

## FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

### Disbursement of \$65 Million by the U.S. Department of Energy to the State of Texas for Construction of a Regional Medical Technology Center at the Former Superconducting Super Collider Site, Waxahachie, Texas

**AGENCY:** U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

**ACTION:** FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**SUMMARY:** The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has completed an environmental assessment (DOE/EA-1090) of the proposed disbursement of \$65 million to the State of Texas for construction of a Regional Medical Technology Center (RMTC) near Waxahachie, Texas. Based on the results of the analysis reported in the EA, DOE has determined that the proposed action is not a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the context of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) is not necessary, and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Additionally, pursuant to Executive Order 11988, *Floodplain Management* and 10 CFR 1022, *Compliance with Floodplain/Wetlands Environmental Review Requirements*, DOE reports in this EA that no riverine or palustrine wetlands that occur within riparian habitats would be adversely impacted by construction of the RMTC.

**PUBLIC AVAILABILITY OF EA AND FONSI:** The EA and FONSI may be reviewed at the following address and copies of the documents obtained from:

U.S. Department of Energy  
Superconducting Super Collider Project Office  
2275 Highway 77  
Waxahachie, Texas 75165.  
Phone: (214) 935-9000 ext. 2507

**FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE NEPA PROCESS:** For further information on the NEPA process, contact:

Carol M. Borgstrom, Director  
Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42)  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20585  
Phone: (202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756.

**BACKGROUND:** In 1993, Public Law 103-126 mandated that DOE terminate construction of the Superconducting Super Collider (SSC), a proposed energy research facility near the town of Waxahachie in Ellis County, Texas. A provision of the law required the Secretary of Energy to consider possible alternative uses of SSC assets to maximize their value to the nation. As part of a settlement agreement with the State of Texas, DOE proposes to disburse \$65 million of federal funds to the Texas National Research Laboratory Commission (TNRLC) for construction of a Regional Medical Technology Center (RMTC) in Ellis County, Texas. The RMTC is a proposed state-of-the-art facility that would provide high-energy-proton-beam cancer therapy. The State of Texas would operate the facility in conjunction with the University of Texas—Southwestern Medical Center. The RMTC would make extensive use of the partially constructed linear accelerator (linac) for the SSC facility.

Funding of the RMTC by DOE is independent of other actions related to closure and reclamation activities at the SSC site.

**ALTERNATIVES:** DOE considered the no-action alternative and alternate sites for the RMTC. If no action is taken, \$65 million would not be disbursed to the State of Texas for the RMTC. The use of alternate sites for the RMTC was dismissed from consideration because the SSC linac assets are available at only the proposed location for the RMTC.

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

##### *Air Quality*

Construction of the RMTC would disturb approximately 10 acres of previously disturbed land at the SSC site. Excavation, grading, and other earth-moving activities would generate fugitive dust [particulate matter (PM)], which would temporarily degrade local air quality at the site. Ambient PM concentrations would not exceed air quality standards, and off-site air quality would not be degraded. Construction and commuter vehicle emissions would be temporary and localized at the SSC site.

##### *Water Resources*

Construction activities would disturb soils, increasing the potential for erosion, seepage, and sedimentation during periods of heavy precipitation. Earthen and straw berms, plastic liners and covers, and other runoff barriers would be used to minimize the potential for runoff to the nearest stream, Boz Creek. Existing french drains near the linac would provide a groundwater sink that would minimize seepage to the deeper confined aquifer system during both construction and operation.

Water consumption during construction would be 4% or less of the reserve capacity of the Waxahachie and Ennis surface water supply.

### *Floodplain/Wetlands*

The proposed site is above the 100-year floodplain of Boz Creek. There are no wetlands on the site. Two small palustrine wetlands less than 1 acre in size are located about 0.5 mile south-southwest of the site. Sediment could temporarily degrade water quality in these areas during periods of heavy precipitation.

### *Biota*

The RMTC would be constructed on a very small, previously disturbed portion of the former SSC site. Because of this, impacts to on-site biotic resources would be minimal. No federally listed threatened and endangered species would be affected by the proposed action.

### *Noise*

The nearest resident to the proposed site is located about 0.8 miles away. Noise from construction vehicles and equipment would be well-above ambient levels at the RMTC site and may be audible at the nearest residence. This may be perceived as nuisance noise by some individuals. No public health effects would be expected because noise levels would attenuate to acceptable levels off-site. Workers would be equipped with personal protective equipment, in accordance with regulatory requirements.

### *Socioeconomics*

Construction of the RMTC would have a small positive impact on the local economy and infrastructure. A workforce of approximately 190 would account for 0.7% of total employment in Ellis County. Jobs provided by the RMTC project would offset a percentage of jobs lost due to termination of the SSC project.

Surveys conducted in support of an environmental impacts analysis for the SSC project found no archaeological or historic resources at the site. Discovery of artifacts during construction would be subject to mitigation requirements defined in an interagency programmatic agreement (DOE, Texas Historical Commission, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and TNRLC) for the SSC project.

### *Environmental Justice*

In accordance with Executive Order 12898, DOE evaluated the potential for adverse impacts to minority and economically disadvantaged populations within the zone of impact of the proposed RMTC. As there are no adverse impacts in general from the proposed action, no special populations would be adversely affected.

### *Health and Safety*

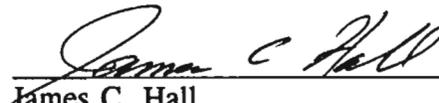
Radionuclides emitted from the RMTC heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning stack present a potential hazard to occupational and public health. Calculations indicate that, during RMTC operation, the maximum dose rate to an individual located 300 ft to the north

of the stack would be 0.0086 millirem/year, which is less than 0.1% of the Environmental Protection Agency's public exposure limit for atmospheric radionuclide releases. Occupational exposure to radiation would occur during patient treatment. Workers would be rotated in jobs to minimize exposure, protected by shielding, and monitored frequently to ensure that their dose is within acceptable industry limits.

The imported red fire ant can be a hazard to sensitive construction workers; worker training and pest control would minimize this hazard.

**DETERMINATION:** Based on the findings of this EA, DOE has determined that the proposed disbursement of \$65 million to the State of Texas for construction of the Regional Medical Technology Center would not constitute a major Federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment within the context of the National Environmental Policy Act. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

Issued at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, this 16th day of May, 1995.

  
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James C. Hall  
Acting Manager  
Oak Ridge Operations Office