DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

PANTEX SITE-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT PUBLIC HEARING

HELD AT RICHLAND, WASHINGTON

ON MAY 23, 1996 AT 6:00 PM

DOE/EIS-0225

TETRA TECH, INC.
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3 June 1996

Dear Recipient,

Enclosed are public hearing transcripts associated with the Draft Pantex Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). We will be continuing to send you transcripts from multiple sites as we receive them. Place them in your reading room with your Pantex DEIS.

If for whatever reason you have not received a copy of the DEIS, notify us and we will send you one.

Sincerely,

Rachael E. Pitts

Rachael E. Pitts
Librarian

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

PANTEX SITE-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY

Pantex Plant Site-Wide EIS
Secured File
5/30/96
(date)

CERTIFIED RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

PUBLIC HEARING

May 23, 1996

Richland, Washington

6:00 p.m.

Facilitator: Ev Avara

ORIGINAL

290 Tieton Street
Richland, Washington 99352

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MR. AVARA: We are at this time going to open the floor for questions and comments. To help us get a clear and accurate recording for the transcript, please speak one at a time. This will make things easier on her to record.

We can start right now. Anyone like to make a comment or a suggestion or question?

A CITIZEN: I have a question to begin with. Have you looked at the -- What are the existing sites you're looking at? Have you looked at the facilities? Are they existing facilities? Have you done any cost studies.

MS. FOUNDS: We have not done cost studies at this point, but all of the facilities are existing facilities. At Savannah River it's the P Reactor. At the Nevada Test Site it is the DAF for 8,000 or it's the P tunnel which would be capable of holding the 20,000 pits. At Pantex it would be their current magazines, and at Manzano it would be the Manzano storage area. Those are all existing facilities.

A CITIZEN: The transportation issue, would your routing be anywheres through Oregon or is it possible to go around it?

MS. FOUNDS: I believe it's possible to go around it so it would not be going through Oregon.

A CITIZEN: I have comments later.

MR. AVARA: Would someone else like to ask a question?

A CITIZEN: This facility, the FMEF, is a multi-purpose manufacturing facility, as well as doing its job. One of the things that I think we should consider is that it's well-matched for what this is intended to do.

One of the things we should also understand is: Is this intended for uranium enrichment reburn or refurbishing fuel for reactors? Obviously we're taking enriched uranium from one spot, putting it into another spot, okay, and obviously this is going to help our whole country, but one thing that we should consider is that storage costs money.

One of the things we should look at is: Can this be reburned, number one, because it is coming here and we have the people to handle this. But we also have the logistics concerned about environmental concerns, about the health concerns, and about safe transportation to this. These folks here have the capability of doing that, but that facility out there has a lot more capability, and hopefully we're doing it at the maximum capability for the taxpayers dollars to make sure we have all the elements in place.

MR. AVARA: Okay. Thank you, sir.

MS. FOUNDS: Did you want me to respond?

A CITIZEN: Yes, please.

MS. FOUNDS: Basically, it's -- Okay, it's the plutonium that we would be considering coming here, and there are three different documents being done all about the same time. Storage and Disposition of Programmatic EIS is also looking at the Hanford Site for the mixed oxide fuel options, and I think there are several people who can probably talk to you more about those.

But, yes, I think that Hanford is being looked at for many different capabilities, and the decision for interim storage won't be made in a vacuum against those other documents. Does that answer your question?

MR. AVARA: Anyone else?

A CITIZEN: Just real quickly, the gentleman that asked about cost studies, are all of the facilities equal as far as where they are in the stage of receiving the plutonium pits? Are there going to be some upgrading, refurbishing that has to be done to any of the facilities? And, also, if you are going to do cost studies, what is that versus cost of transportation to the farthest site versus maybe refurbishing Kirtland, just a cost benefit analysis?

1 MS. FOUNDS: Yes. We haven't done that at
2 this point and we're asking Headquarters as to whether
3 or not they think they need to do those costs. If
4 you're asking me: Are all of them equal? In our site
5 selection, one of the criteria was that, you know, if
6 an assessment would be made as to whether or not each
7 of these facilities could start handling pits within
8 about six months or so, and all of them were considered
9 to be within that realm.
10 MR. AVARA: Mr. Blair?
11 MR. BLAIR: My name is Walt Blair. I live
12 at 706 West 22nd Place, Kennewick, Washington. I'm the
13 primary alternate for the non-management, non-union
14 employees on the Hanford Advisory Board. I'm also a
15 member of the Hanford Advisory Board Health Safety and
16 Waste Management Committee, and I'm a member of
17 Plutonium Round Table.
18 The Hanford Advisory Board has given some advice.
19 It's consensus is Advice No. 46. The subject was the
20 Storage and Disposition of Excess Weapons Usable
21 Plutonium and Special Nuclear Materials. I'd like to
22 have this document submitted as official comments. And
23 basically -- I'll quickly go through it, if you want.
24 MR. AVARA: Go ahead.
25 MR. BLAIR: Okay, number one, any plutonium

or special nuclear material storage disposal program must be compatible and integrated with the Tri-Party Agreement commitments and milestones and should not affect the rate or funding of cleanup. The program would have the safe disposition of plutonium as a priority.

