ministration's Surplus Plutonium Disposition Program. Notice of the EIS was published in the January 19 *Federal Register*.

The DOE and the NNSA settled on the dilute-and-dispose strategy, also known as plutonium downblending, after the cancellation of the department's mixed oxide fuel project in 2018. As part of that project, the NNSA was to build the Mixed Oxide Fuel Fabrication Facility (MFFF) in South Carolina to convert weapons-grade plutonium into MOX fuel for use in commercial U.S. nuclear power plants. Construction of the MFFF, however, was canceled after the NNSA estimated the facility would cost $17 billion and not be complete until 2048.

Disposition of the plutonium was required by a 1998 agreement between the United States and Russia in which each country agreed to convert 34 metric tons of surplus weapons-grade plutonium to a form that could not be returned to nuclear weapons.

The agency's disposal strategy includes converting pit and nonpit plutonium to oxide, blending the oxide with an adulterant, compressing it, encasing it in two containers, then overpacking and disposing of the resulting contact-handled transuranic waste underground at WIPP. According to the NNSA, the approach would require new, modified, or existing capabilities at the Savannah River Site in South Carolina, Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico, the Pantex Plant in Texas, and WIPP.

The NNSA was to publish a record of decision for the Surplus Plutonium Disposition Program in the *Federal Register* after February 20, 2024.

Source Points continues