Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550
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DOE/EA-1915

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

PROPOSED CONVEYANCE OF LAND AT THE HANFORD SITE, RICHLAND, WASHINGTON

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy, Richland Operations Office

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The United States Department of Energy (DOE) has completed a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) *Environmental Assessment for Proposed Conveyance of Land at the Hanford Site, Richland, Washington* (DOE/EA-1915) that analyzed the potential environmental impacts of the Proposed Action to convey approximately 1,641 acres of land on the Hanford Site, located in Richland, Benton County, Washington, to the Tri-City Development Council (TRIDEC) for the purpose of economic development, pursuant to the *National Defense Authorization Act of 2015* (NDAA; Public Law 113-291), Section 3013.

In addition to the Proposed Action, a No Action Alternative was analyzed, as required by DOE NEPA-implementing regulations. In the EA, DOE considered mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, rectify, or compensate for potential adverse environmental effects associated with the Proposed Action. The mitigation measures DOE has committed to implement are set forth in the Mitigation Action Plan (MAP). Based on the analysis presented in the Final Environmental Assessment (EA), which considered comments received on the Draft EA and the commitments specified in the MAP, DOE has determined that the Proposed Action will not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required, and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

Comments received on the Draft EA and DOE's responses are included as Appendix L of the Final EA.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND PUBLIC AVAILABILITY: For questions about this EA, FONSI, and MAP, or to request a copy, please contact:

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For general information concerning DOE's NEPA process, contact:

Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20585–0119
http://energy.gov/nepa

A copy of the NEPA documentation including the EA, FONSI and MAP are available at the following website and physical address:
http://www.hanford.gov/page.cfm/EnvironmentalAssessments

U.S. Department of Energy Public Reading Room
Washington State University, Tri-Cities
Consolidated Information Center, Room 101-L
2770 University Drive
Richland, WA 99352

PROPOSED ACTION: The Proposed Action is to convey the lands requested by TRIDEC, or approximately equivalent acreage, in response to TRIDEC's land request that was initially made under 10 CFR 770, *Transfer of Real Property at Defense Nuclear Facilities for Economic Development*, and which was subsequently required by the NDAA. Section 3013 of the Act, entitled "Land Conveyance, Hanford Site, Washington," requires DOE to convey approximately 1,641 acres to TRIDEC, as follows:

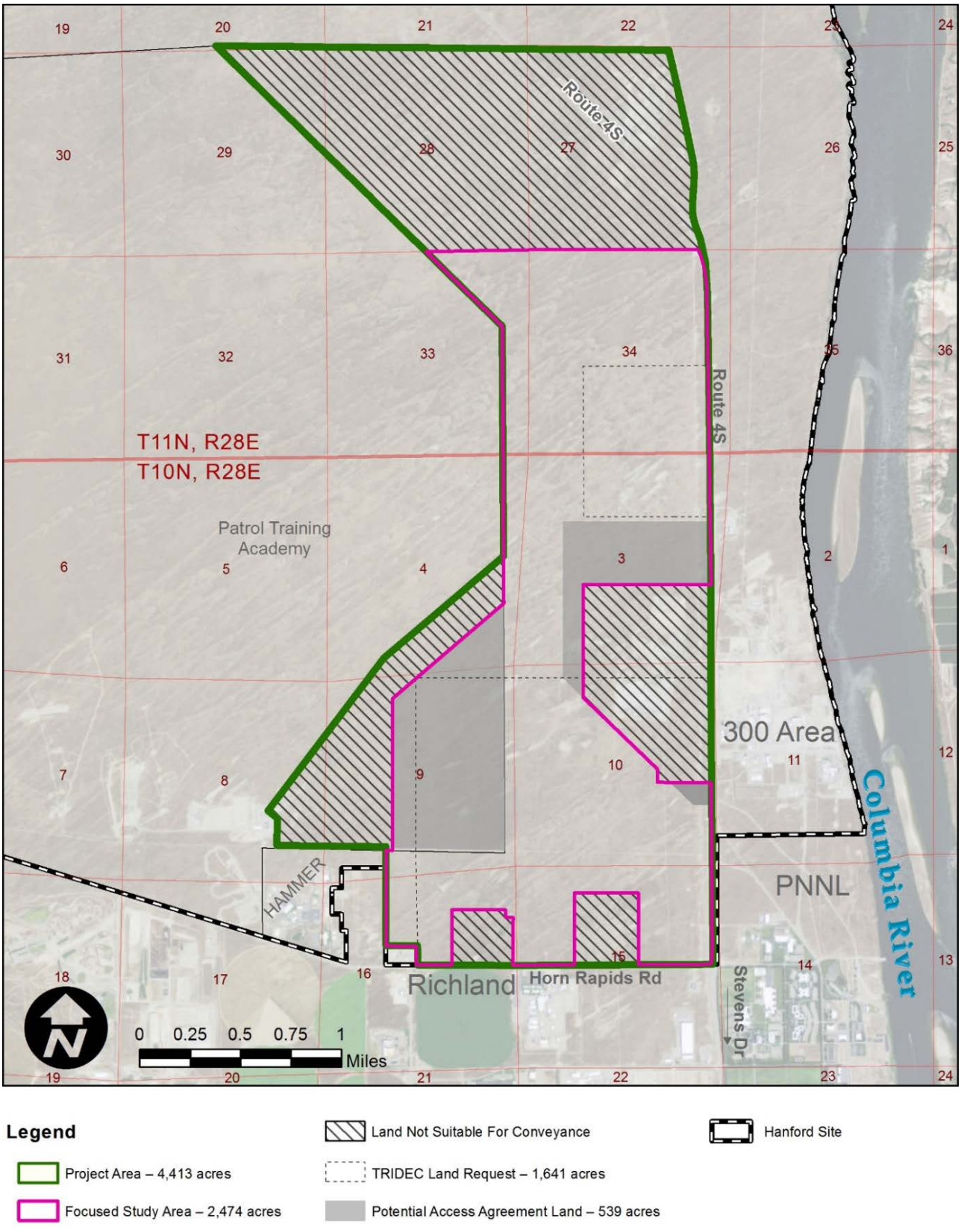
> …not later than September 30, 2015, the Secretary of Energy shall convey to the Community Reuse Organization of the Hanford Site (in this section referred to as the 'Organization') all right, title, and interest of the United States in and to two parcels of real property, including any improvements thereon, consisting of approximately 1,341 acres and 300 acres, respectively, of the Hanford Reservation, as requested by the Organization on May 31, 2011 and October 13, 2011, and as depicted within the proposed boundaries on the map titled 'Attachment 2-Revised Map' included in the October 13, 2011, letter.

