

HLW & FD EIS PROJECT - AR<sup>7</sup>PF  
Control # DC-35

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING ON  
IDAHO HIGH-LEVEL WASTE  
AND FACILITIES DISPOSITION  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2000  
SHILO INN  
IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO

Reported by:  
Kimberly Carpenter, CSR #600

EASTERN IDAHO COURT REPORTERS  
P. O. Box 50853  
Idaho Falls, ID 83405  
(208) 529-0222

1 understand that it's so we can get your comments  
2 on the record.

3 Okay. I think we're ready now to begin  
4 the formal comment portion of this evening's  
5 proceeding. I want to stress that this is a  
6 formal hearing and a recorded proceeding and a  
7 full transcript is being prepared.

8 And, finally, I want to take the time to  
9 thank you for attending the hearing and indulging  
10 me in the little rules we've got to help this  
11 thing proceed in an orderly fashion.

12 Our first speaker is Georgia Dixon.  
13 And Ms. Dixon will be followed by Susan  
14 Hobbs.

15 MS. GEORGIA DIXON: My name is Georgia  
16 Dixon, G-E-O-R-G-I-A, D-I-X-O-N. I am the  
17 district assistant for United States Senator  
18 Larry Craig.

19 And I would like to read just a brief  
20 statement from Senator Craig. He is also -- he  
21 also serves on the Energy Committee of the United  
22 States Senate and will have other opportunity to  
23 speak further to this issue.

24 The Department of Energy in Idaho has  
25 managed dry granular calcined mixed high-level

1 waste in above-ground storage tanks and liquid  
2 mixed transuranic waste in tanks below the ground  
3 according to regulatory requirements for many  
4 years. With the agreement made between the State  
5 of Idaho and the Department of Energy, this waste  
6 will be treated for transportation in the highest  
7 and most safely effective way possible.

8 This Draft Environmental Impact  
9 Statement analyzes five waste treatment  
10 alternatives that span the years between the  
11 years 2000 and 2035. It also analyzes six  
12 facilities disposition alternatives.

13 [ I am very impressed with the reliability  
14 and the readability of this document. ] It is  
15 unusual for a Draft Environmental Impact  
16 Statement to be a document that is  
17 user-friendly. I must congratulate the project  
18 staff for their efforts to provide scientific  
19 information in a manner that the general public  
20 can understand.

21 It is important to know that the  
22 decisions made from this document and the public  
23 input will determine how DOE will treat the great  
24 amount of radioactive and hazardous material for  
25 shipment out of Idaho. I encourage all Idahoans

1 to review this DEIS and send their comments to  
2 the DOE by the deadline of March 20, 2000.

3 Thank you.

4 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you for your  
5 comments, Ms. Dixon. Thank you.

6 Just briefly, before Ms. Hobbs comes  
7 up -- after Ms. Hobbs will be Laurel Hall -- I  
8 have a couple housekeeping items.

9 As the hearing officer, I introduced as  
10 Exhibit No. 1 in this evening's proceeding the  
11 Federal Register Notice, notifying the public of  
12 the meeting.

13 I have also introduced, as Exhibit  
14 No. 2, the talking points from Mr. Wichmann. And  
15 those are Exhibits 1 and 2.

16 Exhibit 3 will be a one-page letter from  
17 Senator Larry Craig dated February 7.

18 Sorry for the interruption. Please  
19 proceed.

20 MS. SUZANNE HOBBS: My name is Suzanne  
21 Hobbs, S-U-Z-A-N-N-E, H-O-B-B-S. I'm the  
22 regional director for United States Senator Mike  
23 Crapo here in Idaho Falls. Mailing address is  
24 490 Memorial Drive, Suite 102.

25 Mike Crapo wrote: I appreciate the

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IX.A(2)

1 opportunity to provide input on the Idaho  
2 High-Level Waste and Facilities Disposition Draft  
3 Environmental Impact Statement and regret that I  
4 could not be here in person.

5           As a lifelong Idahoan, I am a strong  
6 supporter of the people and programs at the  
7 INEEL. The INEEL has served the nation and  
8 contributed to the enhancement of Idaho for more  
9 than 50 years, and continues to do so today and  
10 will continue to do so in the future.

11           Although the INEEL has been and  
12 continues to be an asset to the nation and Idaho,  
13 the environmental legacy of Cold War weapons  
14 production in the INEEL missions has left 4,200  
15 cubic meters of mixed high-level waste calcine  
16 and 1.4 million gallons of liquid mixed  
17 transuranic sodium-bearing waste. This  
18 high-level waste must be safely disposed of so  
19 that future generations are not burdened by this  
20 legacy.

