

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information, please refer to the previous point of contact official in the original notice.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** None.

**Gregory D. Showalter,**  
*Army Federal Register Liaison Officer.*  
 [FR Doc. 00-1820 Filed 1-25-00; 8:45 am]  
**BILLING CODE 3710-92-M**

## DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

### Department of the Navy

#### **Notice of Public Hearings and Extension of Public Comment Period for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Shock Trial of the WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81)**

**AGENCY:** Department of the Navy, DOD.  
**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Navy (DON) has prepared and filed with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) a DEIS evaluating the environmental effects for the shock trial of the WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81) at a site to be located offshore of either Norfolk, Virginia, Mayport, Florida, or Pascagoula, Mississippi. The DON is the lead agency and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is a cooperating agency in the development of the DEIS. The comment period, previously announced in the **Federal Register** on December 10, 1999 (64 FR 69267) has been extended. This notice announces the dates and locations for the three public hearings and the extension of the public review period. Public hearings will be held in order to receive oral and written comments on the DEIS. Federal, state and local agencies, and interested individuals are invited to be present or represented at the hearings.

**DATES AND ADDRESSES:** The public hearings will be jointly hosted by the DON and the NMFS. The hearings have been scheduled as follows:

1. March 13, 2000, 7:00 PM, Granby High School Auditorium, 7101 Granby Street, Norfolk, Virginia.
2. March 14, 2000, 7:00 PM, Pensacola Junior College, Hagler Auditorium, 1000 College Boulevard, Pensacola, Florida.
3. March 15, 2000, 7:00 PM, Fletcher High School Auditorium, 700 Seagate Avenue, Neptune Beach, Florida.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ms. Lyn Carroll, Marconi Systems Technologies, 2611 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 5000, Arlington, Virginia 22202, telephone (703) 413-4099 or e-mail address at ddg81eis@tst.tracor.com.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Per Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), the DON has prepared and filed with the EPA a DEIS evaluating the environmental effects for the shock trial of the WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81), at a site to be located offshore of either Norfolk, Virginia, Mayport, Florida, or Pascagoula, Mississippi. The DON is the lead agency and the NMFS is a cooperating agency in the development of the DEIS. The NMFS is concurrently evaluating the DON's request for a Letter of Authorization for the Incidental Take of Marine Mammals in their regulatory role under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

A Notice of Availability for the DEIS appeared in the **Federal Register** on December 10, 1999 (64 FR 69267). That Notice stated that comments on the DEIS were due by January 24, 2000. The DON is extending the public comment period to March 31, 2000. All written comments should be postmarked no later than that date. This comment period is expected to coincide with the NMFS comment period provided in its Advance Notice of Proposed Rule (ANPR) on the DON'S application for the taking of marine mammals incidental to the proposed shock trial of the WINSTON S. CHURCHILL. The NMFS will provide details on the ANPR by separate notice in the **Federal Register**.

The DON will conduct three public hearings to receive oral and written comments concerning the DEIS and the ANPR. A brief presentation will precede a request for public information and comments. DON representatives will be available at each hearing to receive information and comments from agencies and the public regarding issues of concern. Federal, state, and local agencies and interested parties are invited and urged to be present or represented at the hearings. Those who intend to speak will be asked to submit a speaker card (available at the door). Oral comments will be heard and transcribed by a stenographer. To assure accuracy of the record, all statements should be submitted in writing. All statements, both oral and written, will become part of the public record in the study. Equal weight will be given to both oral and written comments. In the interest of available time, each speaker will be asked to limit oral comments to three minutes. Longer comments should be summarized at the public hearings and submitted in writing either at the

hearing or mailed to Ms. Lyn Carroll (see address below).

The DEIS has been distributed to various federal, state, and local agencies, elected officials, and special interest groups and public libraries. The DEIS is available for public review at the following libraries:

- Beaches Branch Library, Jacksonville Public Libraries, 600 3rd Street, Neptune Beach, Florida.
- Center for Naval Analysis, The Library, 4401 Ford Avenue, Alexandria, Virginia.
- Main Library, Norfolk Public Library, 301 East City Hall Avenue, Norfolk, Virginia.
- Main Library, Jacksonville Public Libraries, 122 North Ocean Street, Jacksonville, Florida.
- Main Library, Pascagoula Public Library, 3214 Pascagoula Street, Pascagoula, Mississippi.
- Main Library, Pensacola Public Library/West Florida Regional Library, 200 W. Gregory Street, Pensacola, Florida.
- Pell Marine Science Library, University of Rhode Island, Narragansett Bay Campus, Narragansett, Rhode Island.
- SIO Library Mono, Scripps Inst of Oceanography, 9500 Gilman Drive, La Jolla, California.
- St. Mary's Public Library, 100 Herb Bauer Drive, St. Mary's, Georgia.
- University of Southampton, National Oceanographic Library, Express Dock, Southampton, United Kingdom.

Dated: January 20, 2000.

**J.L. Roth,**  
*Lieutenant Commander, Judge Advocate General's Corps, U.S. Navy, Federal Register Liaison Officer.*

[FR Doc. 00-1802 Filed 1-25-00; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 3810-FF-P**

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

### Sunshine Act Meeting

Pursuant to the provision of the "Government in the Sunshine Act" (5 U.S.C. § 552b), notice is hereby given of the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board's (Board) meeting described below.

