or minimize environmental harm that may result from implementing the Redevelopment Plan.

Accordingly, Navy will dispose of the surplus Federal property at Naval Air Station Barbers Point in a manner that is consistent with the State of Hawaii's Redevelopment Plan for the property.

Dated: June 17, 1999.

William J. Cassidy, Jr.,

Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Conversion And Redevelopment).

Dated: June 25, 1999.

Ralph W. Corey,

CDR, JAGC, USN, Alternate Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 99–16691 Filed 6–29–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3810–FF–M

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Record of Decision for the Construction and Operation of the Spallation Neutron Source

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Record of decision.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) is issuing this Record of Decision (ROD) regarding DOE's proposal to construct and operate the Spallation Neutron Source (SNS). DOE has decided to proceed with construction and operation of a state-of-the-art Spallation Neutron Source facility at the preferred location, the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. This decision is based on the analysis contained in the ''Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Construction and Operation of the Spallation Neutron Source'' (SNS FEIS, DOE/EIS–0247, April 23, 1999).

ADDRESSES: Requests for copies of the Final EIS and this ROD should be directed to: Mr. David Wilfert, EIS Document Manager, U.S. Department of Energy, Oak Ridge Operations Office, 200 Administration Road, 146/SNS, Oak Ridge, TN 37831. Alternately, Mr. Wilfert may be contacted by telephone at (800) 927–9964, by fax at (423) 576–4542, or by email at NSNSEIS@ornl.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information on the Spallation Neutron Source, contact: Mr. Jeff Hoy, SNS Program Manager, Office of Basic Energy Sciences (SC–13), Germantown, MD 20874–1290, telephone: (301) 903–4924, fax: (301) 903–9513, or email: Jeff.Hoy@science.doe.gov.

For general information on DOE's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, contact: Ms. Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH–42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20585, telephone: (202) 586–4600, fax: (202) 586–7031.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a Notice of Availability for DOE's Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Construction and Operation of the Spallation Neutron Source (Final EIS, DOE/EIS–0247) on April 23, 1999, (64 FR 19999). In the Final EIS, DOE considered the potential environmental impacts of its proposed action, the construction and operation of the SNS at four alternative sites: Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Argonne National Laboratory (ANL), and Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL). The Department identified Oak Ridge as its preferred alternative site. DOE also considered a no action alternative under which the SNS would not be built. DOE has considered all of the comments it received during the public comment period. The Final EIS analyzed environmental impacts over the projected life of the facility, both operating at an initial power level of 1 megawatt (MW) and at the maximum potential upgrade power level of 4 MW.

Background

Scientific discoveries and the new technologies derived from neutron scattering research have contributed significantly to the development of new products in the international marketplace, such as: better magnetic materials for information storage media and for electric generators and motors; improved engine parts; better lubricants; strong, but light-weight structural materials; durable plastics; metallic glasses; semiconductors; adhesives; improved detergents; and new drugs. Neutron research and the associated scientific, engineering, and technological advances provide the catalyst for the development of commercial applications and support U.S. economic progress and competitiveness among the industrialized nations of the world. Construction of a next-generation spallation neutron source in the U.S. will provide a competitive edge for the nation in the physical, chemical, materials, biological, and medical sciences.

The U.S. needs a high-flux, short-pulsed neutron source to provide its scientific and industrial research communities with a much more intense source of pulsed neutrons for neutron scattering research than is currently available. The neutron science community has long recognized the need for both high-intensity, pulsed (accelerator-based) neutron sources and continuous (reactor-based) neutron sources. There are approximately 20 major neutron sources worldwide that produce neutron beams for materials research. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Neutron Science Working Group has identified a growing disparity between the worldwide need for neutron scattering research and the availability of facilities. The OECD Working Group estimated that as the oldest neutron sources continue to age, only about one-third of the present sources would remain available by 2010. For nearly a decade, the research community has regarded U.S. facilities as inferior to the newer and more extensively upgraded foreign facilities. The current generation of neutron sources in the United States has lower neutron beam intensities, lower operating powers, and less advanced measuring instruments, when compared to the current ''state-of-the-science'' (currently technologically feasible and desirable). Thus, next-generation neutron sources are needed not only to create new scientific and engineering opportunities, but also to replace out-dated capacity. Access to European and Japanese neutron sources by U.S. researchers and manufacturers is difficult, unreliable, and costly. The logistics of scheduling time and configuring instrumentation to conduct specialized experiments are prohibitive because of the commuting distances to these facilities. In addition, given the proprietary nature of much of the research desired by U.S. industry, its research cannot be carried out at foreign facilities. A 1 MW state-of-the-art facility like SNS would produce pulses five times more intense than the best spallation source in operation today, the ISIS facility in Great Britain.

