

### Change Bars

Changes from the Draft EIS are indicated in this Final EIS by vertical change bars in the margins. The bars are marked TC for technical changes, EC for editorial changes or, if the change was made in response to a public comment, the designated comment number is noted, as listed in Appendix D of the EIS.

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## FOREWORD

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) published a Notice of Intent to prepare this environmental impact statement (EIS) on December 29, 1998 (63 FR 71628). As described in the Notice of Intent, DOE's proposed action described in this EIS is to close the high-level waste (HLW) tanks at the Savannah River Site (SRS) in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, DOE Orders, and the *Industrial Wastewater Closure Plan for F- and H-Area High-Level Waste Tank Systems* approved by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control. This closure plan specifies the management of residuals as waste incidental to reprocessing. The proposed action would begin after bulk waste removal has been completed and the tank system is turned over to the tank closure program. This EIS assesses the potential environmental impacts associated with alternatives for closing these tanks, as well as the potential environmental impacts of the residual radioactive and non-radioactive material remaining in the closed HLW tanks.

The Notice of Intent requested public comments and suggestions for DOE to consider in its determination of the scope of the EIS, and announced a public scoping period that ended on February 12, 1999. DOE held scoping meetings in North Augusta, South Carolina, on January 14, 1999, and in Columbia, South Carolina, on January 19, 1999. During the scoping period, individuals, organizations, and government agencies submitted 36 comments that DOE

considered applicable to the SRS HLW tank closure program.

A Notice of Availability for the draft EIS appeared in the *Federal Register* on November 24, 2000. Public meetings to discuss and receive comments on the Draft EIS were held on Tuesday, January 9, 2001, in North Augusta, South Carolina and on Thursday, January 11, 2001 in Columbia, South Carolina. The public comment period ended on January 23, 2001. A summary of oral comments, complete written comments, and DOE responses to comments are in Appendix D.

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Transcripts of public testimony, written comments received, and reference materials cited in the EIS are available for review in the DOE Public Reading Room, University of South Carolina at Aiken, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University Parkway, Aiken, South Carolina.

DOE has prepared this EIS in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR Part 1021). This EIS identifies the methods used for analyses and the scientific and other sources of information consulted. In addition, it incorporates, directly or by reference, available results of ongoing studies. The organization of the EIS is as follows:

- Summary (bound separately).

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- Chapter 1 provides background information related to SRS HLW tank closures and describes the purpose and need for DOE action regarding HLW tank closure at the SRS.
- Chapter 2 identifies the proposed action and alternatives that DOE is considering for HLW tank closure at the SRS.
- Chapter 3 describes the existing SRS environment as it relates to the alternatives described in Chapter 2.
- Chapter 4 assesses the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives for both the short-term (from the year 2000 through final closure of the existing HLW tanks) and long-term (10,000 years post-closure) timeframes.
- Chapter 5 discusses the cumulative impacts of HLW tank closure actions in relation to impacts of other past, present, and foreseeable future activities at the SRS.
- Chapter 6 identifies irreversible or irretrievable resource commitments.
- Chapter 7 discusses applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, DOE Orders, and agreements.
- Appendix A provides a description of the SRS HLW Tank Farms and the tank closure process.
- Appendix B provides detailed descriptions of accidents that could occur at SRS during HLW tank closure activities.
- Appendix C provides a detailed description of the fate and transport modeling used to estimate long-term environmental impacts.
- Appendix D describes public comments received on the Draft EIS and provides DOE responses. | EC
- Appendix E, Description of the Savannah River Site High-Level Waste Tank Farms, which is for Official Use Only, contains detailed information about the location, physical dimensions, and content of the HLW tank systems. Due to increased concerns about operational security following the events of September 11, 2001, Appendix E will be made available upon request to those who have a need to review this information. Please contact Andrew Grainger at the address and telephone number given on the Cover Sheet, to request Appendix E. Consistent with the direction of the Attorney General of the United States, this information is not releasable under the Freedom of Information Act. | EC