

**DOE/EA-2142**

**Finding of No Significant Impact for the  
High Explosive Synthesis, Formulation, and  
Production Facility**

**U.S. Department of Energy  
National Nuclear Security Administration**

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**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE  
HIGH EXPLOSIVE SYNTHESIS, FORMULATION, AND PRODUCTION  
FACILITY**

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy (DOE), National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA)

**ACTION:** Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

**SUMMARY:** The NNSA has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA), DOE/EA-2142, to analyze the potential environmental consequences of designing, constructing, and operating a High Explosive Synthesis, Formulation, and Production (HESFP) facility at the Pantex Plant using federal funding. The HESFP complex would support the Pantex Plant mission through consolidating limited capacity legacy facilities that are inadequate for current mission needs, and increasing the required capability and capacity to meet future high explosives workload and mission requirements. Focus areas include explosive and mock formulation operations to support multiple weapons programs, extrusion operations, technology development for future programs, and support for strategic partners.

A Public Notice announcing the Notice of Intent of the draft EA was published in the Panhandle Herald and the Amarillo Globe News on May 7, 2020. Based on the information and analyses in the EA, NNSA 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 (NEPA) of 1969, 42 United States Code 4321 *et seq.*, the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR 1500-1508), and the Department of Energy regulations for implementing NEPA (10 CFR 1021). Therefore, preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required, and NNSA is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

**ADDRESSES:** Digital copies of the EA and FONSI are published and available on the Pantex website

(<https://pantex.energy.gov/mission/environment/environmental-compliance-documents>) and the DOE NEPA website (<https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/national-nuclear-security-administrations-environmental-assessments-and-environmental-impact>).

Copies of the EA are available from:

Mr. Steven Wyatt, NPO Public Affairs Manager  
U.S. Department of Energy/National Nuclear Security Administration  
P. O. Box 2050  
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37831

Requests may also be made by telephone to Mr. Wyatt at (865) 576-9918 or by fax at (865) 576-1237 or by e-mail to: [Steven.Wyatt@npo.doe.gov](mailto:Steven.Wyatt@npo.doe.gov).

For further information on the DOE NEPA Process, contact:

Mr. Brian Costner, Acting Director  
Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance (GC-54)  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20585-0119

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

The proposed action is to design, construct, and operate a new synthesis, formulation, and blending complex which will use the batch processes currently in use for synthesis, formulation, and blending at the Pantex Plant.

The HESFP EA discusses the alternatives considered to address the high explosives supply chain challenges, and the existing difficulty with meeting DOE/NNSA production requirements. The EA proposes supporting the DOE/NNSA mission through all formulation processes which would allow for future mission growth.

Due to the DOE's requirement for new square footage to be offset by demolished square footage, many existing outdated facilities would have to be demolished. The demolition of these facilities is not addressed in this EA but are planned as part of the project. Additional NEPA analyses would be completed prior to demolitions.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

A sliding scale approach was used for analyzing potential environmental and socioeconomic effects. This means this EA focused on significant environmental issues and alternatives and discussed impacts in proportion to their significance. Generally, certain aspects of the proposed action have a greater potential for creating environmental effects than others. The aspects with greater potential for impacts are discussed in more detail in the EA, but are summarized below.

Approximately 19 acres would be affected by both permanent and temporary features of the proposed project. Of the total area affected, approximately seven acres would remain in industrial use after HESFP facility construction is completed, including access roads.

Any disturbed land not occupied by the proposed facility would be reseeded with the appropriate seed mix of native grasses for the soil type and land use. A nurse crop would be planted followed by a second planting of native grass mix. Controls to install and maintain would be in place to protect the newly seeded areas.

Excess soil generated as a result of construction activities would be handled in accordance with applicable rules and regulations. Depending on characterization, the excess soil may be sent to the onsite borrow pit for reuse, or to an applicable landfill or disposal facility.

Impact to transient species would be minimal, because the habitat disturbance area would be geographically small-scale, temporary, and not a critical or unique habitat.

Analyzed resources which could potentially experience cumulative effects are land use, water resources, biological resources, air quality and climate change, visual, noise, cultural resources, human health, transportation, waste, and socioeconomic. The resource areas which are not considered under cumulative effects have a small potential for impact. These include environmental justice and floodplains/wetlands. Actions in the Area of Influence are mostly temporary and short-term. Most of the acreage that is needed for the construction phases of these projects would be returned to the original condition of open space or cultivation. For the long-term impacts of these projects, only the footprint of the facilities would remain and the land not necessary for the footprint would be restored. Pipelines and some electrical connections are underground, so after installation, the surfaces would be returned to the original condition. Regarding the demolition projects, the footprints would be removed and the site returned to open space. Therefore, the incremental impact of the proposed action, when added to those from actions of a similar nature, would be minor.

**DETERMINATION:** Based on the analysis of the EA, and after careful consideration of all public and agency comments, I conclude that the Proposed Action 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 and this FONSI is hereby issued.

Issued this 11th day of December, 2020.

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NNSA Production Office Manager  
National Nuclear Security Administration  
U.S. Department of Energy