tractors, perform routine maintenance, and collect all wastes (e.g., nonhazardous, hazardous, sanitary) for subsequent disposition at supporting stations. In some cases, sanitary wastewater may be discharged in snow covered areas as allowed by the Antarctic Treaty.

Alternative A for the proposed action involves the USAP's development of a traverse capability and the routine use of this resource to optimally complement existing airlift support mechanisms. Other alternatives considered in this environmental review include the development of the traverse capability and use of it on a minimal frequency basis only (Alternative B), or under reduced intensity operating conditions (Alternative C), or with minimal support from remote resources in the field such as caches, depots, or airdrops (Alternative D). Although it may be possible to operate overland traverses only on established routes (Alternative E) this could preclude or severely limit the use of traverses for scientific research applications. The No Action Alternative, that is not proceeding with development of an overland traverse capability, is Alternative F. Several other alternatives were identified but were eliminated from detailed analysis because they either failed to meet the required level of performance or the specific parameters needed to identify and evaluate all associated environmental impacts could not be adequately identified.

The potential environmental impacts of the proposed action that will be identified and evaluated in detail in the Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation include:

- Physical disturbance to the snow and ice environment
- Air emissions
- Releases to the snow and environment
- Impacts to McMurdo Station operations
- Impacts to operations at other USAP facilities
- Impacts to other scientific research in the USAP

Selected mitigating measures, representing specific actions or options that would be taken to reduce or avoid impacts to the environment, will be identified in the Comprehensive Environmental Evaluation, as well as additional measures that will be under consideration during the implementation of the Project activities.

The public is invited to comment on any aspect of the proposal. The comment period on the draft comprehensive environmental evaluation will be a minimum of 90 days from the date the National Science Foundation publishes the notice of availability in the **Federal Register**.

Polly A. Penhale,

Program Manager.

[FR Doc. 03–27156 Filed 10–27–03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 7555–01–U

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 040–08838]

Notice of Consideration of Amendment Request for the Jefferson Proving Ground Site and Opportunity for a Hearing

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is considering issuance of a license amendment to Source Materials License SUB–1435 issued to the U.S. Army for the Jefferson Proving Ground site in Madison, IN. On September 22, 2003, NRC received a request from the Army for a license amendment that would create a 5-year renewable possession-only license. On October 21, 2003, NRC determined that the information provided by the Army was sufficient to begin a technical review. The technical review may identify omissions in the submitted information or technical issues not identified in the administrative acceptance review that require additional information.

If the NRC approves this request, the approval will be documented in a license amendment to NRC License SUB–1435. However, before approving the proposed amendment, the NRC will need to make the findings required by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended, and NRC's regulations. These findings will be documented in a safety evaluation report and either an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement.

NRC hereby provides notice that this is a proceeding on an application for an amendment of a license falling within the scope of subpart L, ''Informal Hearing Procedures for Adjudication in Materials Licensing Proceedings,'' of NRC's rules of practice for domestic licensing proceedings in 10 CFR part 2. Pursuant to § 2.1205(a), any person whose interest may be affected by this proceeding may file a request for a hearing in accordance with § 2.1205(d). A request for a hearing must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date of publication of this **Federal Register** notice.

The request for a hearing must be filed with the Office of the Secretary by mail or facsimile (301–415–1101) addressed to: The Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff of the Office of the Secretary, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001 Attention: Rulemakings and Adjudications Staff; or by e-mail to *hearingdocket@nrc.gov*. The request may also be filed by personal delivery to the Rulemaking and Adjudications Staff at One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays.

In accordance with 10 CFR 2.1205(f), each request for a hearing must also be served, by delivering it personally, or by mail, to:

1. The applicant, Department of the Army, U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency, 5183 Blackhawk Road, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD 21010–5424, Attention: Dr. John Ferriter, and,

2. The NRC staff, by delivery to the Office of the General Counsel, One White Flint North, 11555 Rockville Pike, Rockville, MD 20852, between 7:45 a.m. and 4:15 p.m. Federal workdays, or by mail, addressed to the Office of the General Counsel, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001. Because of the continuing disruptions in the delivery of mail to United States Government offices, it is requested that requests for hearing also be transmitted to the Office of the General Counsel, either by means of facsimile (301–415–3725), or by e-mail to *OGCMailCenter@nrc.gov.*

In addition to meeting other applicable requirements of 10 CFR Part 2 of NRC's regulations, a request for a hearing filed by a person other than an applicant must describe in detail:

1. The interest of the requester in the proceeding;

2. How that interest may be affected by the results of the proceeding, including the reasons why the requester should be permitted a hearing, with particular reference to the factors set out in § 2.1205(h);

3. The requester's areas of concern about the licensing activity that is the subject matter of the proceeding; and,

4. The circumstance establishing that the request for a hearing is timely in accordance with § 2.1205(d).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: The application for the license amendment and supporting documentation are available for inspection and copying from the Publicly Available Records (PARS) component of NRC's document system (ADAMS) under accession number ML032731017. ADAMS is accessible from the NRC Web site at

http://www.nrc.gov/NRC/ADAMS/index.html. Any questions with respect to this action should be referred to Tom McLaughlin, Decommissioning Branch, Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555–0001.

Telephone: (301) 415–5869. Fax: (301) 415–5398.