Alternatives Considered and Evaluated

In the Final EIS, DOE proposed to construct and operate the SNS. DOE evaluated five alternatives for this proposed action:

1. Construct and operate the SNS at ORNL;
2. Construct and operate the SNS at LANL;
3. Construct and operate the SNS at ANL;
4. Construct and operate the SNS at BNL; and
5. No Action Alternative: Do not construct the SNS. The United States would continue to use existing neutron science facilities.

The Preferred Alternative

The Department's preferred alternative is to construct and operate the SNS at ORNL.

Environmental Impacts of Alternatives Evaluated

As demonstrated in the Final EIS, the construction and operation of the SNS is not expected to result in any unacceptable environmental consequences at any of the four candidate sites, though each site does have its own unique adverse environmental aspects. Of the alternative sites, ORNL has the fewest negative impacts. The SNS site at ORNL is adjacent to the Walker Branch Watershed, an environmental research area, and has the potential to degrade some data collection for ongoing atmospheric research by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration/Atmospheric Turbulence and Diffusion Division (NOAA/ATDD) and ecological research by the ORNL Environmental Sciences Division. Some of these long-term environmental monitoring programs are important to our understanding of gradual global changes, like global warming, occurring in the atmosphere. SNS design features are available to mitigate these impacts; therefore, the SNS Project shall work with the research organizations (NOAA/ATDD and the ORNL Environmental Sciences Division) to identify and implement options to reduce or eliminate those negative impacts. This includes, but is not limited to, options identified in the Final EIS, e.g., sizing and location of cooling towers, waste heat recovery to offset the burning of natural gas, or the provision of alternative monitoring capability to the Walker Branch Watershed researchers. By contrast, negative environmental effects associated with the other three candidate sites are not so easily ameliorated. At Los Alamos, drawing cooling water from the sole-source aquifer could adversely impact the area water table; perhaps causing local residents and the White Rock community to increase their water well depth in order to sustain service. Additionally, the electric power supply and distribution system on the mesa would have to be upgraded to accommodate the added SNS load. At Argonne, the limited size of the reservation will make the maximally exposed individual closer to the radiological source term, and it offers fewer opportunities to compensate for the wetlands destroyed during construction of the SNS. At Brookhaven, the permeable soils and shallow sole-source aquifer would require significant and costly design features to mitigate the potential for degradation of the drinking water due to migration of activated soils.

Environmentally Preferable Alternative

The ''no action'' alternative has the least local adverse environmental impact on the sites analyzed; however, it may have greater long-term negative impact on the environment as a whole by depriving the country of future neutron science-based technology that might reduce other negative environmental impacts, e.g., lost fuel efficiency gains in vehicles, less efficient chemical processes, greater power transmission losses, etc. Neutron scattering science has provided many advanced materials, which make possible or contribute to improved quality of life, including protecting and improving the environment. Specific areas with the most direct value to environmental quality are: (1) Light-weight materials, (2) improved lubricants, (3) high temperature superconductors, and (4) new catalysts. Light-weight materials reduce motor vehicle and aircraft weight, thus reducing fuel requirements and attendant combustion product emissions. Improved lubricants reduce friction losses and wear in machinery, thus reducing the manufacture of replacements, and improving emissions performance during operation. High temperature superconductors allow improved energy efficiency in some devices and offer the possibility for more efficient power transmission, thus reducing energy production demands. Finally, catalysts have played a major role in pollution control devices (such as automobile catalytic converters), and neutron scattering is an important tool used in developing new catalysts. Thus, neutron based technology has historically been a benefit to the environment, and the SNS may well result in fewer environmental impacts than the no action alternative.