21           The process established by the National  
22 Environmental Policy Act includes an  
23 environmental impact statement as the method of  
24 ensuring that federal decisions that could  
25 significantly affect the quality of the

1 environment are made considering all the facts.  
2 Paramount in this process are considerations of  
3 the environment and public and worker health and  
4 safely.

5           This public comment period allows input  
6 to the decision-making process prior to  
7 initiation of major federal actions. As a step  
8 forward in cleaning up the waste in Idaho, the  
9 1995 Settlement Agreement between the State of  
10 Idaho and the Departments of Energy and Navy  
11 identifies milestones that must be met for  
12 treatments and removal of the waste from Idaho.

13           I am a strong supporter of the 1995  
14 Settlement Agreement and will do all that I can  
15 to ensure that the Department of Energy continues  
16 to meet its obligations to clean up the Cold War  
17 legacy at the INEEL. To date, all portions of  
18 the agreement have been met.

19           This Draft EIS discusses actions that  
20 feed directly into meeting the milestones to  
21 complete calcine-issued sodium-bearing and liquid  
22 high-level waste by December 31, 2012, and to  
23 complete the treatments of all high-level waste  
24 so it is ready to be moved out of Idaho by  
25 December 31, 2035.

1           Some of the waste processing  
2 alternatives, if chosen, would not meet all  
3 aspects of the Settlement Agreement. The Draft  
4 EIS states that two of the alternatives will not  
5 meet the 2035 milestone for having high-level  
6 waste ready for shipment out of Idaho.  
7           One of these two is the no-action  
8 alternative, which is required to be investigated  
9 to provide a baseline for the NEPA process. In  
10 addition, the Draft EIS states that it may be  
11 difficult to have all of the waste out of the  
12 underground storage tanks and cease using them by  
13 2012 for seven of the alternatives.  
14           I am a supporter of the Settlement  
15 Agreement and encourage the State and the  
16 Department of Energy to choose an alternative  
17 that meets the milestones in the  
18 court-enforceable agreement.  
19           I also want to encourage all Idahoans to  
20 review the Draft EIS and participate in the  
21 public comment period. Public comment is an  
22 important part of the federal agency's  
23 decision-making process and is one of the factors  
24 that will be considered when choosing a course of  
25 action.

1           Sincerely, Michael D. Crapo, United  
2 States Senator.  
3           THE FACILITATOR: Thank you for your  
4 comments.  
5           Ms. Hall.  
6           Exhibit 4 will be a two-page document,  
7 letter from Senator Mike Crapo.  
8           MS. LAUREL HALL: My name is Laurel  
9 Hall, L-A-U-R-E-L, Hall, H-A-L-L. I represent  
10 Representative Mike Simpson. I am the director  
11 of his United Resources INEEL Issues.  
12           Statement by Representative Mike  
13 Simpson: The U.S. Department of Energy has some  
14 important decisions to make regarding management  
15 of high-level waste and mixed transuranic waste  
16 now stored at the Idaho National Engineering and  
17 Environmental Laboratory.  
18           High-level waste management is a  
19 complex, technical subject, and it is important  
20 for Idahoans to understand that these decisions  
21 will determine how DOE will treat large amounts  
22 of radioactive and hazardous material stored over  
23 the Snake River Plain aquifer and how DOE will  
24 close contaminated facilities when they are no  
25 longer needed.

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3501-1  
VII.D(6)

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- New Information -

Idaho HLW & FD EIS

1 The Idaho High-Level Waste and  
 2 Facilities Disposition Draft Environmental Impact  
 3 Statement that DOE-Idaho has just issued for  
 4 public review and comment is the critical first  
 5 step in this decision-making process. While it  
 6 is not a decision document itself, it provides  
 7 the scientific information about the potential  
 8 impacts to the environmental of various  
 9 management alternatives that DOE is considering.

10 The document gives Idahoans the  
 11 opportunity to study these environmental issues,  
 12 compare the impacts of different actions and to  
 13 make their voices heard under the National  
 14 Environmental Policy Act.

3502-1  
IX.A(2)

15 [The DOE project staff have obviously  
 16 worked hard to convey technical information in a  
 17 manner that -- manner that the general public can  
 18 understand.] I encourage all Idaho citizens to  
 19 review the EIS and send their comments on to the  
 20 Department of Energy.

21 Public comment is a very important  
 22 process that is provided for the public to give  
 23 input. It is very important that we, as  
 24 Idahoans, give our public comments, and that it  
 25 should help and will help DOE in determining and

1 considering their choice of action.