Dated at Rockville, Maryland, this 21st day of October 2003.

For the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Tom McLaughlin,

Project Manager, Facilities Decommissioning Section, Decommissioning Branch, Division of Waste Management, Office of Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards.

[FR Doc. 03–27134 Filed 10–27–03; 8:45 am]

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NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

[Docket No. 030–30249]

Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact Related to Materials License No. 42–26928–01, Core Laboratories, Inc. (dba Protechnics) of Houston, TX, License Amendment Request for Approval of an Alternate Disposal Method

I. Introduction

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) is issuing a license amendment for a proposal made by Core Laboratories, Inc. (dba ProTechnics) of Houston, Texas. Core Laboratories requested an amendment to Materials License No. 42–26928–01 to allow an additional disposal alternative pursuant to 10 CFR 20.2002 to inject well returns containing radioactive tracer material into Class II disposal wells that have been approved to accept non-hazardous oil and gas waste by State agencies. An Environmental Assessment (EA) was performed by the NRC staff in support of its review of the license amendment request, in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR part 51. The conclusion of the EA is a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

II. Environmental Assessment

Related to the Core Laboratories, Inc. Request for an Alternate Disposal Method to Inject Well-Logging Waste into Class II Disposal Wells.

Summary: The NRC considered a license amendment request for approval for an alternate disposal method for well-logging waste produced under NRC Byproduct Materials License No. 42–26928–01. Core Laboratories, Inc. (dba ProTechnics) requested NRC approval to allow fracturing sand well returns containing residual material to be injected into Class II disposal wells. These Class II wells would have been approved under permits to accept non-hazardous oil and gas waste by State agencies. Approval of this license amendment request is based upon the NRC's review and evaluation of the merits of the licensee's proposal, current alternatives, and waste disposal regulations in 10 CFR part 20. The NRC staff has evaluated the licensee's proposal and has developed an EA in accordance with the requirements of 10 CFR part 51.

1.0 Introduction

Core Laboratories, Inc., is based in Houston, Texas, and conducts well-logging operations with radioactive materials in oil and natural gas fields worldwide. Core Laboratories is licensed to conduct tracer operations where the NRC has jurisdiction and in Agreement States including Louisiana, Texas, Colorado, Utah, California, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. Core Laboratories performs over 3,000 well-logging fracturing jobs a year in the United States using various radioactive tracer materials with half-lives of less than 120 days. In general, Core Laboratories injects three radioactive materials during its tracer operations: Iridium-192, scandium-46, and antimony-124. The longest half-life of these materials is 84 days. Core Laboratories procedures require that 1,000 pounds of sand be mixed with every 0.4 millicuries of tracer material prior to injection into a well.

Core Laboratories is authorized to use only well-logging beads patented as a Zero-Wash product. Zero-Wash is a well-logging bead that is insoluble (*i.e.*, the radioactivity will not migrate or leach into groundwater). These waste materials are not classified as hazardous or mixed waste by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations. The purpose of the tracer material is to enhance the performance of the oil well fracturing procedures. Using the information provided by the tracer material, the well operator can maximize the production from the well. Approximately 10 percent of the fracturing jobs result in the backflow of injected tracer material to the surface. This phenomena is called sandout or well-logging returns. The amount of the well-logging returns can range from a few gallons (20 pounds) to a tanker truck load (50,000 pounds). The concentration of radioactive material in the well-logging returns is low because the tracer material is mixed into fracturing sand prior to being injected into the well.

Currently, Core Laboratories is allowed to hold radioactive material with a half-life of less than 120 days for decay-in-storage before unrestricted disposal. Under this authorization, the well-logging returns are transported by truck to a storage facility that is distant (sometimes 30 miles or more) from the original tracer injection point. Additionally, the sandout waste may be shipped to an approved waste site for burial. On December 18, 1995, the NRC approved Core Laboratories' generic 10 CFR 20.2002 onsite disposal request for burying radioactive wastes from well-logging sandouts, flowbacks, or any other form into shallow earthen pits at the well site pursuant to 10 CFR 20.2002.

On August 23, 2000, Core Laboratories requested a license amendment to allow fracturing sand well returns to be injected in Class II disposal wells. All the sandout well-logging returns containing tracer radioactive materials would be recovered and contained in Class II disposal wells that met the State's and EPA's regulations. Core Laboratories proposes to dispose of material into Class II wells with radioactivity concentrations that are less than 30 percent of the levels in 10 CFR part 20, appendix B, table 2, column 2. These radioactive concentrations are not radioactive waste as defined in the EPA regulation 40 CFR 144.3. Class II disposal wells are described in part in EPA regulations under 40 CFR 144.6 as ''Wells which inject fluids which are brought to the surface in connection with natural gas storage operations, or conventional oil or natural gas production.'' Some of the EPA requirements imposed on Class II disposal well operators are found in 40 CFR 144.28 and address compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, 24-hour reporting of noncompliance, well plugging and abandonment planning, financial assurance, well casing and cementing, operating and monitoring requirements, records retention, and change of ownership and operational control.

2.0 Proposed Action

The proposed action is to issue a license amendment to Byproduct Materials License No. 42–26928–01 for approval of an alternate disposal method for well-logging waste produced as a result of fracturing sand well-logging operations. The licensee seeks approval to allow fracturing sand well returns to be injected into Class II disposal wells that have been approved