

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**Identification of Preferred Alternatives for the Department of Energy's Waste Management Program: Low-Level Waste and Mixed Low-Level Waste Disposal Sites****AGENCY:** Department of Energy (DOE).**ACTION:** Notice of Preferred Alternatives.

SUMMARY: DOE's Final Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (WM PEIS) identified preferred alternatives for disposal of low-level waste (LLW) and mixed low-level waste (MLLW) as regional disposal at two or three sites to be selected from six candidate sites. (As used here and in the WM PEIS, "regional disposal" refers to using only a few disposal sites for a much larger number of waste generating sites.) The six candidate sites were: the Hanford Site in Washington, the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in New Mexico, the Nevada Test Site (NTS), the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) in Tennessee, and the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina. As committed to in the WM PEIS, this Notice identifies the specific sites the Department prefers for regional disposal of LLW and MLLW.

For the management of LLW analyzed in the WM PEIS, DOE prefers regional disposal at Hanford and NTS. In addition, consistent with current practice, LLW disposal operations at LANL, ORR, INEEL and SRS would continue, to the extent practicable. LANL and ORR would continue disposal of LLW generated on-site. INEEL and SRS would continue to dispose of LLW generated on-site or by the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program.

For the management of MLLW analyzed in the WM PEIS, the Department prefers regional disposal at Hanford and NTS.

DOE will issue a Record of Decision for LLW and MLLW disposal no sooner than 30 days after publication of this Notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Copies of the Final WM PEIS and this Notice are available in DOE public reading rooms and selected libraries located across the United States; the WM PEIS also is available on the internet at www.osti.gov/bridge (select Advanced Search; under Select Field, choose Identifying Number, then key in "DOE/EIS-0200-F"). A list of the public reading rooms can be accessed on the internet at <http://www.em.doe.gov/em30/>. To request copies of the WM

PEIS, this Notice, or a list of the reading rooms and public libraries, contact: The Center for Environmental Management Information, PO Box 23769, Washington, DC 20026-3769, phone number 1-800-736-3282 (in Washington, D.C., 202-863-5084).

For further information on the WM PEIS, or this Notice, contact: Ms. Karen Guevara, WM PEIS Program Manager, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874, 301-903-4981.

For general information on DOE's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, contact: Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environment, Safety and Health, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585-0119, 202-586-4600, or leave a message at 1-800-472-2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background**

DOE analyzed alternatives for low-level waste (LLW) and mixed low-level waste (MLLW) treatment and disposal in the Final Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0200) (WM PEIS) (Chapters 7 and 6, respectively). DOE prepared the WM PEIS under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321, *et seq.*, and issued the Final WM PEIS in May 1997.

For LLW and MLLW treatment and disposal, the Final WM PEIS identified preferred alternatives as required under Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA, in accordance with criteria established (after considering public comments) in Section 1.7.3 of the Final WM PEIS. For LLW and MLLW *treatment*, the Final WM PEIS identified specific site preferences. However, for LLW and MLLW *disposal*, the Final WM PEIS did not identify specific site preferences. As a result, DOE is issuing this Notice of Preferred Alternatives to identify specific LLW and MLLW disposal site preferences.

Neither this Notice of Preferred Alternatives nor the subsequent Record of Decision will address or limit treatment or disposal of DOE waste at commercial facilities; nor will either affect individual, site-specific cleanup decisions on where to dispose of remediation wastes that are not in the waste management program. The Record of Decision for LLW and MLLW will name both *treatment and disposal* sites, whereas the Notice of Preferred

Alternatives focuses only on *disposal* sites.

The Final WM PEIS identified DOE's preferred alternative for LLW treatment as performing minimum treatment (as defined in the WM PEIS) of LLW at all sites that generate LLW. For MLLW treatment, DOE's preferred alternative is to regionally treat MLLW at the Hanford Site in Washington, the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR) in Tennessee, and the Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina, or on-site, consistent with Site Treatment Plans issued under the Federal Facilities Compliance Act, Pub. L. 102-386.

The Final WM PEIS also identified DOE's preferred alternatives for LLW and MLLW disposal as regional disposal at two or three disposal sites, to be selected from the six candidate sites at which DOE currently disposes of LLW or MLLW: the Hanford Site, INEEL, the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) in New Mexico, the Nevada Test Site (NTS), ORR, and SRS. This Notice identifies the specific sites DOE prefers for regional disposal of LLW and MLLW.*

Preferred Alternative for LLW Disposal Sites

DOE's preferred alternative for LLW disposal is to establish regional LLW disposal at two DOE sites: Hanford and NTS. Specifically, Hanford and NTS would each dispose of its own LLW on-site, and would receive and dispose of LLW that is generated and shipped from other sites and meets the waste

* After the Final WM PEIS was issued in May 1997, DOE issued "Accelerating Cleanup: Paths to Closure." In that document, DOE provided estimates of waste volumes that would result from the planned operations and accelerated cleanup processes at DOE sites. Because some of the estimates differed from those provided in the WM PEIS, DOE examined the LLW and MLLW volumes to determine if the updated volume estimates constitute significant new information relevant to environmental concerns that would warrant preparation of a supplemental EIS or a new PEIS. This examination extended only to LLW and MLLW volumes, because the transuranic, hazardous and high-level waste volume estimates did not change from those analyzed in the Final WM PEIS.