2 Thank you.

3 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you for your  
 4 comments.

5 Mr. Siemer is next, Darryl Siemer,  
 6 followed by Joe Marantette.

7 If I've got the last name pronounced  
 8 wrong, forgive me.

9 MR. DARRYL SIEMER: Name is Darryl  
 10 Siemer, D-A-R-R-Y-L, S-I-E-M-E-R. Address,  
 11 12 North 3167 East, Idaho Falls.

12 Three minutes. I'm a technical guy.  
 13 I've worked in high-level waste. I've worked in  
 14 reprocessing. I've worked in quite a number of  
 15 areas at the Site for quite a long time.

16 THE FACILITATOR: Mr. Siemer --

17 MR. DARRYL SIEMER: Yes?

18 THE FACILITATOR: -- if you stray too  
 19 far from the microphone, we can't hear you.

3503-1

VII.D(10)

20 MR. DARRYL SIEMER: Our mission is very  
 21 simple. The State quite wisely asked and got DOE  
 22 to agree to do two things. One is to finish  
 23 calcining the liquid waste and convert it to a  
 24 dry powder, add it to the other calcine, and then  
 25 to convert all of these calcines into road-ready

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1 waste forms. That's our mission, very simple and  
2 straightforward.]

3503-2  
III.F.2(5)

3 [The basic reason for this is that INEL  
4 is a lousy repository site. This is not the  
5 place we should be leaving large amounts of  
6 waste, whether it's radioactive or toxic.] [And we  
7 do need to close the loop on the nuclear fuel  
8 cycle.] We can do that here.

3503-3  
I(2)

9 [This EIS is a document that is supposed  
10 to explain what the alternatives are and to be a  
11 document that guides decision-makers in making  
12 decisions.]

3503-4  
VII.A(3)

13 [How should we be doing this mission that  
14 we've been given?

3503-5  
III.F.2(1)

15 One is, of course, we should obey the  
16 law. And the law is really pretty  
17 straightforward. Now, the law is different than  
18 the assumptions that are generally used when  
19 people make decisions in the DOE complex.  
20 Decisions are made based on DOE policy, not so  
21 much on the law.]

3503-6  
III.E(2)

22 [And, of course, we should do it  
23 efficiently, because one of the impacts that we  
24 have is to the taxpayer, and we have tremendous  
25 impacts to the taxpayer.

1 How can we do this more efficiently?  
2 Well, we can follow the example that  
3 Great Britain did. Great Britain faced the same  
4 problem we did and solved the same problem we  
5 did. And now, if you're familiar with BNFL --  
6 big company -- it's over here taking jobs from  
7 us.

8 How did it solve its historic  
9 reprocessing waste problem?

10 With cements. That's how it did it.  
11 Very successfully.] Now it's over here.

12 [Why do we have all of these options up  
13 here to do something as simple as turn a pile of  
14 sand into rock?

3503-7  
III.D.1(4)

15 Well, it's because there are certain  
16 assumptions under the way that we approach  
17 problems like this.] One --

18 One minute. Technical. One minute.

3503-8  
III.D.2.C(4)

19 [One is that vitrification is the only  
20 way that high-level waste can be treated. That's  
21 not true.] [Another is that volume is the  
22 characteristic of waste that is most difficult to  
23 deal with. And that is not true either.] Those  
24 options make both of those assumptions -- both of  
25 those assumptions are wrong.

- New Information -

Idaho HLW & FD EIS

1 I guess my time is about up, so I will  
 2 give you these.  
 3 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you,  
 4 Mr. Siemer. You still have a few moments, if you  
 5 want to take them.  
 6 I would remind folks that written  
 7 comments can be as long as you want. So, we're  
 8 not limiting in any way your ability to put in  
 9 the record your comments and concerns, we're just  
 10 limiting the oral comment period here.  
 11 Joe Marantette is next -- and I have a  
 12 question mark by Joe's name, suggesting he may or  
 13 may not want to comment -- followed by Lowell  
 14 Jobe.  
 15 MR. LOWELL JOBE: Jobe.  
 16 THE FACILITATOR: Jobe.  
 17 While Mr. Jobe's coming up, I will  
 18 identify for the record Exhibit 5, statement by  
 19 Representative Simpson's staff.  
 20 And then I have Exhibit 6, which is  
 21 several multi-page documents entitled, "Comments  
 22 on Draft INEEL HLW-EIS, Idaho High-Level Waste  
 23 and Facilities Disposition, to Tom Wichmann and  
 24 Ann Dold from Darryl Siemer." And that will be  
 25 Exhibit 6.

