

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Defense Logistics Agency

Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Defense National Stockpile Center

ACTION: Notice of Availability of a Draft Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) announces the availability of its Draft Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS). This announcement is pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 – 1508) and the Defense Logistic Agency's (DLA) regulations (DLAR 1000.22) that implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Defense National Stockpile Center (DNSC) inventory of elemental mercury (approximately 4,436 metric tons) is currently stored in enclosed warehouses at four sites in the United States: near New Haven, IN; in Oak Ridge, TN; in Hillsborough, NJ; and near Warren, OH. Because the mercury has been declared in excess of national defense needs, DNSC must decide on a strategy for the long-term management of this excess commodity. The Draft EIS analyzes three alternatives for managing the National Defense Stockpile inventory of excess mercury: 1) no-action, i.e., leave the mercury at the existing storage locations, 2) consolidated storage of the mercury stockpile at one site, and 3) sale of the stockpile. DNSC's preferred alternative is (2) consolidated storage. The Draft EIS evaluates a range of locations that would be acceptable consolidation sites.

Public comments are invited and encouraged concerning the analysis of environmental and socioeconomic issues, as well as the management alternatives considered in the Draft EIS.

DATES: Public meetings are scheduled to be held as follows: May 20, 2003 in New Haven, IN; May 22 in Niles, OH; June 10 in Hawthorne, NV; June 12 in Tooele, UT; June 17 in Hillsborough, NJ; June 24 in Washington, DC; and July 1 in Oak Ridge, TN. The times and locations of the meetings are provided in the Supplementary Information section of this announcement. The comment period ends on July 18, 2003. Comments on the Draft EIS must be postmarked, e-mailed, or otherwise submitted no later than this date.

ADDRESSES: Paper copies and computer disks (CD) of the Draft EIS (about 450 pages) and Executive Summary are available by writing to: Attention: Project Manager, Mercury Management EIS; DNSC-E; Defense National Stockpile Center, 8725 John J. Kingman Road, Suite 3229, Fort Belvoir, VA. 22060-6223, or calling toll free at 1-888-306-6682. Electronic versions of the Executive Summary and the Draft EIS are found on the internet at www.mercuryeis.com. Copies of the Draft EIS may also be reviewed at

locations listed in the Supplementary Information section. Written comments on the Draft EIS should be sent to the above address, faxed to 1-888-306-8818, or posted to the Mercury Management EIS website at www.mercuryeis.com. Comments may be dictated by calling toll free at 1-888-306-6682.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Requests for information can be made by: leaving a voice message at 1-888-306-6682; faxing a message to 1-888-306-8818; e-mailing a request to information@mercuryeis.com; or accessing the Mercury Management EIS website at www.mercuryeis.com/.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The Defense National Stockpile Center (DNSC) is responsible for the disposition of stockpiled materials declared in excess of national defense needs. The United States Congress has determined that the U.S. Department of Defense no longer needs to maintain a stockpile of mercury because of the increased use of mercury substitutes and because of increases in the nation's secondary mercury production through recovery and recycling. The DNSC excess mercury was offered for sale in open competitions until 1994 when concerns over mercury accumulation in the global environment prompted DNSC to suspend sales. The DNSC inventory of mercury (approximately 4,436 metric tons) is stored in enclosed warehouses at four sites in the United States: New Haven, IN (557 metric tons); Oak Ridge, TN (699 metric tons); Hillsborough, NJ (2,617 metric tons); and Warren, OH (564 metric tons).

As custodian of the mercury, DNSC must decide on a strategy for long-term management of this material. In compliance with NEPA and DLA Regulation 1000.22, "Environmental Considerations in DLA Actions in the United States," DNSC has prepared the Draft EIS to evaluate the environmental impacts of a range of reasonable alternatives for long-term management (i.e., 40 years) of the excess mercury. The alternatives are: (1) no action, i.e., maintaining storage at the four existing sites; (2) consolidation and storage at one of the three current DNSC mercury storage sites or at one of three other candidate locations; and (3) sale of the mercury inventory. The agency's preferred alternative is (2) consolidated storage. The Draft EIS evaluates a range of locations that would be acceptable consolidation sites. If a site other than those evaluated is selected, further environmental analysis would be required.

The Draft EIS also describes the potential environmental, human health, and socioeconomic impacts of these alternatives, together with cost considerations. Several treatment technologies were considered as possible alternatives for mercury management. Based on the immaturity of bulk mercury treatment technologies and the lack of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved path forward, bulk treatment and disposal of elemental mercury is not considered viable at this time and is not evaluated in detail in the Draft EIS.

The Department of Energy (DOE) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are cooperating agencies in the preparation of this Draft EIS. DOE is recognized because of their special expertise and because some of the DNSC excess mercury is stored at their

Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. EPA is recognized because of their special expertise in the areas of mercury fate and effects in the environment, mercury stabilization and disposal technologies, and the regulation of hazardous material.

