

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
NONNUCLEAR CONSOLIDATION WEAPONS SUPPORT PROJECT
FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S KANSAS CITY PLANT
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI**

Proposed Action: The proposed action is to use an electrochemical process to etch solid depleted uranium (DU) components at the DOE's Kansas City Plant (KCP). This process is one of several required to complete the Nonnuclear Consolidation Weapons Production Support Project. An existing building, which is located in the northeast section of the KCP Complex, will be refurbished to house operations required to complete the work. All processes, with the exception of electrochemical etching of solid depleted uranium components and quality control evaluation of the completed product, are currently routinely performed at the KCP. The environmental assessment (EA) analyzed those activities of the electrochemical etching process that are not specifically analyzed in the 1993 Nonnuclear Consolidation EA (DOE/EA-0792).

The proposed action includes three main elements: (1) operating the electrochemical etching system, (2) managing wastes generated by the electrochemical etching of solid depleted uranium components and quality control evaluation, and (3) building restoration operations upon project completion.

The Department has prepared an EA (DOE/EA-1137) that analyzes impacts of the proposed action and the no-action alternative. Under the no action alternative, operations required to complete the electrochemical process would not be performed at the KCP. Inability to complete the work at the KCP hinders the overall mission of the DOE to provide products and services required for the design, manufacture, and testing of nuclear weapons components. These products and services support a national security policy and are necessary to meet stockpile objectives established by the President and the Congress. This project supports the DOE's objective to manufacture nonnuclear components for nuclear weapons and to test and monitor other components in order to maintain a viable nonnuclear production capability. The no-action alternative prevents the DOE from meeting this objective.

Other alternatives to complete this work are limited. Process design and the materials used are established by DOE's design laboratories and are developed to meet a specific need. Therefore, process and design changes were not considered to be reasonable alternatives. Construction of a new facility or renovation of an alternate site which does not meet the security and environment, safety and health requirements for this project could not be accomplished without jeopardizing DOE production schedules. Accordingly, these alternatives were not considered reasonable and were not analyzed further.

Environmental Consequences: Due to special tooling, engineered process controls, and minimal emissions generated by the electrochemical etching process and quality control evaluations, minimal air impacts are expected as a result of this work. Because no discharges of wastewater to sewer systems or surface waters are associated with this process, no water impacts are expected. Similarly, because secondary containment is provided for all process areas, no hydrologic (groundwater) impacts are expected. No significant changes in worker radiation exposure results are expected. Existing practices for the handling of the radioactive sources in the current KCP inventory adequately protect workers from internal exposure. Due to the relatively small quantities involved and the operation of air pollution control equipment, radiation exposure to the public and to uninvolved workers is estimated to be inconsequential. Therefore, with respect to workers, uninvolved workers, and the public, neither the handling of the DU component for this process nor the estimated emissions from the process are significant. The proposed action would not adversely affect the floodplain because it takes place in an area which is already developed. No known archeological or historical properties are located within the proposed project area. No sensitive species or communities are known to occur on the immediate site or surrounding area. No designated critical habitat occurs within the project area. There are no disproportional adverse impacts which affect minority or low-income populations.

No cumulative impacts to water or air quality, threatened and endangered species, floodplains and wetlands, historical and archaeological resources, or minority or low-income populations are anticipated as a result of this project. The electrochemical etching process will increase the volume of low-level wastes (LLW) and mixed wastes generated at the KCP. The total volume of wastes produced for off-site shipment are estimated to be eighteen drums per year of LLW and 100 pounds per year of mixed wastes generated during project operation; and one standard truckload of LLW generated during restoration of the project area. However, these wastes will be handled and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations and no significant impact from the generation of these wastes is expected.

For further information on the proposed action or the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review program at the Kansas City Plant, please contact:

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Finding: Based on the analysis of impacts in the environmental assessment, the proposed action to use an electrochemical etching process on solid depleted uranium components at the DOE's Kansas City Plant would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the meaning of National Environmental Policy Act, 42, U.S. C. 4321, et seq. Therefore, the Department is issuing this finding of no significant impact and the preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required. Furthermore, there is no practicable alternative to locating the proposed action in the floodplain (because the Kansas City Plant is located entirely within the floodplain), and the proposed action would be designed to avoid or minimize impacts to the floodplain (including limiting construction to an already developed area).

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