



NRC NEWS

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NRC APPROVES WESTINGHOUSE HEMATITE'S REQUEST TO DISPOSE OF LOW-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE AT U.S. ECOLOGY SITE IN IDAHO

The Nuclear Regulatory Commission has approved a request by Westinghouse Electric Co. (WEC) to dispose of low-level waste from decommissioning its former Hematite nuclear fuel fabrication facility in Festus, Mo., at the U.S. Ecology Idaho Inc. facility near Grand View, Idaho.

Westinghouse had requested authorization under 10 CFR Part 20.2002 to dispose of about 30,000 cubic yards of low-level radioactive waste, primarily soil and debris containing source, byproduct and special nuclear material, at U.S. Ecology's site, which is regulated by Idaho and is not licensed by the NRC. WEC also requested an exemption from NRC regulations requiring disposal of the waste at an NRC-licensed facility.

In an environmental assessment published Oct. 24 in the *Federal Register*, the NRC issued a finding of no significant impact. The assessment concluded there would be no significant difference in environmental impacts resulting from disposal at U.S. Ecology or a NRC-licensed low-level waste disposal site. The assessment also analyzed the "no-action alternative," which would leave the waste in place and require Westinghouse to maintain environmental monitoring and engineered controls to ensure the safety and security of the facility.

The waste covered by Westinghouse's license amendment request will be generated as part of decommissioning activities under a decommissioning plan approved by the NRC Oct. 13, that includes digging up 40 unlined burial pits and soil underneath site buildings.

Westinghouse submitted its license amendment request on May 21, 2009. The NRC held a public meeting July 28, 2009, in Grand View, Idaho, and published a draft environmental assessment on April 25, 2011, for public comment.

More information about the Hematite facility is available on the [NRC website](http://www.nrc.gov).

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