This Draft EIS is being distributed for public review and copies are also available at the following locations:

Allen County Public Library
435 Ann Street
New Haven, Indiana 46774

Bridgewater Branch Library
N. Bridge Street and Vogt Drive
Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807

Fairfax County Public Library
12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 324
Fairfax, VA 22035

Ford Memorial Library
7169 North Main Street
Ovid, New York 14521

Hillsborough Public Library
379 South Branch Road
Hillsborough New Jersey 08844

Martin Luther King Jr. Library
901 G Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Mineral County Public Library
P.O. Box 1390
Hawthorne, Nevada 89415

Oak Ridge Public Library
1401 Oak Ridge Turnpike
Oak Ridge, TN 37830

Raritan Valley Community College
Evelyn S. Field Library, North Branch
Route 28 and Lamington Road
Somerville, New Jersey 08876

Seneca Army Depot
5786 State Route 96
Building 123
Romulus, NY 14541

Somerville Public Library
35 West End Avenue
Somerville, New Jersey 08876

Tooele City Public Library
128 West Vine Street
Tooele, Utah 84074

Warren-Trumbull County Public Library
444 Mahoning Avenue, NW
Warren, Ohio 44483

Waterloo Library and Historical Society
31 East Williams Street
Waterloo, New York 13165

West End Branch Library
1101 24th and L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

DNSC invites Federal agencies, state, local and tribal governments, and the general public to comment on the environmental and socioeconomic issues and the management alternatives addressed in the Draft EIS. The public comment period began with the publication of the EPA Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on April 11, 2003, and will continue until July 18, 2003. DNSC will consider all comments received or postmarked by the end of the comment period when preparing the Final Mercury Management EIS. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable. As part of the public review process, DNSC has scheduled public meetings at the following locations:

May 20, 2003, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
Park Hill Learning Center
1000 Prospect Avenue
New Haven, Indiana

May 22, 2003, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
McMenamy's Multipurpose Complex
325 Youngstown-Warren Road
Niles, Ohio

June 10, 2003, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
Hawthorne Convention Center
932 E Street
Hawthorne, Nevada

June 12, 2003, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
Tooele High School
240 West 1st South
Tooele, Utah

June 17, 2003, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
Hillsborough High School
466 Raider Boulevard
Hillsborough, New Jersey

June 24, 2003, 1:00 to 4:00 pm
Hall of States
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Washington, DC

July 1, 2003, 6:00 to 9:00 pm
Garden Plaza Hotel
215 S. Illinois Avenue
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

The registration desk and exhibit area at the meeting will open at 6:00 pm (1:00 pm for the Washington, DC meeting). DNSC staff will be available to explain exhibits, provide information materials, and answer questions. At 7:00 pm (2:00 pm for the Washington, DC meeting), DNSC will provide a short presentation on the EIS process and the Mercury Management EIS. Following the DNSC presentation, elected or appointed officials, organizations, and individuals will be invited to offer comments. Comments will be recorded for the record. Speakers will be allotted five minutes each. The meetings will be managed by a facilitator who will help keep the focus on obtaining public input on the content of the Draft EIS. At 8:30 pm (3:30 pm for the Washington, DC meeting), the public comment portion of the meeting will conclude and the exhibit area will reopen. DNSC staff will be available to explain exhibits, provide information materials, and answer questions. The meeting will end at 9 pm (4 pm for the Washington, DC meeting).

Requests to speak at the meetings may be made by writing to the Mercury Management EIS project manager (see ADDRESSES, above), by calling the toll free phone number (888-306-6682) by 4:00 pm EST the day before the meeting, or in person at the meeting. If you phone in to pre-register, please leave your name, the organization you represent, and the location of the meeting you plan to attend. Speakers will be heard on a first-come, first-served basis as time permits. Speakers do not have to pre-register, but pre-registered speakers will be ensured an opportunity to speak. Comments will be

transcribed by a court reporter and will become a part of the meeting record. Speakers are encouraged to provide written versions of their spoken comments. The facilitator and DNSC staff may ask questions to clarify the speaker's comments.

Written comments will be accepted at the meetings and comment forms will be provided for this purpose. For those who prefer to dictate comments before or after the formal comment portion of the meeting, a court reporter will be available in the exhibit area until the meeting closes.

All meeting facilities are handicapped accessible. A hearing-impaired sign language interpreter will be provided at all meetings. Persons who have other special requirements should contact the Project Manager in advance so that arrangements may be made to accommodate their needs.

Input from the public meetings along with comments received by other means (i.e., mail, phone, fax, email, and website) will be used by DNSC in preparing the Final Mercury Management EIS. Written and spoken comments will be given equal weight. The Final Mercury Management EIS will be distributed to information repositories, mailed out upon request, and can be viewed at www.mercuryeis.com.

Issued in Fort Belvoir, VA, on this 7th day of April 2003.

CORNEL A. HOLDER
Administrator
Defense National Stockpile Center