

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release: April 14, 2003
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Defense Stockpile Issues Draft Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement for Public Review

Cornel Holder, Administrator of the Defense National Stockpile Center, announced today the availability of the Draft Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement (Draft MM EIS) for public review. The Draft MM EIS will help decide the best way to manage the elemental mercury in the National Defense Stockpile over the long term.

The Draft MM EIS analyzes three mercury management alternatives: 1) consolidate storage of the mercury stockpile at one site, 2) sale of the stockpile and 3) no-action, i.e., leave the mercury at the existing storage locations. DNSC's preferred alternative is consolidated storage.

The Draft MM EIS concludes that all three alternatives would have small environmental impacts, and differences among them are insufficient to support a preference for any one alternative. It notes that consolidated storage would have negligible to minor impacts on the environment at the potential consolidation sites and minor beneficial impacts at current storage locations after the mercury is removed. The preference for consolidated storage is based on a combination of environmental,

economic and technical factors; policy considerations, and public input. According to the Draft MM EIS, storing the mercury at one location would simplify operations, thus conserving resources, and support DNSC's future plans for closing some depots.

DNSC is responsible for the management of many different commodities in the National Defense Stockpile, one of which is mercury. Most of the commodities in the stockpile have been declared excess to future defense needs and are being sold. However, due to concerns about mercury's impact on the global environment, DNSC stopped selling mercury in 1994. The mercury, approximately 4,436 metric tons, is in safe storage at four locations: New Haven, Indiana; Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Hillsborough, New Jersey; and Warren, Ohio.

In releasing the document, Holder emphasized that no final decision has been made on the preferred alternative: "We've listened to the public, to special interest groups, to industry and environmentalists, and we've worked closely with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Energy as well as other government agencies to develop this Draft MM EIS. The process is not yet complete. I encourage people to let us know what they think; we will be listening to what they have to say at public meetings and reviewing the comments they send us before making a final determination."

After consideration of public comments, DNSC will prepare a Final EIS that includes its responses to comments. Depending on the number of comments received, that should occur by the end of the year or early 2004. A minimum of 30 days after the Final MM EIS is issued, a concise public record -- referred to as the Record of Decision -

- will be published presenting the factors considered and presenting DNSC's decision on which mercury management alternative to implement.

The Draft MM EIS is available for review at the Information Repositories near potentially affected sites and a series of public meetings will be held during the 90-day comment period that ends July 18, 2003; information on the repositories and public meetings is available on the website address listed below. Federal agencies, state, local and tribal governments, and the general public are invited to comment on the environmental and socioeconomic issues, as well as the mercury management alternatives considered in the Draft MM EIS.

Written comments on the Draft MM EIS will be accepted at public meetings or they may be submitted via the U.S. mail to the address below, faxed to 1-888-306-8818, or posted to the Mercury Management EIS website at www.mercuryeis.com. Comments may also be dictated by calling 1-888-306-6682. Electronic versions of the Executive Summary and the Draft MM EIS can be found on the Internet at www.mercuryeis.com.

To obtain a paper copy and/or computer disk (CD) of the Executive Summary or the Draft MM EIS (about 450 pages), individuals may contact:

U.S. Mail: Attention: Project Manager, Mercury Management EIS, DNSC-E
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The Defense National Stockpile Center is a field activity for the Defense Logistics Agency. The Defense Logistics Agency provides supply support, and technical and

logistics services to the military services and to several civilian agencies. Headquartered at Fort Belvoir, VA, DLA is the one source for nearly every consumable item, whether for combat readiness, emergency preparedness or day-to-day operations. DNSC is responsible for all activities necessary to provide safe, secure, and environmentally sound stewardship for all the commodities in the Defense National Stockpile.