Construction and operation at any of the four alternative sites does have its own unique adverse environmental impact at the specific location. Of the action alternatives, the environmentally preferable site for the SNS is the ORNL reservation because it offers relatively minor impacts with comparatively easy and effective mitigation actions which will be addressed in a Mitigation Action Plan (MAP) as discussed later.

Review of the Final EIS

DOE distributed approximately 950 copies (200 full copies and 750 copies of the summary) of the Final EIS to members of Congress; Federal, State, and local government offices; Native American organizations; stakeholders; and public reading rooms. In addition, the document is available on the World Wide Web at the Environment, Safety and Health home page, http://nepa.eh.doe.gov/eis/eis0247/eis0247.html.

The U.S. Department of the Interior provided comments on the Draft EIS that were inadvertently omitted from the Final EIS. Generic concerns focused on protection of ground and surface water, and on continued and expanded project participation in consultation and permitting processes; and site-specific comments were offered for each candidate site. In a subsequent response letter, DOE agreed to address these comments in the selected alternative's MAP.

EPA provided comments on the Final EIS, indicating no objection to DOE proceeding with detailed design and site evaluation. However, EPA states that if these activities produce significant new information or adverse environmental impact, then DOE would prepare a supplemental EIS. EPA also identified groundwater concerns at ANL related to drinking water wells. Lastly, EPA provided comments regarding air quality modeling that would need to be addressed in the next phase of the project regardless of which site was selected.

Decision

DOE will proceed with the proposed action to construct and operate the SNS at the preferred location on the ORNL reservation.

Basis for Decision

The decision to proceed with construction and operation of the SNS is based on the significant scientific and economic benefits expected to be derived from the facility and the minimal environmental consequences associated with its construction and operation. Selection of the ORNL reservation as the site for the SNS is based on environmental and programmatic factors. First, while the environmental consequences for construction and operation of the SNS are not severe at any of the candidate locations, the ORNL reservation affords the combination of minimal impact and easiest mitigation for those consequences that do occur. A modest amount of wetland (0.23 acres) will be disturbed when constructing the facility access road. However, it is anticipated that the permitting process will not be complicated due to DOE's ability to

implement compensatory action on the ORNL reservation. Periodic degradation of the long-term environmental monitoring program on the Walker Branch Watershed is undesirable, but engineering solutions to reduce or eliminate those impacts are readily available.

Other Decision Factors

In addition to environmental factors, DOE considered the existing infrastructure for neutron science, cost of construction, and community support for the proposed action.

ORNL provides a unique and comprehensive set of scientific research infrastructure that will function in synergy with the SNS facility. The High Flux Isotope Reactor (HFIR) has long been a dominant location for thermal neutron scattering research; and that facility is currently being upgraded to provide cold neutron research capability. The combination of HFIR and SNS will provide the full spectrum of neutron research tools at one laboratory, thus allowing scientists to optimize on-site research during their time in Oak Ridge. ORNL maintains a staff of world-class neutron scattering scientists continuing the base neutron research programs initially developed at the laboratory in the early 1950's. The current cadre of technicians supporting neutron research at the HFIR will provide an experienced pool from which to develop that same capability for the SNS facility as it is brought into operation. In addition, ORNL also provides an important physical plant infrastructure to support the SNS. This includes a large reservation without significant adjoining population centers; ready availability of utilities and services to support facility operation and waste stream handling; and regional availability of a low-cost skilled labor pool for construction and operation of the SNS.

