

MERCURY

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DNSC Explains Scope of MM EIS

DNSC has issued a report that summarizes public comments provided during the scoping period for the MM EIS and presents determinations reached by DNSC as a result of that process.

The Scope of the Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement (Scope of Statement) explains the major issues that will be addressed in the MM EIS, the proposed action and the implementation alternatives that will be considered. It also explains the approach DNSC will take in evaluating potential impacts from these actions.

DNSC Deputy Administrator Cornel Holder said that the Scope of Statement shows that DNSC is "moving ahead on the mercury management issue and listening to the views and concerns of the public."

Prior to release, the report was reviewed by the Inter-Agency Working Group, which is providing input to DNSC on the development of the MM EIS. The Inter-Agency Working Group includes the Department of Energy, a cooperating agency on the MM EIS; the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Commerce, the U.S. Geologic Survey, the Department of Public Health & Human Services, and the International Trade Administration.

The Scope of Statement describes how DNSC encouraged public involvement during the scoping period (February 5–June 30, 2001) by offering several mechanisms for submitting comments: email, toll-free voice and fax numbers, and a mail-in option. DNSC also made available information on DNSC, mercury, and the EIS process in fact sheets, exhibits, a website, and the MM EIS newsletter. These outreach mechanisms are available throughout the EIS process.

In addition, DNSC hosted five scoping meetings in the vicinity of mercury storage depots and in Washington, D.C. One hundred and eight people participated in the meetings at

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Mercury Storage Depots Are Safe and Secure, DNSC Official Assures Public

"DNSC's mercury storage depots are safe and secure," says DNSC Deputy Administrator Cornel Holder, "and we're conducting new vulnerability assessments to ensure that they stay that way."

In an interview with the *Mercury Management News*, Holder said he wanted to continue the dialogue begun with the public during scoping meetings on the MM EIS last spring, and address possible concerns related to recent terrorist activities. He emphasized that DNSC's top priorities in the wake of the September 11th attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are, as always, "the health and safety of our workers and the community, and the protection of our environment."

He explained that, given the presence of power plants, pipelines, chemical plants and other more attractive targets, DNSC's mercury storage depots have never been considered likely targets for terrorist attacks. However, as an added precaution, DNSC initiated immediate re-assessments of their vulnerability, Holder said. "Both the Defense Department and the General Services Administration, which owns or leases the property on which the DNSC mer-

cury storage depots are located, had previously evaluated DNSC's security and found it sufficient. Nevertheless, we asked both agencies to revisit the mercury storage sites and conduct new assessments."

The General Services Administration completed its assessment of security at the Somerville, New Jersey, Depot in October 2001 and concluded that the site is adequately protected. Vulnerability assessments of the New Haven,

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which attendees had the opportunity to visit exhibits, obtain information materials, and speak with DNSC representatives, as well as to submit comments—oral or written—on the scope and content of the MM EIS.

Public Comments Focus on Health, Accidents, Sales

In response to DNSC’s request for comments, the Scope of Statement notes that 109 comments were submitted. Commentors included private citizens and representatives of industry and public interest organizations, as well as federal, state, and local government officials.

The majority of comments related to three issues:

- impacts on human health and safety from the past, present and future storage of mercury,
- impacts from potential accidents at DNSC mercury management facilities,
- environmental and economic impacts from renewed sales.

As anticipated, human health risk was one of the key areas of comment. The MM EIS will evaluate the risks presented by each of the mercury management alternatives to public health and to DNSC workers. Risks will be assessed during routine conduct of mercury management activities and in accident scenarios.

Potential accident scenarios will include spills, leaks, fires, and accidents caused by natural events such as high winds, tornadoes, and earthquakes, as well as the likelihood and potential consequences of a terrorist attack. The EIS analysis will consider potential routes of exposure to workers and the public, including air, surface water, groundwater, and contaminated food.

A number of commentors recommended mercury sales, while others indicated opposition. The MM EIS will discuss the potential for impacts from renewed sales, including impacts from reduced mercury mining, adverse impacts on mercury recycling, and

adverse impacts on industries that recover mercury as a byproduct of mining other materials.

EIS Analysis Will Include Impacts and Mitigation Measures

Holder said, “The Scope of Statement is a significant step forward because it identifies the mercury management alternatives that will be analyzed in the MM EIS.” He noted that no new alternatives were identified during the scoping process, but one was eliminated. “The treatment and storage alternative was eliminated from consideration for two primary reasons: elemental mercury can be safely stored in its present state; and treatment could preclude future uses or make them more difficult, because elemental mercury is the preferred form in industrial processes that require mercury.”