Two, any plutonium program assigned to Hanford must be fully funded from new funding sources. This funding should include appropriate site infrastructure, overhead costs. Funding should fully cover the cost of treatment, storage and disposal of any new waste streams.

Three, the acceptance of plutonium at Hanford should not delay, defer or negatively impact Hanford cleanup.

Four, appropriate local and regional public information and involvement programs must be conducted by the agencies to ensure that the public is fully informed of the risks, hazards and impacts of such a program. This would be part of the national dialogue on all nuclear materials prior to assignment of any nuclear materials to a specific site.

Five, any permit or plan approval for new Hanford programs/activities must be fully integrated and must comply with all Washington State public health and

1 safety rules and regulations.

2 Six, equity impacts must be addressed in the
3 assignment of new nuclear materials, including
4 plutonium, to Hanford.

5 Seven, the transportation of plutonium and special
6 nuclear materials to Hanford storage will require
7 careful planning of routes and consideration of weather
8 emergencies to minimize the likelihood of an accident.
9 Emergency preparedness for minimizing the impacts of an
10 accident will require financial support from DOE for
11 state, tribal and local involvement, including adequate
12 equipment and training. When materials are shipped,
13 timely notification should be provided to the
14 transportation agencies.

15 Eight, the choice of disposal options re: Pu will
16 be a determinant for sites such as Hanford. Prior to
17 the choice of the disposal option, complete
18 characterization of the material and the impacts of
19 short and long-term disposition technologies must be
20 reviewed by the public and regulatory agencies.

21 Nine, acceptable processing techniques, including
22 waste processing, must be developed as an integral part
23 of the new Hanford storage and disposal program.
24 Permanent disposal of waste plutonium at Hanford is not
25 acceptable.

1 Ten, a systems analysis approach should be
2 utilized to select the most effective method for
3 processing and interim storage. This analysis should
4 adequately address public and worker health and safety
5 and environmental issues.
6 Eleven, if a plutonium disposition mission is
7 assigned to Hanford, every effort should be made to use
8 existing workforce, facilities, technologies and other
9 resources.
10 I would like to submit this. And if anyone here
11 would like a copy, it would be nice if you'd provide
12 it.
13 Another document I have is from the Office of the
14 Governor. It's dated the August 31st, 1994, comments
15 of Governor Lowry on the Storage and Disposition of
16 Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials. I'm not going to go
17 through all four points here -- Well, I could.
18 Safe disposition is only one part of the legacy
19 all Americans must face from the nuclear standoff of
20 the past half century. Decisions about plutonium must
21 be integrated with those about disposal of high-level,
22 low-level, and mixed wastes left over from producing
23 plutonium in the first place.
24 Two, we believe in shared responsibility. That's
25 the whole gist of this statement here. All citizens

1 must bear some risk, as well as the costs of cleaning
2 up this legacy. The burden must be equitably
3 distributed, recognizing that some citizens have
4 already incurred risks and problems as the fissile
5 materials were created.
6 Three, the proposed programmatic environmental
7 impact statement should examine all reasonable
8 alternatives for permanent management of weapons
9 plutonium, and thoroughly assess the magnitude and
10 distribution of the risks and burdens.
11 Four, this legacy is a major national problem now
12 in no small part because of the secret practices of the
13 past. Broad, respectful, open, deliberate, and early
14 public involvement is essential to break the distrust
15 and ensure that today's solution does not become our
16 grandchildren's problems.
17 The overall gist of the Governor's comments here
18 is shared responsibility. In other words, we're
19 willing to do our share as long as everyone else is
20 equitable. And that's why we're pushing very hard for
21 the National Equitable Dialogue. This is another
22 document, if anyone's here, it would be nice if you
23 made them a copy.
24 I would like to now speak for myself representing
25 the local work force. We, the local work force, is

willing to be involved in the final disposition of plutonium. We would like to have Hanford considered as the primary site for the disposition of plutonium. We are not interested in the long-term storage.

MR. AVARA: Okay. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that. Did you want to respond to some of that?

MS. FOUNDS: There were a lot of -- I think most of them went to the disposition ones. So I will let you know, too, that we are coordinating comments with the Storage and Disposition between -- because they're also dealing with long-term storage, as well as what we're dealing with as interim storage, too.

So, just to let you know, our final EIS will be coming out in October 1995, and then after that the Storage and Disposition final EIS will be coming out also. And then a Record of Decision on ours is scheduled for the November 15th, and then theirs is also scheduled for shortly thereafter, I think in the December time frame.

