

separately developing a consent-based process for siting nuclear waste facilities.

According to a preliminary schedule outlined in the DOE's draft plan, a defense waste repository could be available about a decade earlier than a common waste repository. While lacking specific dates, the preliminary schedule does show key milestones for developing the repository, including the initiation of a consent-based siting process, the identification of sites for evaluation, the selection of a site for characterization, the submittal of a license application to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and the start of disposal operations. According to the DOE, based on the assumptions made for the draft plan, first disposal of defense waste could occur about 22 years after the consent-based siting process has been initiated.

The DOE notes in the plan that multiple factors could contribute to the risk that specific milestones might not be met and that a broad range of uncertainty exists in its cost estimates. The DOE also said that changes in legislation, regulations, and policy may alter its plans. "This draft plan is a snapshot of an evolving process," the DOE said. "It projects the principal activities that need to occur, but cannot predict the timing or fashion in which they will occur."

The *Draft Plan for a Defense Waste Repository* can be found online at www.energy.gov/DWR. Comments can be submitted online at www.regulations.gov.

● The Department of Energy intends to prepare a supplemental environmental impact statement (SEIS) for its proposal to dispose of depleted uranium oxide (DUO_x) conversion product from its depleted uranium hexafluoride (DUF₆) conversion facilities at the Paducah, Ky., and Portsmouth, Ohio, sites at up to three off-site low-level radioactive waste disposal facilities. Notice of intent to prepare the SEIS was published in the August 26, 2016, *Federal Register*.

According to the DOE, the *Draft Supplemental Environmental*

Impact Statement for Disposition of Depleted Uranium Oxide Conversion Product Generated from DOE's Inventory of Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride (DOE/EIS-0359-S1; DOE/EIS-0360-S1) will analyze the potential environmental impacts of transporting to and disposing of DUO_x at three proposed LLW facilities: the DOE's Nevada National Security Site (NNSS); EnergySolutions' facility in Clive, Utah; and Waste Control Specialists' (WCS) facility in Andrews County, Texas.

The DOE has an existing inventory of over 760,000 metric tons of DUF₆ stored at the Paducah and Portsmouth sites. The material resulted from uranium enrichment activities at the gaseous diffusion plants at Paducah, Portsmouth, and Oak Ridge, Tenn. All of the DUF₆ at Oak Ridge was previously moved to Portsmouth. Before it can be disposed of, the DUF₆ must be converted into the more stable DUO_x. The DOE estimates that it will take 18 years to convert Portsmouth's inventory of DUF₆ to DUO_x, while it will take 25 years to process Paducah's larger inventory.

The proposed SEIS represents the third phase of an environmental review process that is being used to evaluate and implement the DOE's long-term management program for DUF₆. While previous DOE environmental reviews considered the disposal of depleted uranium at the NNSS and Clive facilities, this SEIS will include the WCS facility, which was approved in 2014 to accept bulk uranium.

● A new facility to process naval spent nuclear fuel will be built at Idaho National Laboratory (INL), according to a record of decision issued by the Department of Energy's Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program (NNPP) that was published in the December 6 *Federal Register*. The decision covers the recapitalization of infrastructure supporting the handling of naval spent fuel at the Naval Reactors Facility (NRF) at INL.

According to the record of decision, the new facility, which will be built in the northeast section of the NRF site, will allow the



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