DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Transfer of Control of Occupancy and Use of United States Forest Service Lands Adjacent to the Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina

The U. S. Forest Service of the Department of Agriculture, has prepared an environmental assessment which evaluates the potential impacts associated with a request by the Department of Energy (DOE) for transfer of control of occupancy and use of 6,021 acres of land of the Sumter National Forest adjacent to DOE's Savannah River Plant, Aiken, South Carolina. The environmental assessment has been adopted by the DOE following its independent review.

Based on the findings of the environmental assessment, which is available to the public on request, the DOE has determined that the proposed action would not significantly affect 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 an environmental impact statement is not required.

The proposed action is a request by the DOE for transfer of control of occupancy and use of 6,021 acres of publicly accessible land managed by the Forest Service. The Department has requested use and occupancy of the Forest Service lands to improve the security posture of the Savannah River Plant (SRP). The land in question is comprised of three tracts. Tracts 1 and 2, the Talatha Units, adjoin the SRP near the 703-A Administration building, and contain 706 acres and 535 acres of land, respectively. Tract 3, the Swamp Unit, adjoins the western boundary of the SRP near the "D" area and Equipment Test Facility, is bounded on the south by the Savannah River and contains a total of 4,780 acres. As described in the environmental assessment, hunting, camping and

other public use on the Talatha Units and 1,250 acres of the Swamp Unit would be prohibited. Hunting and fishing on the remaining 3,530 acres within the Swamp Unit would be allowed for no less than 20 days annually. Management of the natural resources such as timber, watershed and wildlife habitat would continue under Forest Service administration.

There are no significant environmental impacts associated with the DOE's request for transfer of control of occupancy and use of the 6,021 acres of Forest Service administered land adjacent to the Savannah River Plant. The DOE has no plans to develop any of the land obtained from the Forest Service under the proposed occupancy and use request. Consequently, impacts to the natural environment (i.e. soils, air, water, wildlife, flora, endangered species or sites of historical or archeological interest) are not anticipated as a result of the DOE's occupancy and use. Although there will be a reduction in the amount of publicly accessible land, 3,530 acres in the Swamp Unit would be available for limited public access (controlled hunting and fishing).

Alternatives to the proposed action considered in the environmental assessment include: (1) no action; (2) occupancy and use of all 6,021 acres by the DOE with no public access on any of the land; and, (3) occupancy and use of the Talatha Units only by the Department (the entire acreage in the Swamp Unit would remain under Forest Service administrative control).

Single copies of the environmental assessment are available from:

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