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**Finding of No Significant Impact
Proposed Decontamination and Dismantlement
at the Pinellas Plant in
Largo, Florida**

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy
ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) (DOE/EA-1092) of the proposed decontamination and dismantlement of the Pinellas Plant in Largo, Florida. Under the Decontamination and Dismantlement EA, the DOE proposes to clean up facilities, structures, and utilities; dismantle specific structures; and mitigate or eliminate any environmental impacts associated with the cleanup, dismantlement, and related activities. Related activities include utilization of specific areas by new tenants prior to full-scale cleanup.

Based on the analyses in the EA, the DOE has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et. seq.* Therefore, the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required and the DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

SINGLE COPIES OF THE EA AND FONSI ARE AVAILABLE FROM:

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BACKGROUND: The Pinellas Plant encompasses approximately 99 acres in the center of Pinellas County, Florida. The plant was constructed in 1956 as part of the nuclear weapons production complex, and the original products of the plant were neutron generators, a principal component of nuclear weapons. The production of these devices led to the manufacture of other weapons application products. In 1993, the DOE decided to phase out the Pinellas Plant and proposed leasing all or portions of the plant to commercial enterprises (Nonnuclear Consolidation EA DOE/EA-0792, issued a FONSI by the DOE on September 14, 1993 and Commercialization EA DOE/EA-0950, issued a FONSI on August 15, 1994). It is anticipated that the commercial enterprises would involve manufacturing processes that are identical or similar to the processes currently used at the Pinellas Plant.

As part of the DOE strategy to promote commercial uses of the site, the DOE sold the Pinellas Plant to the Pinellas County Industry Council (PCIC) on March 17, 1995. The sales contract and the related lease, which provides for continued DOE occupancy at the site, include clauses to ensure continued compliance with Federal, State, and local regulations and cleanup of the site.

The sale of the plant to the PCIC provided impetus for the DOE to accelerate the decontamination and dismantlement of the site. The DOE will perform cleanup of the Pinellas Plant in a way that is both cost effective and ensures the safety of plant personnel, potential future tenants, the public, and the environment. The DOE will continue to conduct environmental restoration activities at the site separate from the Decontamination and Dismantlement EA actions.

SITE DESCRIPTION: The Pinellas Plant is located midway between the major municipalities of Clearwater and St. Petersburg. The closest cities are Largo and Pinellas Park. Light industry, including, but not limited to, warehousing operations, is conducted in the area immediately surrounding the plant, and the closest residential area is approximately 0.3 miles from the plant. The Pinellas Plant is owned by the PCIC, leased by the DOE, and operated by Lockheed Martin Specialty Components (Specialty Components) as a prime contractor for the DOE.

PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action includes decontamination of specific areas of the plant, dismantlement of certain areas and structures, and utilization of the remaining areas and structures by the PCIC tenants. During all of these activities, the DOE would maintain responsibility for conducting environmental restoration activities at the site.

In the proposed action, certain areas at the Pinellas Plant would undergo aggressive cleanup, with the goal of releasing these areas from the DOE stewardship by the end of Fiscal Year 1997. The specified areas would be cleaned to meet Federal, State, and local standards. The areas would then be made available for use as determined by the PCIC. There is the potential for some or all of Pinellas Plant structures to be dismantled. An additional part of the proposed action would be to allow a tenant to assume stewardship of, and continue to use, certain plant facilities prior to cleanup. The PCIC would identify a tenant who would be contractually obligated to share in the responsibilities for plant cleanup in accordance with applicable regulations. Although the DOE would be contractually indemnified against a default by a tenant on its obligation to clean up the area, the responsibility and liability for the cleanup at the Pinellas Plant would continue to reside with the DOE.

No Action

The no action alternative would consist of the DOE performing only the limited types of cleanup allowed by the Pinellas Plant Commercialization EA. The DOE would continue to use its facility easement indefinitely and would continue to perform surveillance, maintenance, and environmental restoration activities. Other DOE uses of the plant would cease, and extensive cleanup would not be performed. Areas currently leased to businesses by the PCIC may continue to house small tenant operations, and larger operations may be brought on site. Contaminated areas, however, would not be occupied.

Performing the no action alternative may result in violation of the DOE's obligation to comply with Section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) of 1980, which requires ultimate removal of all hazardous materials.

Other Alternatives

One alternative to the proposed action includes DOE aggressively performing cleanup activities for the entire Pinellas Plant except for areas that are characterized and determined to be already clean. The level of cleanup would be the level appropriate for unrestricted or light industrial use. Dismantlement of structures would not be included in this action nor would there be any attempt by the PCIC to contract with a tenant to occupy plant areas prior to cleanup. The DOE would maintain responsibility for conducting environmental restoration activities at the site.

A second alternative to the proposed action includes DOE performing cleanup activities and dismantlement of some or all of the site structures. There would be no attempt by the PCIC to contract with a tenant to occupy plant areas prior to cleanup. The DOE would maintain responsibility for conducting environmental restoration activities at the site.

