

needed to implement these mitigation measures and provide schedules for completion. These mitigation measures represent all practicable means to avoid or minimize harm from the alternative selected.

### Conclusion

DOE has considered environmental impacts, stakeholder concerns, and National policy in its decisions regarding the management and use of LANL. The analysis contained in the Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement is both programmatic and site specific in detail. It is programmatic from the broad multi-use facility management perspective and site specific in the detailed project and program activity analysis. The impacts identified in the Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement were based on conservative estimates and assumptions. In this regard, the analyses bound the impacts of the alternatives evaluated in the Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement. The Expanded Operations Alternative was defined to include activities to implement the programmatic decisions made or that may be made as a result of other DOE Environmental Impact Statements (some of which are currently in progress). This Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement and the analyses it contains can be used to support these future programmatic or project decisions.

In accordance with the provisions of NEPA, its implementing procedures and regulations, and DOE's NEPA regulations, I have considered the information contained within the Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement, including the classified supplement and public comments received in response to the final Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement. Being fully apprised of the environmental consequences of the alternatives and other decision factors described above, I have decided to continue and expand the use of LANL and its resources as described. This will enhance DOE's ability to meet its primary National security mission responsibility and create an environment that fosters technological innovation in both the public and private sectors.

Issued at Washington, DC, September 13, 1999.

**Thomas F. Gioconda,**

*Brigadier General, USAF, Acting Assistant Secretary for Defense Programs.*

[FR Doc. 99-24456 Filed 9-17-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Withdrawal of Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Minnesota Agri-Power Plant and Associated Facilities

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy.

**ACTION:** Notice of withdrawal.

**SUMMARY:** On October 7, 1998 (63 FR 53885), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board [MEQB, a Minnesota State agency] announced its intent to prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding a proposal by the Minnesota Valley Alfalfa Producers (MnVAP) to construct and operate a 75-103 megawatt biomass fueled gasifier and electric generating facility, known as the Minnesota Agri-Power Plant (MAPP), and associated transmission lines and alfalfa processing facilities. After careful review of this proposed biopower gasification project, DOE has determined that it will no longer participate in the cooperative agreement with MnVAP. This determination terminates DOE's financial support for the MAPP project, thus DOE will not provide funding toward the cost of constructing the proposed biomass power plant and the associated alfalfa processing facilities. As a result of DOE's decision not to fund the construction of the power plant and the associated processing facilities, there is no longer a federal requirement to conduct an EIS. Accordingly, DOE is withdrawing its notice of intent to prepare an EIS.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For general information on the DOE's NEPA process, please contact: Ms. Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, EH-42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585-0119, Phone: 202-586-4600 or leave a message at 1-800-472-2756.

For general information about the NEPA process relating to MnVAP's proposed biopower gasification project, please contact Mr. Tim Howell, Acting NEPA Compliance Officer, U.S. Department of Energy, Golden Field Office, 1617 Cole Blvd., Golden, CO 80401; Telephone: 303-275-4700 or toll-free 1-800-644-6735 extension 4700; Fax: 303-275-4790; E-mail: tim-howell@nrel.gov.

For information regarding the MEQB process please contact: Mr. John Hynes, Permit Compliance Officer, Minnesota Environmental Quality Board, 300 Centennial Building, St. Paul,

Minnesota 55155, Phone: 651-296-4095, Fax: 651-296-2871, E-mail: john.hynes@mnplan.state.mn.us.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** MnVAP is a farmer-owned cooperative, incorporated in 1994 to increase the value of farm products grown in and near the State of Minnesota. In response to a joint Department of Energy and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Solicitation for Financial Assistance for Biomass Power for Rural Development (DE-PS36-95GO10052), MnVAP submitted a proposal to establish Minnesota Agri-Power as a limited liability corporation, with MnVAP as the majority stock holder, for the purposes of siting, constructing, and operating a 75-103 megawatt power plant fueled with gasified alfalfa stems. DOE selected the MnVAP project as one of several promising efforts to meet the goals of the Energy Policy Act of 1992 to develop and ultimately commercialize biomass energy systems for the purposes of positively affecting global climate change and the revitalization of rural America. Under the terms of the solicitation, MnVAP and DOE would each share the financial burden of taking a biomass gasification technology from the demonstration phase to full commercial production.

The proposed power plant was to partially meet the Minnesota "Biomass Power Mandate," Minnesota State Law, 216B.2424, which requires that:

A public utility \* \* \* that operates a nuclear-powered electric generating plant within this state must construct and operate, purchase, or contract to construct and operate (1) by December 31, 1998, 50 megawatts of electric energy installed capacity generated by farm-grown closed-loop biomass scheduled to be operational by December 31, 2001; and (2) by December 31, 1998, an additional 75 megawatts of installed capacity so generated scheduled to be operational by December 31, 2002.

