

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE MULTIPURPOSE HAUL ROAD
WITHIN THE IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY SITE (EM-FMDP-10-068)

Agency: U. S. Department of Energy (DOE)

Action: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

Summary: The DOE prepared a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed “Environmental Assessment for the Multipurpose Haul Road Within the Idaho National Laboratory Site” (DOE/EA-1772).

The proposed action consists of constructing a road for limited year-round use with the ability for trucks traveling in opposite directions to pass. The analysis of the proposed road evaluates clearing and grading a base, installing necessary culverts and drainage, and placing and compacting gravel for the roadway. The haul road would be used to:

- Transport spent fuel
- Transport special nuclear material
- Accommodate research fuel transfers
- Transport testing or experiment materials
- Transport wastes.

Based on identified selection criteria, the following alternatives were identified and analyzed:

Alternative 1—New route south of the T-25 utilizing the existing road to the extent possible
(Preferred Alternative)

Alternative 2—T-24 road upgrade.

The No Action Alternative and four additional alternatives are discussed in this section. The four additional alternatives were considered, but eliminated from detailed analysis.

The EA was prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CFR 1500-1508), and the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR 1021).

The Draft EA was released for a 30-day public review and comment period on May 17, 2010 and 43 comments were received in eight comment documents. Based on the analysis in the Draft EA that indicated there would be no significant impact, DOE has decided to proceed with the action as proposed.

Selected Action: Alternative 1 – New route south of the T-25 utilizing the existing roads to the extent possible. The route would travel south of the T-25 power line maintenance road and be approximately 13 miles long. The road would stay south of the power line, avoiding the power line and the buried fiber optic cable just north of the power line. The route from INTEC to MFC would be the following: Lincoln Boulevard south to Central Facilities Area, East Portland

Avenue to Jefferson Boulevard¹, north along Jefferson Boulevard, Wilson Boulevard to Fillmore, then north to T-25, and continue along a corridor south of the existing T-25 east to MFC.

The road south of the existing T-25 would be an upgraded site road to support the required transport vehicles to meet the requirements for the majority of the required shipments with a design capacity for a 100,000-lb gross vehicle weight, double-drop, three-axle trailer with 6-inch ground clearance. Shipments exceeding that limit may have to use U.S. Highway 20. A few such unusual shipments on U.S. Highway 20, with the associated road closures, are assumed to be acceptable without substantial project impacts, costs, and inconvenience to the public.

Lincoln Boulevard, Portland Avenue, and Jefferson Boulevard are existing, paved, maintained roads. Wilson Boulevard is a paved road but is currently classified as inactive and, therefore, is not maintained. The pavement on Wilson Boulevard (approximately 2.10 miles) is breaking up and is in poor condition. The pavement would break up under heavy use and would require regrading of the road and shoulder areas at some point.

Analysis: Based on the analysis in the EA, the proposed action would not have a significant effect on the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. The term “significantly” and the significance criteria are defined by the CEQ Regulations for implementing NEPA at 40 CFR 1508.27. The significance criteria are addressed below and referenced to the corresponding analysis in the EA.

1) Beneficial and adverse impacts [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(1)]:

Some impact to cultural, ecological, and air resources will occur but the upgraded road will reduce shipment costs and improve operational efficiency in support of INL Site missions while avoiding closure of U.S. Highway 20 and the associated impacts of closing the road (Section 2.4.1, pg 9). The analysis (reference) indicates there will be no significant impacts from implementing the selected action.

2) Public health and safety [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(2)]:

The analysis indicates that calculated increases in particulate matter 10 µm and smaller (PM)-10 concentrations in air due to the haul road construction would be below significant contribution levels set by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDAPA 58.01.01.006.105). PM-10 concentrations during operational activities would be substantially below levels set by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDAPA 58.01.01.006.105) (Sec. 4.3.1, pg 30).

3) Unique characteristics of the geographical area [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(3)]:

The analysis indicates no unique characteristics of the geographical area (area between the Materials and Fuels Complex (MFC) and the Critical Infrastructure Test Range Complex (CITRC) areas) will be impacted by the project. Operational controls that will be implemented to minimize impacts by ensuring successful revegetation are: minimize the disturbance of soils and vegetation during construction, provide revegetation with supplemental irrigation, and implementation of a weed management plan (Sec. 4.2.1, 4.2.2, and 4.2.3, pg. 20 – 21).

1. This portion of the route is the same for Alternative 1, 2 and the No Action Alternative.

4) Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to become highly controversial [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(4)]:

The analysis indicates implementing the proposed action will result in no significant effects on the quality of the human environment and the opportunity provided for public comment indicated that the proposed action or the impacts identified are not highly controversial.

5) Uncertain or unknown risks on the human environment [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(5)]:

The analysis indicates no unique, uncertain, or unknown risks to, or effects on the human environment will result from impacts associated with implementing the proposed action.

6) Precedent for future actions [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(6)]:

The project does not set a precedent for future actions that may have significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.

7) Cumulatively significant impacts [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(7)]:

The analysis indicates there are no impacts associated with implementing the proposed action which, when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would result in a cumulatively significant environmental impact (Sec. 4.7, p. 35). While there was substantial loss of sagebrush resulting from the Jefferson Wildland Fire that started on July 13, 2010, the additional loss of sagebrush due to implementing the selected alternative does not significantly increase the impact caused by that wildland fire.

8) Effect on cultural or historical resources [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(8)]:

The Cultural Resource Management Plan (DOE/ID-10997) identifies the process for addressing cultural resources on the INL. This plan will be implemented for this project. In addition, the operational controls that are identified in the EA (Table 3, pg 18) will be implemented to minimize potential impacts associated with this action.

9) Effect on threatened or endangered species or critical habitat [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(9)]:

The analysis indicates that no threatened or endangered species or critical habitat will be adversely affected by the selected action (reference). However, the sage-grouse is presently a candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. DOE will implement the operational controls that are identified in the EA to minimize the potential impact to that species and other species of concern (Section 4.2.7.8, pg 27).

10) Violation of Federal, State, or Local law [40 CFR 1508.27 (b)(10)]:

The analysis indicates implementing the proposed action will not violate any federal, state, or local law (Sec. 5, p.21).

Determination: Based on the analysis presented in the attached EA, I have determined that the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

Issued at Idaho Falls, Idaho on this 4th day of August, 2010.



R. B. Provencher
Manager, Idaho Operations Office

Copies of the EA and FONSI are available from: Brad Bugger, Office of Communications, MS-1214, Idaho Operations Office, U. S. Department of Energy, 1955 Fremont Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho, 83415, or by calling (208) 526-0833 or the toll-free INEEL citizen inquiry line (800)708-2680.

For further information on the NEPA process contact: Jack Depperschmidt, NEPA Compliance Officer, MS-1216, U. S. Department of Energy, 1955 Fremont Drive, Idaho Falls, Idaho, 83415, (208) 526-5053.