



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

News Media Contact(s):
Megan Barnett, (202) 586-4940

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Department of Energy Announces Decision to Consolidate Surplus Plutonium in South Carolina

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today announced its decision to consolidate surplus, non-pit plutonium at its Savannah River Site (SRS) in South Carolina, greatly reducing storage costs and significantly enhancing security across the nation's weapons complex. DOE will begin shipping the surplus, non-pit plutonium no sooner than 30 days from today and under the plan this surplus plutonium is expected to be shipped to SRS by 2010.

"Consolidation is a key part of the Department's efforts to properly manage surplus plutonium and follows our dedication to non-proliferation, environmental management and national security," Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management James Rispoli said. "Today's decision continues the momentum for the safe disposition of surplus materials."

The surplus plutonium to be consolidated at SRS will come from the following DOE facilities: the Hanford Site in Washington; the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California; and the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico. Some 2,300 plutonium storage containers from Hanford and close to 700 from Lawrence Livermore and Los Alamos Labs will be moved by secure transport to SRS. The surplus material to be consolidated is "non-pit" plutonium, which comes from sources other than nuclear weapons triggers, or pits.

DOE's decision will reduce the number of sites with special nuclear material, enhancing the security of these materials and reducing the costs associated with plutonium storage, surveillance and monitoring, and security at multiple sites. By transferring the material to one location, the Department expects to increase security while avoiding significant costs at all three sites.

Once the material is consolidated at SRS, the Department's current plan for disposing of surplus plutonium involves the use of up to three SRS facilities: the Mixed Oxide (MOX) Fuel Fabrication Facility (currently under construction); the existing H-Canyon facility; and the proposed new, small-scale plutonium vitrification capability. DOE will evaluate reducing and possibly eliminating the need for the vitrification capability, and instead disposing of all the surplus plutonium through the MOX facility and H-Canyon. DOE's plan ensures that surplus plutonium which will be consolidated at SRS has an identified, clear disposition path out of South Carolina.

DOE has notified Congress and provided a plan for the disposal of the surplus plutonium once it gets to SRS, pursuant to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2002 (Public Law 107-107). Consolidation of surplus plutonium at SRS has been analyzed in a Supplement Analysis and DOE issued an Amended Record of Decision for the Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. View the [Supplement Analysis and Amended Record of Decision](#).

Separately from this consolidation announcement, DOE is preparing a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Surplus Plutonium Disposition at the Savannah River Site to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of alternative methods to disposition the surplus, non-pit plutonium materials.

U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Public Affairs, Washington, D.C.