Construction on the ORNL reservation would require the least infrastructure upgrades and only minimal site specific environmental mitigation measures. At Los Alamos, it would be necessary to upgrade electric power supply and water supply/distribution systems to satisfy the incremental SNS needs. At Argonne, the limited space would require immediate restoration of an old Argonne waste burial ground, upgraded facility safety systems to ensure adequate protection to residents located very close to the facility, and extensive surface mitigation actions to address wetlands, floodplains, and a major traffic pattern disruption. At Brookhaven, close proximity of the sole-source aquifer and the highly permeable soil would require design modifications to ensure continuing separation of ground water from activated soil/shielding around large portions of the facility. The construction cost advantage at ORNL, due to lower upgrade and mitigation costs, could be offset to some degree by the possible application of Tennessee state sales and use taxes to the SNS construction project. Thus, based on construction costs, the preferred site at ORNL is at least as attractive as any of the alternative sites.

Tennessee State and local governments, as well as the local community, have expressed broad support for locating the SNS at Oak Ridge. Tennessee is actively demonstrating their support of neutron science activities in Oak Ridge by building a guest user facility, the Joint Institute for Neutron Science, on the ORNL reservation, and has committed to developing a neutron science program at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

Project Commitments and Mitigation Measures

The DOE shall use all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the construction and operation of the SNS and will document specific steps to achieve this end in a Mitigation Action Plan (MAP). The Department will monitor its progress against the MAP to help ensure that it is properly implemented. Copies of the MAP will be made available in the local public reading rooms for information.

With ORNL having been selected as the site for the SNS, DOE will perform three-season surveys there to confirm the presence/absence of threatened and endangered species and archeological investigations to locate any historically sensitive areas. These studies will be performed before major land disturbance begins. The Department will fully assess any species or areas of concern that it identifies and will act to mitigate any adverse impacts to the extent practicable in compliance with governing regulatory agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the State of Tennessee).

Construction of the SNS on the ORNL reservation will result in damage or destruction of three small [a total of 0.23 acres (0.09 ha)] wetland areas to accommodate the facility access road. As conventional facility design evolves, the amount of impacted wetland shall be held to a minimum. During construction, DOE will comply with the requirements of the appropriate regulatory authority (the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the State of Tennessee) with respect to the affected wetlands. The Department will use runoff and siting controls during construction to restrict unnecessary damage to remaining wetland areas.

As changes evolve in facility design or as facility upgrade actions are proposed, the DOE shall revisit requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to ensure continued compliance by the SNS.

Issued in Washington, D.C. this 18th day of June, 1999.

Bill Richardson,

Secretary of Energy.

[FR Doc. 99–16603 Filed 6–29–99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450–01–P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP99–562–000]

Destin Pipeline Company, L.L.C.; Notice of Request Under Blanket Authorization

June 23, 1999.

Take notice that on June 15, 1999, Destin Pipeline Company, L.L.C. (Destin), P.O. Box 2563, Birmingham, Alabama 35202–2563, tendered for filing in Docket No. CP99–562–000 a request pursuant to sections 157.205, 157.208, and 211 of the Commission's Regulations under the Natural Gas Act (18 CFR 157.205, 157.208, and 157.211) for authorization to construct, install and operate a lateral pipeline and appurtenant facilities under Destin's blanket certificate issued in Docket Nos. CP96–657–000 and 001, all as more fully set forth in the request that is on file with the Commission and open to public inspection. This filing may be viewed on the web at http://www.ferc.fed.us/online/rims.htm (call 202–208–2222 for assistance).

The lateral would accommodate the transportation of natural gas production from a new production platform to be located in Main Pass Block 283 (Main Pass 283 Platform) for connection into Destin's 24-inch lateral line in Main Pass Block 279 (Main Pass 279) for ultimate delivery to downstream pipeline interconnections in southern and central Mississippi.

Specifically, Destin is proposing to construct, install and operate (i) approximately one thousand three hundred fifty (1,350) feet of 12-inch OD lateral pipeline from the Main Press 283 Platform to a subsea tap on Destin's existing 24-inch lateral in Main Pass 279, in Federal Waters, Gulf of Mexico;