



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Nevada Site Office
P.O. Box 98518
Las Vegas, NV 89193-8518

APR 06 2004

RECEIVED

APR 12 2004

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
BUDGET AND PLANNING DIVISION

Julie Butler
Nevada State Clearinghouse
Department of Administration
209 East Musser
Carson City, NV 89710

**NOTIFICATION OF INTENTION TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
(EA) RADIOLOGICAL/NUCLEAR COUNTERMEASURES TEST AND EVALUATION
COMPLEX (RNCTEC)**

A major concern associated with potential terrorist attacks in the United States is the placement and detonation of improvised nuclear devices and/or radiological dispersion devices. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is the federal organization charged with defending the borders of the United States. A vital part of defending the United States is the ability to interdict unauthorized transportation of radioactive material into the country. The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296), includes provisions authorizing the DHS to utilize Department of Energy (DOE) sites in carrying out its missions. The National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Site Office (NNSA/NSO), in cooperation with DHS, proposes to construct, operate, and maintain the RNCTEC at the Nevada Test Site (NTS). The purpose of this proposed facility would be to test and evaluate sensor systems and their associated operational procedures and protocols that may be used at border crossings and transportation facilities to detect the presence of potential radiological materials. As part of project planning and in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, NNSA/NSO is preparing an EA for the proposed actions.

As presently conceived, the RNCTEC would consist of eight or more venues, including: (1) Port of Entry - Primary, (2) Port of Entry - Secondary, (3) Airport Customs Facility, (4) Active Interrogation Facility (radiation sensor detection systems), (5) Environmental Test Facility, (6) Portal Test Track, (7) a two to three mile long High-Speed Road, and (8) a Training Facility. The estimated area that would be impacted by these venues is about 50 acres. Additional potential venues could increase the impact area by as much as 50 acres. Those potential future venues include: an isolated railroad track about two to three miles in length, a simulated seaport including an operational gantry crane and cargo ship mock-up, and a mock urban area for conducting simulated radiological/nuclear searches. Construction of the RNCTEC would include access roads, extension of water and electrical service to the facilities, and treatment facilities for domestic sewage. The EA will include a detailed description of the proposed RNCTEC.

APR 06 2004

NNSA/NSO determined that an EA would be required to consider the potential environmental impacts of the proposed actions. The EA will address the potential impacts to the biological, geological, hydrological, social, and cultural environments and of using radiological sources and special nuclear materials in the RNCTEC venues. There will be a 33-day period for Federal, state, and local government agencies and other interested parties to provide input regarding the scope of the EA. The scoping period for this EA will end 33 days after the date of this letter.

Please provide any issues or concerns that should be addressed in the EA to the following:

Dirk Schmidhofer
NEPA Document Manager
National Nuclear Security Administration
Nevada Site Office
P.O. Box 98518
Las Vegas, NV 89193

or e-mail schmidho@nv.doe.gov

We anticipate that the preapproval draft EA will be provided for your review in June 2004.

If there are questions regarding the proposed action please contact Mr. Schmidhofer at (702) 295-0159. Questions regarding DOE's NEPA procedures may be addressed to the NNSA/NSO NEPA Compliance Officer, Michael G. Skougard at (702) 295-1759.



Kenneth A. Hoar, Director
Environment, Safety & Health Division

ESHD:MGS-4151
ENV 11-05

cc:

M. J. Elges, BAPC, Carson City, NV
Stan Marshall, BHPS, Carson City, NV
Teri Maize, NDEP, Las Vegas, NV
D. R. Elle, NDEP, Las Vegas, NV