TRIDEC would subsequently convey these lands, in whole or part, to a public entity partner (e.g., City of Richland) or private owner for purposes of economic development. As stated in the EA, DOE recognized that there are continuing mission needs on some of the requested lands, such as an active borrow area and a safety buffer zone, making them unsuitable for conveyance. Therefore, DOE conducted a land suitability review process that started with the 4,413-acre Initial Hanford Site Land Conveyance Project Area (PA). Through this review process, DOE identified and documented continuing mission or operational needs within the PA. Moreover, some lands were removed from consideration for conveyance to avoid potential effects to cultural resources. **Figure 1**, "Project Area, Focused Study Area, Potential Access Agreement Land, and Land Not Suitable for Conveyance," shows the PA and 2,474 acres of land referred to as the Focused Study Area (FSA) lands that have the least encumbrances. The FSA includes a 1,635-acre "main" FSA, a 300-acre "solar farm" FSA, and 539-acres of Potential Access Agreement Land (PAAL). The EA analyzed the potential environmental effects associated with the reasonably foreseeable future uses of FSA land, based on industry targets described in TRIDEC's proposal and target marketing industries, including warehousing and distribution, research and development, technology, manufacturing, food processing and agriculture, "back office" (i.e., business services), and energy.

The approximately 1,641 acres of land that DOE would convey, as required by the NDAA, would be selected from the 1,935 acres that includes the main and solar farm FSAs (the acreage of the FSA minus the acreage of the PAAL (see **Figure 1**)). The deed will identify the legal boundaries of the transferred lands. Portions of the 539-acre PAAL could be conveyed in the future, but only for utilities and infrastructure to provide services to the transferred lands. PAAL acreage would only be conveyed, if necessary, by a realty instrument other than a deed and would stay under the administrative jurisdiction of DOE.

The acreage analyzed in the EA is part of approximately 59 square miles of Hanford Site lands previously designated by DOE for industrial uses under the Hanford Comprehensive Land-Use Plan (CLUP), based on analyses presented in the Hanford CLUP Environmental Impact Statement (HCP–EIS) [DOE/EIS–0222; September 1999; Record of Decision (ROD) (64 FR 61615; November 12, 1999)]. The HCP–EIS recognized the potential for future conveyance of some industrial-designated lands to the local community for economic development.