MR. BLAIR: The problem is the word "interim." Members that I work with on the Hanford Advisory Board, when we say "interim," it may be a thousand years. So they aren't going to consider it unless there's an agreement ahead of time who's doing

the disposition of plutonium. They consider it long-term storage.

MS. FOUNDS: The one thing is that, again, we were talking about interim, and that means until a decision is made on the storage and disposition one because they are actually talking about long-term. But I understand what your comment is and will pass that along, too.

A CITIZEN: I'm, like, a high-schooler, so excuse me if I ask a really funny question. But I'm wondering just in the general proximity how many jobs, if any, will this create for the Tri-Cities.

MS. FOUNDS: In terms of the number of jobs, I think we're estimating -- To some extent it's a little bit difficult to estimate because I think it's only like 50 or so, because a lot of -- it's the security forces more than anyplace else that we need for the storage option. And you already have an existing security force, et cetera.

So we've estimated across the sites anywhere from 50 to, I think, a hundred or so, if which were actually going to put the interim storage at a particular location, depending upon how many more people the site would have to hire in order to accept the plutonium storage option.

Cliff, did you have any clarifying on that? Those are the numbers that I remember.

MR. JARMAN: The exact number needed would be about 120 people, and the thing is, we don't know how many of those would be reassigned from current work forces or from job retraining and such. So the absolute peak would be 120 new jobs, but it more than likely will be less than that.

MR. AVARA: Here we are, sir.

A CITIZEN: Well, I'm the high-schooler's dad and these are my concerns because my family was born and raised here and I'm here and I brought my girls home, and the reason why is we want to keep our future in the Tri-Cities, and we also have a beautiful facility out there. And what I was concerned about upfront -- hopefully I did it the right way -- is the interim storage which you accurately pointed out.

If we're going to do this thing right, we don't store things for thousands of years. We figure out how to make other things work. That facility out there where this is going to go hopefully could make it work that we could create additional jobs, do the right things, and not store it and cost the taxpayers more money to keep it in the ground. That's not what we're all about here.

What we're all about here is the leading edge of technology with the right people to do the job, and that's what my daughter's here for. That's what I'm here for. Thank you.

MS. FOUNDS: Appreciate your comment.

MR. AVARA: I'd like to mention briefly, this is not the only forum in which you can make comments. The period for comments ends on July 12th, and you can either submit comments through the mail, by phone, by fax or by E-mail, and there's some addresses on the poster outside the door to do that.

A CITIZEN: My name is Pam Brown, and I'm the Hanford Analyst for the City of Richland, and I'm sharing comments tonight not only for the City of Richland, but also for the other communities in this area.

We have an organization known as the Hanford Communities, which is composed of Richland, Pasco, Kennewick, Benton City, West Richland and Benton County. We have recently taken a very careful look at the plutonium or the fissile materials programmatic environmental impact statement and have submitted comments to DOE Headquarters, and I was pleased to hear that you'll be incorporating comments from this process with that process.

1 I would just like to summarize some of the issues
2 that we've dealt with, and this position was adopted
3 unanimously by the city councils of all of our
4 communities. One of the things that we think is very
5 important is that the United States deal with the
6 disposition of plutonium and not just simply the
7 storage of it. And this is an issue must be addressed
8 within the United States and that this material should
9 not be sent to Canada or anyplace else.
10 We also believe that existing facilities should be
11 used to the best extent possible, which would be
12 consistent with what you've discussed this evening. We
13 do not want Hanford to be the nation's plutonium
14 disposal facility, but we believe we can play an
15 important role in the disposition of the plutonium.
16 We have at FMEF not only a facility that can store
17 materials, but one that can make mixed oxide fuel and
18 could potentially house a small vitrification plant, as
19 well. We have two reactors on site, the Washington
20 Public Power System Plant No. 2 and FFTF that can burn
21 mixed oxide fuel.
22 We believe that we should form a partnership with
23 other DOE sites in the country that have the facilities
24 to play a role in this process. So the Pantex role in
25 disassembling the weapons is important, and Los Alamos

1 or Pantex perhaps could be involved in the conversion
2 of plutonium so that it is available for fabrication
3 into mixed oxide fuel.
4 So that is the general nature of the comments of
5 this community, that we do want to play a role, we have
6 the facilities, equipment, the talented people, and we
7 look to working in partnership with other sites on the
8 DOE complex.
9 MS. FOUNDS: Thank you very much.
10 MR. AVARA: Anyone else like to make a
11 comment?
12 (No response)
13 MR. AVARA: Okay. We'll take a short break
14 now, and if some more folks come in, we'll take some
15 comments from them. For right now we'll take a
16 10-minute break and we'll be back shortly.
17 (Recess)
18 MR. AVARA: We're going to try and get
19 started again shortly.
20 MS. FOUNDS: Ladies and gentlemen, if there
21 are any other questions that you'd like to present to
22 us at this time, we'll be happy to answer them. We
23 will be here until 9 o'clock tonight. So if you just
24 want to stay and have us explain anything else -- We
25 do have the displays in back there where we can talk

about the transportation, the AT-400 Area or any other questions that you might have. Sir?