**TIME AND DATE OF MEETING:** 6 p.m., February 9, 2000.

**PLACE:** Ambassador Hotel, Trinity Room, 3100 I-40 West, Amarillo, Texas.

**STATUS:** Open. While the Sunshine Act does not require that the scheduled discussion be conducted in a meeting, the Board has determined that an open meeting in this specific case furthers the

public interests underlying both the Sunshine Act and the Board's enabling legislation.

**MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED:** The Board is visiting the Pantex Plant as a part of its oversight of the Department of Energy's (DOE) defense nuclear facility safety management program. The Board's enabling legislation requires health and safety oversight encompassing design, construction, operation and decommissioning activities.

The Board wishes also to avail itself of the opportunity of this visit to meet with the stakeholders and local members of the public. The session is intended to be informal and to provide an opportunity for members of the public, DOE, and its contractor employees or their representatives to comment on or provide information directly to the Board regarding matters affecting health or safety at Pantex.

**CONTACT PERSON FOR MORE INFORMATION:** Richard A. Azzaro, General Counsel, Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board, 625 Indiana Avenue, NW., Suite 700, Washington, DC 20004, (800) 788-4016. This is a toll-free number.

Dated: January 24, 2000.

**John T. Conway,**  
*Chairman.*

[FR Doc. 1966 Filed 1-24-00; 12:44 pm]

BILLING CODE 3670-01-M

## DEFENSE NUCLEAR FACILITIES SAFETY BOARD

### [Recommendation 2000-1]

#### The Need to Stabilize and Safely Store Large Amounts of Fissionable and Other Nuclear Material That for Safety Reasons Should Not Be Permitted to Remain Unremediated

**AGENCY:** Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board.

**ACTION:** Notice, recommendation.

**SUMMARY:** The Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board has made a recommendation to the Secretary of Energy pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 2286a(a)(5) concerning the need to stabilize and safely store large amounts of fissionable and other nuclear material that for safety reasons should not be permitted to remain unremediated.

**DATES:** Comments, data, views, or arguments concerning this recommendation are due on or before February 25, 2000.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comments, data, views, or arguments concerning this recommendation to: Defense Nuclear

Facilities Safety Board, 625 Indiana Avenue, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20004-2901.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Kenneth M. Pusateri or Andrew L. Thibadeau at the address above or telephone (202) 694-7000.

Dated: January 20, 2000.

**John T. Conway,**  
*Chairman.*

### Recommendation 2000-1

It is now almost six years since the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (Board) transmitted to the Secretary of Energy its Recommendation 94-1 entitled, "Improved Schedule for Remediation in Defense Nuclear Facilities Complex." That Recommendation pointed to the existence of large quantities of unstable fissionable material and other radioactive material that had been left in the production pipeline following termination of nuclear weapons production. These materials required prompt conversion to more stable forms, to prevent deterioration leading to inevitable spread of radioactive contamination. Further, some of the material was in such a state that serious safety problems could be expected in a very short period of time if remediation did not take place.

The Recommendation identified safety problems posed by plutonium both as metal and in chemical compounds, and plutonium-bearing materials such as residues and spent nuclear fuel. Most of this material was and still is at three sites: Savannah River, Hanford, and Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (RFETS). A substantial amount of spent nuclear fuel also existed at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory. In the Implementation Plan responding to the Recommendation, the Department of Energy (DOE) justifiably saw fit to add to the sources of concern the enriched uranium solution stored at the Savannah River Site, accumulated from processing of spent nuclear fuel, and the highly radioactive uranium-233 in the decommissioned Molten Salt Reactor Experiment (MSRE) at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory. The highly enriched uranium solution, amounting to many thousands of gallons of liquid, is stored outside the H-Canyon in large tanks where over a period of time precipitation resulting from freezing, chemical changes, or evaporation of liquid could produce sediments posing a threat of accidental criticality. The MSRE has been shut down for many decades, and deterioration, the onset of

which had already been detected, could in time release its radioactive material into the environment.

### Materials Stabilized Since the Recommendation

In the years since the Recommendation, progress has been made at defense nuclear facilities in remediating the most hazardous material. Most sites have repackaged plutonium metal and oxides that had been left in containers in contact with plastic that could become a source of hydrogen gas. Deteriorating spent nuclear fuel elements stored in the 603 Basin at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory have been moved to the 666 Basin where control of water purity is much better. Substantial amounts of spent nuclear fuel elements and nuclear targets stored in basins at the Savannah River Site have been chemically processed and plutonium and other radioactive material so extracted have been stored. Most of the plutonium in solution at the Savannah River Site has been converted to metal and along with other plutonium metal at the Site has been packaged in seal-welded containers with inert atmospheres by means of the bagless transfer system. Almost all of the plutonium-bearing solutions in facilities at the RFETS have been chemically treated to remove the plutonium, which has then been stored as more stable oxide. Numerous drums containing radioactive residues, mostly at the RFETS, have been vented to prevent buildup of pressure by gas liberated through chemical reactions and by effects of radioactive decay. Though non-technical problems continue to plague actions to store nuclear waste in the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) facility in New Mexico, some storage at that site has taken place, and presumably momentum will build toward highly important shipment of more material to that disposal site. In these ways, most of the very immediate concerns prompting the Recommendation have been eased.

Furthermore, after a long period when it seemed that little was being accomplished, progress has been made toward cleanup of the important K-East and K-West fuel storage basins at the Hanford Site. Remediation of many of the cleanup problems at the RFETS has taken on momentum after a long initial period when little was accomplished. Some of the most notable advances have been made by arrangements to ship plutonium-bearing material to the Savannah River Site and to WIPP.

Approximately 300,000 liters of plutonium solution in the F-Canyon at