Figure 1. Project Area, Focused Study Area, Potential Access Agreement Land, and Land Not Suitable for Conveyance



ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: In addition to the Proposed Action, DOE evaluated the "No Action Alternative." Under the No Action Alternative, DOE would not convey land in response to TRIDEC's land request. DOE would then not meet the NDAA Section 3013 requirement to transfer land to TRIDEC no later than September 30, 2015. The No Action Alternative would not meet the purpose and need for action, but was analyzed as required by DOE's NEPA-implementing regulations (10 CFR 1021.321). In this alternative, the federal government would retain ownership of the requested lands and there would be no change in land use caused by the Proposed Action. Existing activities, such as environmental monitoring, utility corridor uses, and other administrative functions would continue under the No Action Alternative.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES: The EA considered the potential environmental consequences to geology; water resources; air quality; ecological resources; wetlands and floodplains; historic properties and cultural resources; land use; visual resources; noise, vibration, and electromagnetic fields (EMF); utilities and infrastructure; transportation; waste management; socioeconomics and environmental justice; and human health and safety. The analysis also included potential environmental consequences to the local region, and ongoing federal missions and activities at the Hanford Site.

In the EA, DOE considered mitigation measures to avoid, minimize, rectify, or compensate for potential adverse environmental effects associated with the Proposed Action. DOE has made the decision to implement mitigation measures to better achieve an environmentally-preferable outcome and has committed to implement the mitigation measures as outlined in the MAP.

The significance of DOE's Proposed Action was considered based on both "context and intensity" as defined by NEPA Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1508.27). The following discussion provides a summary of the potential environmental consequences and the reasoning for why impacts will not be significant. The full analysis of potential environmental consequences can be found in the EA and is incorporated by reference.

Geology. Geologic impacts will not be significant because any such impacts would be localized and temporary. Increased vulnerability to erosion resulting from soil disturbance from development activities would be attenuated as vegetation is reestablished over time. Upon completion of construction activities, no additional incremental impacts are expected to geologic and soil resources on the 1,641 acres. While construction activities would involve the disturbance/removal of some soils and gravel, such disturbance/removal would not result in a long term significant effect to the geological conditions of the area.

Water Resources. Construction of buildings and parking lots would create impervious surfaces that would lead to increased stormwater runoff during precipitation (rain or snow) events, which could result in increased soil erosion. The quantities of water used during construction, however, would be minimal (i.e. limited to sufficient water to limit dust generation). Impacts to water resources from stormwater runoff will not be significant because the quantity of stormwater runoff would be minimized by the relatively high porosity of the undisturbed surrounding sandy soils along with high evaporation and plant transpiration rates in the shrub-steppe semiarid desert climate that is characteristic of the area. Because of distance and topography, it is unlikely that stormwater would carry sediments or other potential contaminants away from the construction areas and to the Yakima or

Columbia rivers. To prevent disturbance to area hydrologic conditions that might affect transport of existing contaminants in the groundwater, groundwater wells would not be permitted, and would be restricted through deed language. In addition, while it is not anticipated that stormwater runoff following development of the FSA would mobilize contaminants from groundwater plumes, a deed restriction limits the locations where stormwater drainage facilities are permissible to avoid potential for elevated groundwater levels to mobilize contamination in the vicinity of the FSA. DOE is conducting a quantitative analysis to determine whether the deed restriction will continue to be necessary or modified. There would be no effects on surface waters from the Proposed Action because there are no surface waters within the PA or within close enough proximity to the PA to experience effects.

Air Quality. Construction activities would generate fugitive dust from ground disturbing activities and from the combustion of fuels in construction equipment. Such effects would be temporary. Any fugitive dust would be mitigated by application of water to areas of disturbance, however quantities would be minimal (i.e. limited to sufficient water to limit dust generation).

Effects to air quality associated with construction and operation of new facilities would create new sources of criteria and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. The EA describes effects during operation possibly exceeding the threshold, but that is based on a bounding-case scenario (which overestimates results) of total build out at the same time. Effects would be temporary during construction and would only slightly exceed threshold limits, if at all. Construction activities and future operations will be subject to applicable air permitting requirements. No pollutant criteria are in non-attainment. There are no regulatory significance thresholds for stationary or mobile source air emissions in air quality attainment areas such as Benton County. Therefore, potential air quality impacts will not be significant.

Climate change is a global phenomenon that the proposed land transfer would not alter. While it is reasonably foreseeable that climate change may substantially alter the affected environment described in this EA, such as some reduction in Columbia River water availability in summer months, impacts from the Proposed Action will not be significant because DOE identified no plausible nexuses between the Proposed Action and global climate change that would alter its impact determinations for the affected environment.

Ecological Resources. Development within the FSA would result in habitat loss and wildlife displacement on 1,641 acres of shrub-steppe habitat, although impacts from construction of reasonably foreseeable facilities would vary based on footprint, operations, etc. Impacts to ecological resources will not be significant for the following reasons. No species are known to occur within the FSA or the larger PA that are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Shrub-steppe vegetation on FSA lands has been previously impacted by clearing and development from historical homesteading and agricultural activities, and more recent wildfire and noxious weed control activities. Less than three percent of the shrub component of the native vegetation community remains on PA lands. Additionally, the FSA lands make up approximately one-half of one percent of lands on the surrounding Hanford Site, including the Hanford Reach National Monument. In the Final EA, DOE outlined a number of mitigation measures that would be undertaken to compensate for the loss of habitat within the FSA, such as habitat enhancements in surrounding areas. These mitigation measures are described in the MAP.

