

Final Environmental Impact Statement for Site Selection for the Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve Document No. DOE/EIS-0385

Responsible Federal Agency: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Petroleum Reserves

Location: Potential new Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) storage sites are Bruinsburg salt dome located in Claiborne County, Mississippi; Chacahoula salt dome in Lafourche Parish, Louisiana; Richton salt dome in Perry County, Mississippi; and Stratton Ridge salt dome in Brazoria County, Texas. Existing SPR storage sites that could be expanded are Bayou Choctaw in Iberville Parish, Louisiana; Big Hill in Jefferson County, Texas; and West Hackberry in Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes, Louisiana. Associated pipelines, marine terminals, and other facilities that might be developed are located in East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, St. James, Terrebonne, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana Parishes, Louisiana; Adams, Amite, Forrest, George, Greene, Jackson, Jefferson, Lamar, Lincoln, Marion, Pike, Walthall, and Wilkinson Counties, Mississippi; and Galveston County, Texas.

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Abstract: The Energy Policy Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-58) requires DOE to expand the SPR to its full authorized 1 billion-barrel capacity. DOE's proposed action is to develop one new site and expand capacity at two or three existing sites. Storage capacity would be developed by solution mining of salt domes and disposing of the resulting salt brine by ocean discharge or underground injection. New pipelines, marine terminal facilities, and other infrastructure would also be required. DOE's preferred alternative is to build a new SPR storage site at Richton, Mississippi, and expand existing SPR sites at Bayou Choctaw and West Hackberry, Louisiana; and Big Hill, Texas.

DOE has determined that site selection and expansion constitute a major Federal action within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 USC 4321-4347). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Notice of Availability of the draft EIS in the *Federal Register* on May 26, 2006 (71 FR 30400), starting the 45-day public comment period that ended July 10, 2006. DOE held public hearings in Houma, Louisiana; Pascagoula, Port Gibson, and Richton, Mississippi; and Lake Jackson, Texas. DOE received 93 written comment letters and 21 people testified at public hearings on the draft EIS. This final EIS responds to comments on the draft EIS, including revising the Richton alternatives to provide a supplemental source of surface water and providing additional information on essential fish habitat and endangered species. Also, a new storage site at Clovelly, LA, considered in the draft EIS, has since been shown to not be feasible, and therefore DOE has not analyzed the Clovelly alternatives in the final EIS because they are unreasonable.

DOE will issue a Record of Decision no sooner than 30 days after publication of the EPA's Notice of Availability of this final EIS.

Vertical lines in left margin indicate where text in the draft EIS has been deleted, revised, or supplemented in this final EIS.

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