1 MR. LOWELL JOBE: My name is Lowell  
 2 Jobe, L-O-W-E-L-L, J-O-B-E. And I'm representing  
 3 Coalition 21.  
 4 My comments with regard to this, the  
 5 first one, seems to be partially, at least,  
 6 solved when I got here tonight and find that the  
 7 cost summary is on the table out there to be  
 8 seen.  
 9 But the purpose of an EIS doesn't have  
 10 to include the effective costs; however,  
 11 cost-effective comparisons of the various  
 12 alternatives is or should be a major factor in  
 13 the public's, and also the DOE's, evaluations and  
 14 decisions. Environmental concerns are important,  
 15 but they are not the only important factors that  
 16 determine the best interests of our  
 17 United States.  
 18 Therefore, we, the public, need to know  
 19 when the cost and evaluations will be available.  
 20 And, hopefully, somebody can tell us when we  
 21 might expect to receive them. Now, such  
 22 information could very possibly narrow down the  
 23 alternatives worth considering.  
 24 The second point is, we are not totally  
 25 convinced that DOE supplied the National Resource

3504-1  
X(2)

3504-2  
X(3)

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1 Council Committee on INEEL with the sufficient  
2 data for them to arrive at a more definitive  
3 evaluation of all these different alternatives  
4 for handling this high-level waste.]

3504-6  
VII.D(i)

5 [To meet the Idaho Settlement's deadline,  
6 it is easy to postpone decisions and actions  
7 while waiting for better information, such as the  
8 NRC requested, but such postponement does not get  
9 things done. And it does sound as though DOE is  
10 trying here to expedite those.]

3504-3  
III.F.2(i)

11 Third, [we support the State of Idaho's  
12 view that DOE's current method of calculating the  
13 metric tons of heavy metal should be changed to  
14 either of the State's proposed methods to allow  
15 the DOE high-level waste to be within the  
16 proposed repository's space allotment.]

3504-4  
III.F.2(e)

17 Fourth, [DOE should freeze the Waste  
18 Acceptance Criteria without waiting for details  
19 of the repositories. This would allow expediting  
20 a decision on INEEL waste handling by eliminating  
21 any bureaucratic procrastination.]

3504-5  
VII.A(i)

22 And, fifth, [greater DOE emphasis on  
23 public comment, input, should really be given to  
24 recommendations and comments from the Citizen's  
25 Advisory Board, who are selected to represent a

1 real cross-section of the public and who  
2 intensively study the issues before making  
3 consensus recommendations. Those of the public  
4 who make comments have an obligation to really  
5 study the issues and facts first, and base their  
6 comments on those, rather than any emotions.]

7 And so, with that, I'll just say that  
8 this is only the preliminary comments, and we  
9 will have further ones in writing.

10 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you for your  
11 comments.

12 MR. LOWELL JOBE: And I'll leave you  
13 this.

14 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you, sir. All  
15 right.

16 Well, as Exhibit No. 6, a one-page  
17 document from Coalition 21 letterhead.

18 John Tanner is next, followed by Don  
19 Beckman.

20 Did I say Exhibit 6? I meant Exhibit 7.

21 MR. JOHN TANNER: John Tanner, J-O-H-N,  
22 T-A-N-N-E-R, from Idaho Falls, retired INEL  
23 employee.

3505-1  
III.D.1(i)

24 [I accept the statements made earlier  
25 that any of the methods chosen to deal with our

- New Information -

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1 high-level waste should not have significant  
 2 environmental effects, with exception, of course,  
 3 of the no-action alternative, where it would be  
 4 very sloppy, to say the least, to leave the  
 5 liquid waste in the tank until they finally,  
 6 someday, leak.] And, also, having worked at the  
 7 INEL, I believe there would be no more risk to  
 8 workers from any of the methods than from any of  
 9 the better industries around the country.  
 10 [But I would like to give added  
 11 encouragement to reasonable -- to calculating  
 12 metric tons of heavy metal based on amount of  
 13 radioactivity, rather than on waste volume. And  
 14 the reason that this is more sensible is that  
 15 it's amount of radioactivity that determines heat  
 16 load, and heat load, in turn, limits -- is the  
 17 limiting factor for packing density inside the  
 18 repository.]  
 19 [And the practical importance of this is  
 20 that some important methods are, more or less,  
 21 being ruled out on the basis of disposal costs  
 22 because of -- they entail a higher volume, waste  
 23 volume. And I'm talking specifically about the  
 24 suggestion to grout the calcine instead of doing  
 25 a separations method or instead of vitrifying