The preferred disposal site alternatives were chosen based on factors that would not be affected by these changed waste volume estimates. Waste volume considerations could have influenced the choice of preferred disposal site alternatives only if the estimated volume of LLW, the estimated volume of MLLW, or the expected nationwide distribution of waste had changed dramatically, none of which occurred. Therefore, DOE has concluded that its decisionmaking process for LLW and MLLW disposal can proceed without preparing a supplemental EIS or a new PEIS.

acceptance criteria. (Use of the term "regional" would not impose geographical restrictions on which DOE sites could ship LLW to Hanford or NTS for disposal.) In addition, disposal operations at INEEL, LANL, ORR, and SRS would continue, consistent with current practice and to the extent practicable. LANL and ORR would continue disposal of LLW generated on-site. INEEL and SRS would continue to dispose of LLW generated on-site or by the Naval Nuclear Propulsion Program. DOE's current preferred alternative for LLW disposal is a combination of the preferred LLW disposal alternative identified in the Final WM PEIS (i.e., regionalized disposal at two DOE sites—Hanford and NTS) and the Decentralized Alternative described in the Final WM PEIS (on-site disposal of on-site generated LLW—INEEL, LANL, ORR, and SRS).

Preferred Alternative for MLLW Disposal Sites

The Department's preferred alternative for MLLW disposal is to establish regional MLLW disposal operations at two DOE sites: Hanford and NTS. Specifically, Hanford and NTS would each dispose of its own MLLW on-site, and would receive and dispose of MLLW generated and shipped by other sites, consistent with permit conditions and other applicable requirements. Therefore, DOE's current preferred alternative for MLLW disposal is the preferred MLLW disposal alternative identified in the Final WM PEIS.

Factors Used to Identify Preferred Alternatives for LLW and MLLW Disposal Sites

In identifying the preferred alternatives announced today, DOE considered the following factors, among others (a more complete list is presented in Volume I, Section 1.7.3 of the WM PEIS):

- DOE's mission to safely and efficiently dispose of wastes.
- Environmental impacts, including health impacts on workers and the public.
- Distribution of waste management facilities in ways that are considered equitable.
- Overall implementation cost.
- Flexibility of implementation.
- Transportation.

In addition to the factors presented in the Final WM PEIS, DOE also considered the subsequent comments of stakeholders in identifying the preferred alternatives announced in this Notice. DOE received these comments as part of a consultative process it has engaged in

with States, Tribal governments, regulators, and other stakeholders since the Final WM PEIS was issued. The preferred alternatives announced today for LLW and MLLW disposal sites are among the options discussed with stakeholders, including on the following occasions:

- National Governors' Association's Federal Facilities Compliance Task Force meetings in March and October 1998.
- National Association of Attorneys General's DOE Workgroup meetings in April and December 1998.
- Intersite Discussions on Nuclear Material and Waste convened by the League of Women Voters Education Fund in June 1998.
- Transportation External Coordination Working Group in July 1998 and January 1999.
- LLW Seminar sponsored by the Nevada Citizens' Advisory Board in August 1998.
- State and Tribal Government Working Group meetings in October 1998 and April 1999.
- LLW Forum in October 1998.
- Environmental Management Advisory Board in October 1998.
- National Council of State Legislators Roundtable Discussion in September 1999.

Through this process, the Department received comments on factors to consider in its decisionmaking process. This public input focused on transportation, site conditions, cost effectiveness, and waste/materials consolidation. In summary, the comments suggested that DOE should:

- Address urgent risks.
- Seek to minimize transportation of nuclear waste and materials.
- Pursue consolidation of nuclear waste and materials only as needed to address risk and to allow for site closures.
- Consider each site's suitability and surrounding population in deciding which sites should receive wastes.
- Consider cost effectiveness in deciding which sites should receive waste.
- Compensate receiving communities for receiving other sites' wastes.
- Continue ongoing discussions with the public about radioactive waste and material issues, including transportation routes and implementation.

Decision Process for LLW and MLLW Disposal Sites

This Notice fulfills a commitment DOE made in the WM PEIS, Volume I, Section 3.7, to announce which specific LLW and MLLW disposal sites it prefers at least 30 days before making decisions

on disposal sites. DOE will issue a Record of Decision for LLW and MLLW treatment and disposal no sooner than 30 days after publication of this Notice.

Issued in Washington, DC, this 5th day of December, 1999.

Carolyn L. Huntoon,

Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management.

[FR Doc. 99-32053 Filed 12-9-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. RP00-112-000]

Colorado Interstate Gas Company; Notice of Tariff Filing

December 6, 1999.

Take notice that on December 1, 1999, Colorado Interstate Gas Company (CIG) filed of its FERC Gas Tariff, First Revised Volume No. 1, Fifteenth Revised Sheet No. 11A, reflecting a decrease in its fuel reimbursement percentage for Lost, Unaccounted-For and Other Fuel Gas from 1.43% to 1.31% effective January 1, 2000.

CIG states that copies of this filing have been served on CIG's jurisdictional customers and public bodies.

Any person desiring to be heard or to protest said filing should file a motion to intervene or a protest with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426, in accordance with Sections 385.214 or 385.211 of the Commission's Rules and Regulations. All such motions or protests must be filed in accordance with Section 154.210 of the Commission's Regulations. Protests will be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceedings. Any person wishing to become a party must file a motion to intervene. Copies of this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection in the Public Reference Room. This filing may be viewed on the web at <http://www.ferc.fed.us/online/rims.htm> (call 202-208-2222 for assistance).

David P. Boergers,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 99-32044 Filed 12-9-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6717-01-M