



## Department of Energy

Oak Ridge Operations Office  
P.O. Box 2001  
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831—

June 13, 2008

### STAKEHOLDER DISTRIBUTION LIST

Dear Stakeholder:

**NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE DISPOSITION OF NICKEL AT DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY FACILITIES IN OAK RIDGE, TENNESSEE, AND PADUCAH, KENTUCKY, FOR CONTROLLED RADIOLOGICAL APPLICATIONS (DOE/EA-1599)**

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) is considering the disposition (that is, the sale, transfer, grant or disposal) of approximately 15,300 tons of nickel metal scrap recovered from equipment used in the uranium enrichment process. This nickel was generated in areas maintained under DOE radiological controls and is considered to be volumetrically contaminated. The nickel inventory is stored at the East Tennessee Technology Park in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, in Paducah, Kentucky. A brief background and description of the proposal is provided below.

In 1995, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared for the *Proposed Sale of Radioactively Contaminated Nickel Ingots Located at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant, Paducah, Kentucky* (DOE/EA-0994). A Finding of No Significant Impact was issued on April 23, 1995. The 1995 EA considered the Paducah, Kentucky, portion of the DOE nickel inventory only, with sale to a private entity for decontamination, and resale on the international market. However, DOE did not implement that proposed action because the purchaser cancelled the sale as a result of a business decision. Since that time, the Secretary of Energy has issued two moratoria that prevent the unrestricted release of all volumetrically-contaminated metals into commerce including the January 12, 2000, DOE Secretarial moratorium on the unrestricted release of DOE volumetrically-contaminated metals, and the subsequent July 13, 2000, DOE Secretarial suspension on the unrestricted release for recycling of scrap metals from DOE radiological areas.

The proposed action analyzed in this EA would allow the stored nickel from both Oak Ridge and Paducah to be processed into final products for use, consistent with the referenced Secretarial moratoria, in controlled government and/or commercial radiological applications. All aspects of the recycling and production would be controlled and the final products would be for end-use in radiological applications only; that is, for DOE controlled, or U. S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (including Agreement State) licensed or otherwise regulated end-use radiological applications.

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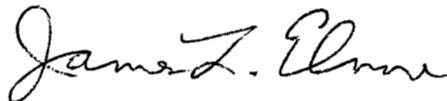
Pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Council on Environmental Quality implementing regulations, and the DOE NEPA regulations, DOE has prepared this Draft EA to analyze the potential consequences resulting from the proposed action and its alternatives which include disposal of the nickel as a radioactive waste and a no-action alternative. In accordance with DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures, 10 CFR 1021.301 (61 Federal Register 64603, December 6, 1996), DOE is providing affected states, as well as the general public, with the opportunity to review and comment on the draft prior to DOE's final decision on the EA. An electronic copy of the EA can be accessed via a link to the DOE Information Center at the following website: <http://www.oakridge.doe.gov>. To obtain a hard copy of the Draft EA, please contact the DOE Oak Ridge Information Center at (865) 241-4780 or DOE Paducah Environmental Information Center at (270) 554-6979.

If you have any comments, questions, or concerns about the EA, please forward them to me prior to July 16, 2008, at the following address:

United States Department of Energy  
Oak Ridge Office, SE-32  
200 Administration Road  
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830  
Phone: (865) 576-0273  
Fax: (865) 576-0746

Comments received after completion of the public comment period will be considered to the extent practical. For further information about the NEPA process, please contact me at (865) 576-0273.

Sincerely,



for Gary S. Hartman  
ORO NEPA Compliance Officer