the Draft Consolidation EIS was published on July 1, 2005 (70 FR 38132).

In response to public comments, DOE explored other locations and facilities for the “bridge” alternative, in addition to those analyzed in the Draft Consolidation EIS. While review of other reasonable alternatives at DOE sites was in progress, it became evident that refurbishment of existing facilities to make them suitable for the bridge period would not be cost effective. In addition, the escalating cost estimate of proposed new construction at INL did not favor the proposed consolidation. Therefore, DOE postponed issuance of the Final Consolidation EIS while the program reanalyzed its approach to Pu–238 production, with or without consolidation. On the basis of this reanalysis, DOE now believes that consolidation is no longer a reasonable alternative due to very high cost of refurbishment of facilities for the bridge period and for proposed new construction at the consolidation site. Therefore, the Consolidation EIS is hereby cancelled.

Next Steps

In order to restart Pu–238 production, implementation of the decision made in the NI PEIS ROD offers the optimum approach. Since the NI PEIS ROD was issued nearly 12 years ago, DOE will prepare an SA in accordance with DOE’s NEPA Implementing Procedures at 10 CFR 1021.314 prior to implementing that decision. There are no changes to the proposed action as analyzed in the NI PEIS. If there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns, DOE will prepare a supplemental EIS in accordance with 10 CFR 1021.314 and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations at 40 CFR 1502.9. Otherwise, DOE may determine that the 2001 decision can be implemented without further NEPA documentation. DOE’s determination will be announced in the Federal Register and the SA and the determination will be available to the public and posted on the DOE NEPA Web site. Copies of the determination and SA will be provided upon written request and will be available for inspection in the appropriate DOE public reading room(s) or other appropriate location(s) for a reasonable period of time.