3505-2  
III.F.2(d)

3505-3  
X(1)

1 it.  
 2 The cost document only was just released  
 3 today, and they don't actually give the  
 4 calculations for the cost, except by reference to  
 5 other documents with which I'm not familiar.  
 6 But I strongly suspect that the  
 7 enormously higher disposal costs attributed to  
 8 grouting the calcine is simply due to counting  
 9 metric tons of heavy metal as calculated on waste  
 10 volume, rather than radioactivity and, therefore,  
 11 assuming that they will be packed in the  
 12 repository a certain waste -- by a certain waste  
 13 volume fraction instead of the maximum density  
 14 that the radioactive heat load would permit.]  
 15 Thank you.  
 16 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you for your  
 17 comments.  
 18 I would remind you, if you want to  
 19 comment this evening, to register at the  
 20 registration table just outside the door, and  
 21 then I will get your name and call your name.  
 22 And, also, there's a variety of ways, in addition  
 23 to commenting verbally, that are available. And  
 24 all those are identified and the items for doing  
 25 so are available at the registration table.

1 I have Don Beckman.  
2 MR. DON BECKMAN: I'm going to  
3 relinquish my three minutes and submit it in  
4 writing.  
5 THE FACILITATOR: Are you Mr. Beckman?  
6 MR. DON BECKMAN: Yes.  
7 THE FACILITATOR: Okay. Thank you,  
8 Mr. Beckman.  
9 Karol Kay Hope.  
10 MS. KAROL KAY HOPE: No. I'll  
11 relinquish.  
12 THE FACILITATOR: Thank you, Ms. Hope.  
13 Harry Heiselman. Is Mr. Heiselman in  
14 the room?  
15 Let the record reflect that he didn't  
16 come forward.  
17 That concludes the list of folks who  
18 have signed up to comment. We're going to be  
19 here until ten o'clock, in the event that any of  
20 you want to comment and gather your thoughts. In  
21 the meantime, we will go off the record subject  
22 to call of the chair -- or of the hearing  
23 officer.  
24 MR. DARRYL SIEMER: We go sign up again,  
25 is that what we do?

59

1 THE FACILITATOR: No, sir. We're  
2 allowing one opportunity for all commentors this  
3 evening. And the purpose for that is to give  
4 everyone equal opportunity to comment. We're not  
5 always sure we're going to have fewer commentors  
6 than time allotted. And, in terms of fairness, I  
7 think it's -- we'll restrict you to one shot this  
8 evening.  
9 You do have plenty of additional shots,  
10 though, however, by filing written comments or  
11 through the other avenues that are available to  
12 you.  
13 So, we'll be off the record subject to  
14 call of the hearing officer.  
15 (A recess was taken.)  
16 THE FACILITATOR: Okay. We'll be back  
17 on the record.  
18 This is a continuation of the  
19 United States Department of Energy's Idaho  
20 High-Level Waste and Facilities Disposition Draft  
21 Environmental Impact Statement being held on  
22 February 7 in Idaho Falls, Idaho.  
23 After our break, we're back on the  
24 record at 9:30. I note for the record that no  
25 additional commentors have registered to comment

60

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- New Information -

Idaho HLW & FD EIS

1 this evening and would remind all the folks in  
2 the audience that, if you would like to comment,  
3 you can do so by March 20, 2000, by submitting  
4 written comments, fax comments, Internet  
5 comments, or by attending one of the other public  
6 meetings being held throughout the region.

7 We did have one commentor who I called  
8 earlier this evening who wasn't in the room when  
9 I called him. We'll see if he's departed or if  
10 he's here.

11 Joe Marantette.

12 I will note for the record that  
13 Mr. Marantette is not here, and ask if there's  
14 anyone else in the audience who has not yet had  
15 an opportunity to do so but would like to comment  
16 this evening on the Draft Environmental Impact  
17 Statement.

18 I will note for the record that no one  
19 has so indicated.

20 With that, we will close this evening's  
21 hearing, and we'll resume tomorrow in Pocatello  
22 at the Quality Inn --

23 MS. CAROL COLE: No. At Idaho State  
24 University.

25 THE FACILITATOR: -- at Idaho State

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Control # DC-36

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
PUBLIC COMMENT HEARING ON  
IDAHO HIGH-LEVEL WASTE  
AND FACILITIES DISPOSITION  
DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2000

SNOW KING RESORT  
JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING

Reported by:  
Kimberly Carpenter, CSR #600

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