The MM EIS will evaluate a range of reasonable alternatives, including no action, consolidated storage, treatment and disposal, and sales alternatives. It will evaluate potential impacts on: meteorology, air quality and noise, waste management, human health and ecological risk, transportation, geology and soils, water resources, ecological resources, cultural resources, land use and visual resources, infrastructure, socioeconomic and environmental justice. Cumulative impacts also will be analyzed. The impact assessment will consider population density, proximity to residential and recreation areas, and sensitive environmental resources. If the analyses indicate that adverse impacts may occur, mitigation measures will be identified.

Socioeconomic impacts of mercury management alternatives will include discussion of renewed sales on domestic precious metal mining, mercury mining

and mercury recycling industries. The transportation analysis will consider truck and rail and, for the sales alternative, transport overseas by ship.

Public Outreach Will Be Enhanced

Some commentors said they did not see DNSC’s display advertisements announcing the scoping meetings. Ads were prominently placed in one weekday and one weekend edition of local newspapers; however, during the next round of public meetings on the Draft EIS, DNSC intends to take additional steps to reach the public, such as mailing notices or using other means of public announcement. DNSC will conduct public meetings on the draft EIS next year, probably in late summer. ■

The Scope of Statement is available on the MM EIS website and at the following information repositories:

- > **Allen County Public Library**
435 Ann Street
New Haven, IN 46774-1279
- > **Bridgewater Branch Library**
N. Bridge Street and Vogt Drive
Bridgewater, NJ 08807
- > **Fairfax County Public Library**
12000 Government Center Parkway, Ste. 324
Fairfax, VA 22035
- > **Hillsborough Public Library**
379 South Branch Road
Hillsborough, NJ 08844
- > **Martin Luther King, Jr. Library**
Paul Mills, Chief Sociology Education and Government Division
901 G. Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001
- > **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, NJ 08876
- > **Somerville Public Library**
35 West End Avenue
Somerville, NJ 08876
- > **Warren-Trumbull County Public Library**
444 Mahoning Avenue NW
Warren, OH 44483
- > **West End Branch Library**
1101 24th and L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

ACRONYMS THAT MAY APPEAR IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DNSC	Defense National Stockpile Center
DOE	Department of Energy
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
IAWG	Inter-Agency Working Group
MM EIS	Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act

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Mercury Storage *Continued from page 1*

Indiana, and Warren, Ohio, Depots will be completed over the next few months. The Defense Department's security reassessment of the depots is underway and will be completed on a similar schedule. DNSC also stores mercury at DOE's Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, a facility subject to DOE security measures.

DNSC Has History of Environmental Stewardship

Holder, a 17-year DNSC veteran and the head of the MM EIS effort, maintains that DNSC has always been at the forefront of environmental protection. "Anytime an environmental issue came to DNSC's attention, we took care of it promptly," he stated. "In the 80's, for example, DNSC ensured the integrity of underground storage tanks by double lining them—long before environmental laws required such insulation to protect against leaks." Holder also noted that investigations of possible impacts from mercury through the years have found no adverse environmental impacts.

"There has been no contamination due to mercury at any of our sites. No adverse health effects have been found during monitoring of our workers. Nevertheless, we have proceeded with caution. When the Environmental Protection Agency expressed concern about mercury in the global environment in 1994, we halted sales of our excess elemental mercury and initiated an environmental assessment. Later, we decided to conduct a larger study, the MM EIS that we are working on now."

Finding A Storage Consolidation Site Could Be Critical

The MM EIS will consider mercury management alternatives that include no action, treatment and disposal, and sales, as well as consolidated storage, Holder said that if storage turns out to be the way to go, finding a suitable site could become a critical issue.

"The question is, where do we—all of us—want to store this material that we acquired when it was needed for our national defense and security?"

Initially, DNSC is working to identify potential sites for the storage of mercury by contacting federal agencies. However, if no federal sites are proposed, DNSC may solicit state, local, Native American, and commercial consolidation locations.

DNSC may well need cooperation from the states, Holder observed. "My hope is that, if storage is the alternative ultimately chosen, some states will step up to the plate and offer

potential sites. Nothing has been decided yet, but there could be incentives such as a guaranteed 40-year income stream and construction funding that would flow to the host state."

Holder explained that if potential sites were identified for consideration in the MM EIS, the public would have opportunities to obtain information about them and to submit comments before any decision is made. However, even if no sites have been identified, the consolidated storage alternative will still be analyzed in the MM EIS. "Consolidated storage is a reasonable alternative," Holder said, "so we will approach it by analyzing a generic site."

Personally, Holder said, he is optimistic. "I believe that people will ultimately understand that DNSC mercury storage is safe. After all, as our studies have repeatedly shown, DNSC has stored mercury for 50 years without any adverse impacts on the environment or adverse health effects on our workers or in the communities."