A third alternative to the proposed action includes DOE performing a limited level of cleanup. Tenants would operate in areas not completely cleaned with a contractual obligation to share in the responsibility for cleanup upon cessation of tenant activities. No dismantlement of structures would be performed by the DOE or the tenants. As in all cases, the DOE would maintain responsibility for conducting environmental restoration activities at the site.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

The EA for Decontamination and Dismantlement evaluated the environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives. Specific areas included in this evaluation include impacts to environmental restoration activities, nonradiological and radiological air emissions, nonradiological effluent discharges, radiological liquid effluent, waste management capacity, water demand, groundwater quality, threatened and endangered species, noise, transportation, environmental justice, socioeconomics, human health effects, and accident analysis. (Section 3.0)

Tenant activities associated with the proposed action could result in increases in liquid effluents, air emissions, waste generation, and employee vehicular traffic into and out of the plant, but the impacts are dependent on the specific types of tenant operations brought to the site. (Section 3.0)

Decontamination activities associated with the proposed action would result in temporary increases in water usage, liquid effluents, air emissions generation and disposal of waste, and traffic associated with waste disposal. Dismantlement activities included in the proposed action would result in temporary additional increases in water usage, (air emissions) generation and disposal of waste, production of recyclable materials, and traffic associated with waste disposal. (Section 3.0)

Increased water usage associated with decontamination activities is estimated to total greater than 165,000 gallons (0.3 percent of recent plant annual demand). The temporary increase in water usage for dismantlement is estimated at 547,500 gallons (0.9 percent of historical plant annual water demand). However, the additional water demand required for the proposed action would result in a negligible impact on Pinellas County water resources. (Section 3.5.1)

Dismantlement activities would result in additional nonradiological emissions. Building dismantlement may result in the generation of dusts and other fugitive emissions. Debris piles would be sprayed down with water to control dust and minimize the impact of dusts and asbestos releases to negligible levels. As a precautionary measure, monitoring for airborne contaminants would be conducted during dismantlement activities to ensure compliance with the applicable regulatory standards. (Section 3.2.1)

Decontamination and dismantlement actions may generate a very minor, direct, short-term increase in radiological air emissions. Best engineering practices would be implemented to reduce the radiological emissions during cleanup and dismantlement activities to maintain emissions to minimal levels. As a result, radiological air emissions are expected to meet the DOE, Federal, and State standards for protection of human health. Continuous monitoring for airborne contaminants would occur during cleanup activities to protect the health of the cleanup workers and plant personnel. (Section 3.2.2)


Cleanup and dismantlement activities at the Pinellas Plant would result in an initial increase in the generation of waste, including nonhazardous, hazardous, low-level radioactive, and asbestos-contaminated wastes. A maximum of approximately 1,210,000 pounds of hazardous waste; 1,764,000 pounds of low-level radioactive waste; 380,000 pounds of low-level radioactive asbestos waste; 300,000 pounds of nonradioactive asbestos waste; and 3.3 billion pounds of solid (nonhazardous) waste (60 percent of which could be recycled) may be generated as a result of decontamination and dismantlement activities. Each individual waste type would be managed and disposed of in accordance with the applicable Federal, State and local requirements. (Section 3.4)

Cleanup and dismantlement activities associated with the proposed action would result in a substantial short-term increase in local traffic (particularly near the entrances to the plant) due to the transportation of waste materials off site. However, the effects of the proposed action represent a negligible impact to Pinellas County as a whole. (Section 3.8)

The Decontamination and Dismantlement EA evaluated the cumulative impacts of the proposed action and alternatives with respect to environmental restoration activities, decontamination and dismantlement activities, and operations conducted by tenants brought on the site by the PCIC. Cumulative impacts would remain within the constraints of the plant's Air Emissions Operating Permit, the Industrial Users Wastewater Discharge Permit, the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments Permit as well as all applicable Federal, State, and local regulations, as these requirements pertain to the DOE and its contractors. (Section 3.13)

FINDING: Based on the analyses in the EA, the DOE has determined that the proposed action does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the NEPA. Therefore, the Department is issuing this FONSI and an environmental impact statement for the proposed action is not required.

Issued at Largo, Florida, on this 22nd day of September, 1995.


Richard E. Glass, Area Manager
Pinellas Area Office

Management and Review Team
Concurrence Sign-Off
for Environmental Assessment Approval

ACTION: Environmental Assessment for Decontamination and Dismantlement

ISSUE: Approval of the document as the final Environmental Assessment for this action and the issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Decontamination and Dismantlement at the Pinellas Plant.

RECOMMENDATION: The Management and Review Team and the AL and PAO NEPA Compliance Officer concur in their recommendation that the DOE Manager approve this document as the final EA, DOE/EA-1092, for this action and issue a FONSI.

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