FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Mercury Transfer Project at Hawthorne Army Depot, Nevada

June 13, 2012

Defense Logistics Agency
DLA Strategic Materials
Fort Belvoir, Virginia

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Defense, Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Strategic Materials

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

SUMMARY: As required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.), DLA Strategic Materials has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA), *Environmental Assessment Mercury Transfer Project at Hawthorne Army Depot.* The EA considered the potential environmental impacts of the proposed repackaging of the mercury stockpile stored at Hawthorne Army Depot (HWAD), Hawthorne, Nevada, from three-liter steel flasks into new one metric ton containers. Based on the analysis in the EA, including the no-action alternative, DLA Strategic Materials has determined that the proposed action is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

ADDRESSES AND FURTHER INFORMATION: Copies of the final EA, this FONSI or further information on the proposed action are available from:

DLA Strategic Materials
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Additional information on the NEPA process can be obtained from the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) website at http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/.

BACKGROUND: The DLA Strategic Materials mercury stockpile consists of approximately 4,436 metric tons (about 4,890 tons) of mercury stored in 14 warehouses at HWAD. The mercury is contained in 128,672 three-liter steel flasks that are packaged in steel drums and stored on pallets with drip pans. The mercury storage at HWAD was implemented following the decision reached in the DLA Strategic Materials Record of Decision dated April 22, 2004, for the Final Mercury Management EIS.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES: To satisfy the terms of its agreement with the State of Nevada allowing the consolidation of the mercury stockpile for storage at HWAD, DLA Strategic Materials proposes to transfer mercury from three-liter steel flasks into new one-metric-ton containers. Transfer activities would be accomplished inside a modular repackaging

facility to be set up adjacent to one of the 14 warehouses where mercury is stored. Drums containing flasks of mercury would be transported to the repackaging facility. After the metric ton containers are filled with mercury, they will be transported back to the warehouses for storage. Repackaging would be completed in 15 years and would employ approximately 10 full-time people during the repackaging process. Repackaging facility will have proper ventilation and filtration system to limit worker exposures to mercury vapors and to prevent release of mercury vapors to the environment.

DLA Strategic Materials also considered the no-action alternative. Under this alternative, the mercury stockpile would continue to be stored in the existing three-liter steel flasks inside steel drums in the 14 warehouses at HWAD.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS: The EA found that the proposed action would have only minor adverse impacts and would have small positive impacts on socioeconomic conditions. Control systems and management practices already incorporated in the plans for the proposed action would ensure avoidance of potential adverse impacts in the areas of air quality, waste management, and health and safety.

There would be minor impacts on air quality from generation of fugitive dust and air pollutants from excavation for installation of site utilities and from operation of motor vehicles during site development and project operations.

Waste management impacts from the proposed action would be minor. The proposed action would result in the generation of hazardous and nonhazardous wastes. These wastes would be managed safely under existing federal and state requirements and in accordance with DOD policies.

Assessment of potential impacts to worker and public health and safety considered both the construction and operational phases of the repackaging facility, including impacts of potential accidents. No special concerns are identified for the construction phase. During operation, presence of mercury vapor in air would be of main concern for worker health and safety. Ventilation and filtration equipment in the repackaging facility would prevent workers as well as non-workers from exposure to mercury vapors at levels that exceed protective thresholds for chronic exposure to mercury. Potential impacts of any mercury releases within the repackaging facility would be minimized through spill containment, ventilation, and filtration systems in the new facility.

Impacts on hydrology are limited to a small increase in residential water consumption due to use of water by project workers and their families. However, any impact to Walker Lake would be very small compared with other water losses affecting the lake.

The potential for impacts to biological and cultural resources is low. There are no identified archaeological sites on the route for the electric line and the proposed action would not alter buildings that could be historic.

Existing services and utilities have sufficient capacity to meet the demands of the proposed action without adverse impacts. Socioeconomic impacts would be small but positive, due to a small increase in local employment that could be easily accommodated by existing housing and community services. Potential impacts on land use, aesthetics and noise, and transportation and traffic are negligible.

No environmental justice impacts are identified. No minority or low-income populations are identified in the local area that could be affected by the proposed action and the action would not produce any environmental impacts that would be considered "high and adverse."

Based on the analysis of the potential impacts, including direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, the Environmental Assessment concludes that the proposed action would produce no significant adverse impacts on the human environment.

DETERMINATION: Based on the results of the analyses performed during the preparation of the Environmental Assessment, I conclude that the proposed repackaging action does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the context of National Environmental Policy Act. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed action is not required.

Issued at Fort Belvoir, Virginia this 25th day of Sept, 2012.

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