MR. BLAIR: The 12,000, 8,000 pits, total of 20,000, has there been any discussion about declaring any of those surplus weapons or what's the deal? Now, we have -- Presently at the PFP we have, I forget the actual amount, but we have plutonium that's stored that was declared excess weapons program. What's happening with the pits in that direction and what about international controls through the International Atomic Energy Agency? What's gone on?

MS. FOUNDS: Well, right at the moment those pits are not considered excess to the Department's needs at this time. In our document we've considered them as we need to store them from the part of the dismantlement process. It would be the Storage and Disposition who would take the -- and declare that portion excess to the Department's needs that they would be talking about for disposition.

Then in stockpile search, upper management, then they will consider part of, all of it to be the strategic reserve that would support the stockpile. So anything that would be considered excess would be dealt with under the storage and disposition PEIS. Does that answer your question?

1 MR. BLAIR: More or less. In other words,
2 its not under your control at Pantex?
3 MS. FOUNDS: Right, yeah. And we're
4 basically not dealing with that. None of this is
5 considered surplus at this time.
6 A CITIZEN: I'd just like to offer some
7 general remarks as a citizen and taxpayer. My name is
8 Gordon Rogers and you have my address on the sign-in
9 sheet. I have a strong personal interest in this
10 subject. At one time I was the engineering manager
11 during the design and construction of the Fuels and
12 Materials Examination Facility and it's been a source
13 of frustration for over ten years, now, that that thing
14 has never found a suitable mission.
15 I know this discussion of the plutonium
16 disposition is not within the scope of your current
17 EIS, but I'd like to just make a general plea to you as
18 Department of Energy employees, as well as our own
19 local staff here, to do what you can with the
20 Headquarters staff, the Administration and Secretary,
21 and I know you have the same problem that all the other
22 citizens do, but, you know, from the common-sense
23 standpoint and the taxpayers and citizenry, it would be
24 criminal idiocy not to make some constructive use of
25 this plutonium that the nation spent several trillion

1 dollars manufacturing.

2 We can save and store what we need for future
3 weapons replacements and things of that type, but the
4 prospect of constructively using that as fuel and for
5 energy recovery and electric generating plants, such as
6 the Supply System's Plant 2 and the Fast Flux Test
7 Facility, is clearly a sensible thing to do. This
8 would avoid the consumption of fossil fuels, much of
9 which are imported by this nation.

10 And I think we also have an ethical need to show
11 the world that the United States can take advantage of
12 its technology to avoid further consumption
13 of -- excessive consumption of fossil fuels, and leave
14 these for the less-developed nations to upgrade their
15 standard of living. It's really unconscionable for us
16 to blindly consume natural gas as though it were going
17 out of style. So many people are standing around
18 wringing their hands over the alleged global warming,
19 which is substantially due to carbon dioxide emissions
20 from fossil fuel burning.

21 We really have a win-win situation here that I
22 think we just all need to really beat on our government
23 representatives, our congress persons, the White House,
24 Secretary of Energy, to sit down, get real, and let's
25 move ahead on this and dispose of this plutonium. It

avoids long-term storage cost and makes use of something that cost us a lot. I think we'd all be better off for it. Thank you very much.

MR. AVARA: Thank you, sir, for that comment. Anyone else like to make a comment this evening?

(No response)

MS. FOUNDS: Again, there are various forms where you can write in to us, or E-mail us if you happen to like the computer systems, or fax us, et cetera, and we will be passing your comments on and entering them into our comment response document.

But we appreciate your attendance. Thank you for coming. And we will, again, be around for a while if you'd like to ask us any other clarifying questions, et cetera. So, thank you.

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1 **REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE**

2 I, **DEBORAH K. RICHMAN,** Registered Professional Reporter
3 and Certified Shorthand Reporter, do hereby certify that I
4 was present at and reported in Stenotypy the foregoing
5 proceedings; that my stenotype notes were thereafter reduced
6 to typewritten form by computer-aided transcription under my
7 direction; that the foregoing is a true and accurate
8 transcription of my notes and of the proceedings therein had.
9 **IN WITNESS WHEREOF,** I have affixed my signature this
10 28th day of May 1996.
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14
15 **DEBORAH K. RICHMAN,** Notary Public in
16 and for the State of Washington,
residing in the City of Richland.
17 My commission expires: May 15, 2000
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