated: May 14, 2002.

Robert Brenner,

Acting Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation.

[FR Doc. 02-12684 Filed 5-17-02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P