

**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-1177, to assess environmental impacts associated with the salvage and demolition of the 200 West Area, 200 East Area, and 300 Area Steam Plants and their associated steam distribution piping, equipment, and ancillary facilities at the Hanford Site, Richland, Washington.

It is proposed that all materials, wastes, and equipment be salvaged and recycled where feasible. The existing coal storage yards of each steam plant would serve as lay down yards to store equipment and material during salvaging activities. Foundations and concrete footings would be removed in order to return the areas to ground level for potential reuse. Waste minimization practices would be in place to keep wastes at a minimum.

Based on the analysis 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 (EIS) is not required.

#### **ADDRESSES AND FURTHER INFORMATION**

Single copies of the EA and further information about the proposed action are available from:

W. A. Rutherford, Acting Director  
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U.S. Department of Energy  
Richland Operations Office  
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For further information regarding the DOE NEPA Process, contact:

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**PURPOSE AND NEED:** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) needs to reduce costs of future surveillance and maintenance for the 200 West Area Steam Plant, and avoid future surveillance and maintenance costs for the 200 East Area and 300 Area Steam Plants.

**BACKGROUND:** The transition of the Hanford Site mission from defense production to a restoration mission has reduced the large demand for steam required to support defense operations. The 200 West Area Steam Plant was shut down in fiscal year 1995 and is currently in surveillance and maintenance awaiting decommissioning. The 200 East Area and 300 Area Steam Plants are currently in operation and are expected to be shut down in the near future. The costs for access controls and surveillance and maintenance of the steam plants would escalate over time.

**PROPOSED ACTION:** The DOE proposes to salvage and demolish the steam plants in the 200 West Area, 200 East Area, and 300 Area with their associated steam distribution piping, equipment, and ancillary facilities. Activities would include salvaging and recycling of all materials and equipment where feasible, in keeping with waste minimization principles. Existing coal storage yards would serve as lay down yards to store equipment and material during salvaging activities. Foundations and concrete footings would be removed in order to return the areas to ground level for potential reuse.

**ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED:** The EA discussed several alternatives to reduce surveillance and maintenance costs for the 200 West Area, 200 East Area, and 300 Area Steam Plants, as well as the No Action Alternative.

**No-Action Alternative.** This alternative would keep the 200 West Area Steam Plant in surveillance and maintenance indefinitely. Following the shutdown of the 200 East Area and 300 Area Steam Plants, there would be no isolation activities and no decommissioning activities for those facilities. The costs of maintaining the buildings would increase over time. This alternative was not considered a reasonable alternative.

**Alternative Surveillance and Maintenance.** This alternative would keep the 200 West Area Steam Plant in surveillance and maintenance mode indefinitely, and the 200 East Area and 300 Area Steam Plants would be put into surveillance and maintenance mode indefinitely after deactivation activities. Costs of maintaining the buildings would increase over time. This alternative was not considered a reasonable alternative.

**Alternative Uses.** This alternative would reuse the three steam plants for other activities. At this time, no foreseeable reuse has been identified.

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:** All areas involved in the proposed action are previously disturbed areas. No Federally or State listed, proposed or candidate, threatened, endangered species are expected to be effected by the proposed action. However, to avoid adverse impacts to cliff swallows, demolition of the coal ramp building in the 200 West Area Steam

Plant would be undertaken outside the nesting season that extends from April 1 to July 30. It is planned during the salvage/demolition phase to remove all foundation and concrete footings and the steam distribution system poles. If any hazardous or radioactive contamination is found in the soils during excavation, the contamination would be covered with clean soil and left in place awaiting remediation of the Operable Unit, or otherwise dealt with in a manner acceptable to the relevant regulatory agency. All voids that would occur during this phase would be backfilled. Because the amount of soil disturbance would be minimal and temporary, anticipated impacts to the environment are not expected to be consequential.

DOE and the State Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO) concur that the proposed action would have no adverse effect on the Hanford Site Historic District, of which the 284-West Powerhouse is part. The SHPO has concurred with DOE that the 384 Powerhouse is a contributing structure to the Hanford Site Historic District. Since the Programmatic Agreement between the DOE, SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation allows mitigation of buildings through preparation of an Historic Property Inventory Form (HPIF), it is expected that there would be no adverse effects on the cultural resources of the proposed action.

It is expected that only nonhazardous solid waste would be generated during the salvage/demolition phase of the proposed action. Any hazardous substances or materials that might be discovered later in the buildings would be managed in accordance with applicable federal and state regulations. Waste resulting from the proposed action is expected to be minimal compared to annual Hanford Site waste generation. The proposed action would not release any particulate matter, thermal releases, or gaseous discharges in significant amounts. Therefore, these impacts to the environment are expected to be small.

#### Accident Impacts

The only reasonably foreseeable accidents under the proposed action would be typical construction accidents associated with salvage and demolition activities, including blasting, and subsequent backfilling activities. Areas would be roped off and cleared of personnel prior to any blasting. Areas affected by blasting would be restricted to the building sites. Personnel handling recycle and salvage/demolition activities would follow approved safety procedures. Typical construction hazards would be present, however the risk of a severe accident is small.

Socioeconomic Impacts

Only small numbers of workers would be involved at any one time. Therefore, no socioeconomic impacts are expected from the proposed action.

Environmental Justice

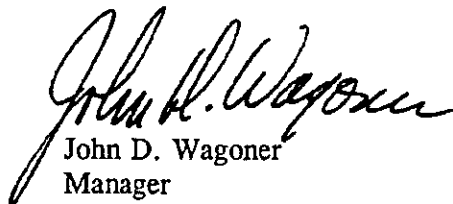
Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, requires that federal agencies identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs and activities on minority and low-income populations. With respect to Executive Order 12898 regarding environmental justice, distributions of minority and low income population groups have been identified for the Hanford Site. The analysis of the impacts in this EA indicates that there would be minimal impacts to both the offsite population and potential workforce by implementing the proposed action, because the entire proposed action would occur on the Hanford Site and the offsite environmental impacts from the proposed action analyzed in this EA are expected to be minimal. Therefore, it is not expected that there would be any disproportionate impacts to any minority or low-income portion of the community.

Cumulative Impacts

Waste generation and disposal resulting from the proposed action are not expected to be considerable and would not substantially effect any associated operations or disposal sites; therefore, the proposed action is not expected to result in any cumulatively significant impacts.

**DETERMINATION:** Based on the analysis in the EA, and in the absence of any public comments, I conclude that the proposed Salvage/Demolition of the 200 West Area, 200 East Area, and 300 Area Steam Plants at the Hanford Site, Richland, Washington does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, an EIS for the proposed action is not required.

Issued at Richland, Washington, this 21st day of October 1996.

  
John D. Wagoner  
Manager  
Richland Operations Office