

NEWS RELEASE

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DNSC Mercury Management EIS Announced

Mr. Richard Connelly, the Defense National Stockpile Center (DNSC) administrator, announced yesterday the center's plan to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to evaluate alternatives for the long-term management or disposal of the Department of Defense inventory of excess mercury.

DNSC is responsible for the management of 68 commodities in the National Defense Stockpile, one of which is mercury. Most of the commodities in the stockpile have been declared excess to DoD future 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, totaling 4,408 metric tons, is in safe storage at four locations: New Haven, Ind.; Oak Ridge, Tenn.; Somerville, New Jersey; and Warren, Ohio.

The Environmental Impact Statement will help decide on how to manage or dispose of the material over the long term. Some of the alternatives being considered include: (1) consolidating the mercury at one location for long-term storage, (2) mixing the mercury through a chemical stabilization process to reduce or eliminate potential environmental impacts and then storing or disposing of it, (3) selling it, or (4) leaving it where it is currently located. Currently, there are no approved methods for disposal of mercury.

A Notice of Intent to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement was published on February 5, 2001 in the *Federal Register*. That notice provides details on the proposed action and alternatives for mercury management, and requests public comments about additional alternatives or considerations not already being addressed. The Notice of Intent lists the issues tentatively identified for analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement, including potential health effects, impacts on water, air, plants, animals, soil, cultural resources, and socioeconomic effects on affected communities.

DNSC will accept comments on the scope of the Environmental Impact Statement until June 30, 2001 and hold public meetings at times, dates, and locations to be announced later through newspaper advertisements and news releases. The Notice of Intent and public meeting information will be posted on the Mercury Management EIS web site (www.mercuryeis.com).

The Defense National Stockpile Center is a primary level 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. The DNSC is responsible for all activities necessary to provide safe, secure, and environmentally sound stewardship for all 68 commodities in the Defense National Stockpile.