

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
WASTE MANAGEMENT OPERATIONS
DOUBLE-SHELL TANKS FOR DEFENSE HIGH-LEVEL RADIOACTIVE WASTE STORAGE
SAVANNAH RIVER PLANT
DOE/EIS-0062
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
(SUPPLEMENT TO ERDA 1537, SEPTEMBER 1977)

1. This final environmental impact statement (EIS) has been prepared in compliance with the September 29, 1979, order of the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia (Natural Resources Defense Council, et al., v. Administrator ERDA/DOE, et al. (D.D.C. Civ. No. 76-1691)). The statement analyzes the impacts of the various design alternatives for the construction of fourteen 1.3 million gallon high-activity radioactive waste tanks. The EIS evaluates the effects of these alternative designs on tank durability, on the ease of waste retrieval from such tanks, and the choice of technology and timing for long-term storage or disposal of the wastes.
2. The proposed action is to complete the construction of the 14 tanks as originally planned and use them to store waste. This action will facilitate the continued safe interim storage of waste from the SRP production of nuclear materials and make possible the retirement of 24 tanks of older designs beginning with nine tanks known to have leaks.
3. The design alternatives considered in the EIS are: thicker and more chemically resistant steel plates, an impressed-current, cathodic protection system to guard against stress corrosion cracking, better waste retrieval equipment, and enlarged tank openings to facilitate retrieval. The design alternatives are not proposed because no unique advantages are provided by the alternatives and because each of the alternatives possess definite disadvantages (cost, delays, or potential technical problems).
4. The environmental impacts of current waste management operations at SRP were assessed in ERDA-1537 (September 1977). ERDA-1537 covered interim storage of the high-activity wastes in subsurface tanks. SRP plans to continue existing operations and improve waste management practices in accordance with DOE policies and standards; this plan is Alternative 4 of ERDA-1537. It involves regular assessment of current waste management practices and continued improvement of volume reduction and storage equipment and techniques. Provision of these new tanks (and retirement of older ones) is a major step in the interim waste management program.

5. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency published a notice of availability of a draft of the EIS (45 FR 4466) on January 22, 1980, and the comment period ended on March 3, 1980. Only four comment letters were received.
6. The EIS was forwarded to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on April 11, 1980, and an announcement of its availability will be submitted to the Federal Register.
7. Additional information regarding the EIS may be obtained from Dr. G. K. Oertel, M. S. B-107, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, DC 20545, telephone (301) 353-3641.