DNSC Will Expand Outreach Efforts

Holder said that DNSC wants to go well beyond what is required to reach people who are interested in MM EIS issues and provide them with the information they need. "We want interested parties to have a good understanding of the issues and the decision-making process. During the public comment period on the Draft EIS—probably next summer—we will again host meetings in or near affected communities, and we will go the extra mile to ensure that people are aware of the meetings so they can get information and make comments."

Meanwhile, Holder said that DNSC will continue to confer with an interagency working group [see story, p.1] and with public interest groups and others on an informal basis. "We met last summer and fall in Washington, D.C., with several environmental, industry, and political organizations to solicit their input on the MM EIS [see story, p.1]. We are hoping they will help us to increase public understanding of the degree of risk posed by DNSC elemental mercury and the trade-offs among the alternatives for managing it."

Mercury Storage Depots Are In Capable Hands

Before becoming Deputy Administrator at DNSC headquarters, Holder was a regional administrator responsible for 26 DNSC stockpile sites. He has worked closely with the people who manage DNSC facilities. "I know from personal experience that our depot managers are all capable and well-trained," he said. "The managers at the mercury storage depots have many years of experience working and living in the depot communities. They know the right thing to do; they know how to do it; and they want to do right by their neighbors." ■

Meet the Managers

“They know the right thing to do; they know how to do it; and they want to do right by their neighbors.”

Cornel Holder, DNSC Deputy Administrator

Jack Pittano,
Depot Manager
DNSC Mercury Storage
Depot, Warren, Ohio



Jack Pittano, the manager of the DNSC mercury storage depot in Warren, Ohio is a lifelong resident of the Warren/Youngstown, Ohio area. He is the father of four boys and has been active as Cub Scout Master, Scout Leader, baseball and soccer coach, and he has served on numerous fund-raising committees. He joined DNSC in 1983 as a material handler, was promoted to depot foreman, and has served as Depot Manager for 10 years. He says, "We here at the Warren Depot are particularly proud of our annual employment programs in which more than 60 area youths have participated to date, our Computers for Schools program, and staff participation in area civic, school, church, and veterans' association functions."



Jim Farley, Depot
Manager
DNSC Mercury Storage
Depot, Somerville,
New Jersey

Jim Farley's family history in the Somerville community dates back to the 1800s. He has served at the DNSC Somerville Depot for 21 years, including 10 years as Depot Manager, and shorter stints as a

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firefighter and storage specialist. A life-long resident of the community, he has been an active participant in a variety of activities. Farley has contributed 32 years of active service as a life member of the Hillsborough Volunteer Fire Department, serving as Chief for 12 of those years. He also served on the Board of Education and the Hillsborough Township Board of Adjustment for three years. Farley's wife is from the local area and his two children have attended local schools. He says, "Our staff takes great pride in incident-free, safe storage and handling of DNSC materials for more than 50 years. We remain totally dedicated to the continuance of our fine safety record and committed to working together in a positive way to reach solutions to matters of concern to our community."



**Ron Favors,
Depot Manager**
*DNSC Mercury Storage
Depot [at the
Department of Energy's
Y-12 National Security
Complex], Oak Ridge,
Tennessee*

Ron Favors' background includes 14 years of government service following several years of work in the oil and gas industry. For the past five years, he has served as manager of the DNSC depot

in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. He also has oversight responsibility for DNSC mercury stored at DOE's Y-12 Complex. He is an active member of the community, holding leadership positions in church organizations that assist youth and the elderly, and in a national fundraising service for federal employees. His son attends an area high school and his wife has served with the local school system for 20 years.

**Frederic Brooks,
Depot Manager**
*DNSC Mercury Storage
Depot, New Haven,
Indiana*



Fred Brooks, manager of the DNSC mercury storage depot in New Haven, Indiana is a 23 year resident of the Fort Wayne, Indiana area. He joined DNSC in 1978, and worked his way up through the ranks, starting as a laborer, forklift operator, equipment operator, heavy-duty equipment mechanic, and warehouse foreman. He has served as Depot Manager for 15 years. A father of two and grandfather of three, his favorite past time is target shooting at ranges in the area. He is known for, and takes pride in, a keen sense of security that he attributes to years of training as a security specialist in the United States Air Force. ■

TENTATIVE MM EIS SCHEDULE

- Based on the current MM EIS schedule, DNSC expects to have the draft completed and available for public comment by mid 2002.
- The comment period on the Draft EIS will be at least 90 days.
- Public meetings will be held during the comment period in the vicinity of each potentially affected site.
- A final EIS is expected to be available in 2003.
- The Record of Decision will be published no earlier than 30 days after the final EIS is released.

TO REQUEST A COPY OF THE SCOPE OF STATEMENT OR TO OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION:

*U.S. mail: Attention: Project Manager,
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Defense National Stockpile Center
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Ft. Belvoir, VA 22060-6223
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