The MAPP project, as proposed, was to use an "integrated gasification combined-cycle" or IGCC system where the gasifier would process approximately 1,100 tons of alfalfa stems per day (i.e., this would produce approximately 750 million British thermal units per hour). As proposed, the gross output of the power plant could be as high as 103 megawatts. The alfalfa stems were to be rapidly heated in the gasifier to approximately 1,650 degrees Fahrenheit to produce alfalfa gas, cooled to 1,020 degrees Fahrenheit, and then cleaned to meet air quality standards and the requirements for the combustion turbine. The combustion turbine was to be designed to operate efficiently on the low energy biomass fuel produced by the gasifier unit with

a gross electric power output of 66 megawatts (the alfalfa gas was to be supplemented with natural gas as needed). Another 37 megawatts were to be generated from the super-heated, high-pressure steam recovered from the hot combustion gases leaving the combustion turbine. Since the biomass gasification technology proposed for MAPP has yet to be successfully demonstrated at full commercial scale, DOE was proposing to fund \$44 million (up to 30%) of the cost of construction of the plant and associated facilities (approximately \$140 to \$200 million) as part of the Department's mission to support biomass technology commercialization. Other key participants in the MAPP project have included the University of Minnesota, Stone and Webster Engineering Corporation, Kvaerner/Carbona Corporation, Enron Capital and Trade Resources Corporation, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Enron Capital and Trade Resources Corporation, however, terminated its co-development participation in the MAPP project in early 1999.

In the event that MnVAP elects to proceed with the MAPP project without funding from DOE, an analysis of the relative impact of the proposed project on the environment would still be required under applicable Minnesota laws and regulations. In such an event, the MEQB, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations, would be the lead agency for the environmental analysis. While DOE may be asked by the MEQB to assist by providing relevant information to any Minnesota led environmental analysis, DOE would no longer participate as a lead agency or as a co-preparer.

Issued in Golden, Colorado, on September 10, 1999.

**Frank M. Stewart,**

*Manager, Golden Field Office, U.S. Department of Energy.*

[FR Doc. 99-24457 Filed 9-17-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Idaho Operations Office; Notice of Availability of Solicitation for Awards of Financial Assistance

**AGENCY:** Idaho Operations Office, DOE.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of solicitation number DE-PS07-00ID13860—Nuclear Engineering Education Research (NEER) Program.

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office, is

soliciting applications for special research grant awards that will support nuclear engineering research. It is anticipated that on September 16, 1999, the full text for Solicitation Number DE-PS07-00ID13860 for the 2000 NEER Program will be made available on the Internet under, "current solicitation", at the following URL address: <http://www.id.doe.gov/doiid/PSD/proc-div.html>, under current solicitation.

**DATES:** The deadline for receipt of applications will be November 22, 1999.

**ADDRESSES:** Applications should be submitted to: Dallas L. Hoffer, Procurement Services Division, U.S. Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office, 850 Energy Drive, Mail Stop 1221, Idaho Falls, Idaho 83401-1563.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dallas Hoffer, Contract Specialist at [hofferdl@id.doe.gov](mailto:hofferdl@id.doe.gov).

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The solicitation will be issued in accordance with 10 CFR 600.6(b). Eligibility for awards under this program will be restricted to U.S. colleges and universities with nuclear engineering degree programs or options or an operating research reactor. The purpose of the Nuclear Engineering Education Research (NEER) program is to (1) support basic research in nuclear engineering; (2) assist in developing nuclear engineering students; and (3) contribute to strengthening the academic community's nuclear engineering infrastructure.

The statutory authority for this program is Public Law 95-91.

Issued in Idaho Falls on September 13, 1999.

**R.J. Hoyles,**

*Director, Procurement Services Division.*

[FR Doc. 99-24458 Filed 9-17-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### International Energy Agency Meetings

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy.

**ACTION:** Notice of meetings.

**SUMMARY:** The Industry Advisory Board (IAB) to the International Energy Agency (IEA) will meet during the week of September 27, 1999 at the headquarters of the IEA in Paris, France in connection with a Seminar on IEA Oil Stock Strategy, a Disruption Simulation Exercise, and a meeting of the IEA's Standing Group on Emergency Questions (SEQ).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Samuel M. Bradley, Assistant General Counsel for International and National

Security Programs, Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20585, 202-586-6738.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** In accordance with section 252(c)(1)(A)(i) of the Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6272(c)(1)(A)(i)), the following notice of meetings is provided:

A meeting of the Industry Advisory Board (IAB) to the International Energy Agency (IEA) will be held at the headquarters of the IEA, 9, rue de la Fédération, Paris, France, commencing on September 27, 1999, at approximately 10 a.m.. The purpose of this notice is to permit attendance by representatives of U.S. company members of the IAB at:

(1) A Seminar on IEA Oil Stock Strategy ("Stock Seminar") commencing on September 27 at approximately 10 a.m. and ending on September 28 at approximately 12:45 p.m.;

(2) A brief meeting of the IAB, on September 28 from approximately 1:45 p.m. to 2 p.m., in preparation of the Simulation Exercise;

(3) A Disruption Simulation Exercise (the "Simulation Exercise"), commencing on September 28 at approximately 2 p.m. and ending on September 30 at approximately 12:30 p.m.;

(4) A meeting of the IEA Standing Group on Emergency Questions (SEQ) on September 30 from approximately 2:30 p.m. to approximately 5 p.m. and on October 1 from approximately 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.; and

(5) A meeting of the IAB on September 30 from approximately 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

The Agendas for the Stock Seminar (item 1 above), the Simulation Exercise (item 3), and the SEQ (item 4) are under the control of the IEA Secretariat and the SEQ. It is expected that the following Agendas will be followed:

### I. Seminar on IEA Oil Stock Strategy (September 27 and 28 (a.m.))

- Welcome by SEQ Chairman, and IEA Executive Director
- Presentation by Secretariat of Background Note on Global Oil Stock Situation and Synopsis of Replies to SEQ Questionnaire on Stockholding and Stockdraw
- Session 1—Stocks as a Means of Rapid Response, and Demand Restraint Operations

How the Administrations and the industry would ensure quick and effective response to a major disruption: presentations and discussion