Wetlands and Floodplains. DOE completed the required reviews in accordance with DOE regulation 10 CFR 1022 *Compliance with Floodplains/Wetlands Environmental Review Requirements*. There would be no effects on wetlands or floodplains from the Proposed Action because neither of these resources has been identified within the PA nor within close enough proximity to the PA to experience effects.

Cultural Resources. Land conveyance and subsequent development activities could result in adverse impacts to archeological sites and other cultural resources located on the FSA. Impacts to cultural resources will not be significant for the following reasons. DOE avoided effects to cultural resources by removing certain lands from consideration for conveyance. Moreover, through the *National Historic Preservation Act* (NHPA) Section 106 process, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed, which contains the agreed upon stipulations to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for the potential adverse effects to historic properties and cultural resources. Through the MOA, DOE has agreed to implement mitigation measures that will apply to the transferred land parcels. DOE will also implement mitigation measures, including deed restrictions, for the individual historic properties and cultural resources in accordance with the MOA. The MOA is incorporated in the MAP.

Land Use. The land conveyance would result in a change in current land use from essentially undeveloped to developed industrial land uses and would foreclose opportunities for these lands to be considered for other future uses. The Proposed Action is consistent with the Hanford Comprehensive Land Use Plan, and with applicable local zoning and comprehensive land use plans. The proposed development would be consistent with existing and currently planned commercial and industrial development in the vicinity of the 1,641 acres (e.g., Horn Rapids Industrial Park and gravel quarry west of Stevens Drive).

Visual Resources. Development of the FSA would change the landscape setting to industrial and result in a change in the visual resource management classification of the conveyed lands. Impacts to visual resources will not be significant because when viewed from a distance to the north or northwest, most of the Proposed Action facilities would not be discernable against the backdrop of the existing industrial development from an environmental analysis perspective. None of the sensitive viewer locations provide unique views of the development area and some are blocked by topography or other obstructions. Mitigation measures, including restrictions on the height and color of buildings and requiring the use of native plants, are contained in the MOA. DOE will also implement specific mitigation measures, including deed restrictions, for potential effects associated with visual resources in accordance with the MOA. The MOA is incorporated in the MAP.

Noise, Vibration and Electromagnetic Fields. Potential effects due to noise, vibration and electromagnetic fields (EMFs) differ depending on location and type of facilities. Impacts will not be significant because deed restriction language would limit noise, vibration, and electromagnetic fields to levels acceptable to Pacific Northwest National Laboratory and Laser Interferometer Gravitational Wave Observatory. These deed restrictions are incorporated in the MAP.

Utilities and Infrastructure. The Proposed Action would result in new, long-term demand for utility services (e.g., electricity, natural gas, water, and sewer). Impacts will not be significant because service providers have the capability to expand existing systems or facilities to accommodate additional demands. New infrastructure and services would be provided and maintained by the City of

Richland, Port of Benton, Bonneville Power Administration, Cascade Natural Gas, and other service providers, as applicable.

Transportation. The industrial development of the FSA lands would result in increased use of railways and car and truck traffic and congestion in the area surrounding the FSA during both construction and operation; the severity of which would vary depending on the rate and extent of development. The EA assumed simultaneous and full development of representative facilities in its bounding-case scenario (which overestimates results). Prior to approving specific developments, the applicable local agency would likely conduct a SEPA review and could require an assessment of project-specific impacts and potential improvements to the surrounding roadways that serve as the access routes to the PA. Therefore, impacts will not be significant.

Waste Management. Impacts to waste management will not be significant because the waste volumes and types of waste generated would be typical of other industrial, research, and office park operations in the region. Wastes would be disposed at the Horn Rapids Sanitary landfill. Projections made by the City of Richland indicate that the current permitted space of the landfill would be filled by 2018.As discussed in the EA, however, the city is exploring options for future growth, including expanding the Horn Rapids Sanitary Landfill or closing the landfill and long hauling the waste out of the city. Recycling and reclamation activities would further reduce waste volumes.

Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice. The Proposed Action would result in a long term economic benefit to the Tri-Cities area by the creation of new jobs within the local labor force. The nearest residences (minority or not) are located almost 2 miles southeast of the PA.

This EA has not identified any human health or environmental impacts that would adversely affect minority or low-income populations. The Proposed Action would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority or low-income populations.

Human Health and Safety. For human health and safety, soil sampling, gamma scanning surveys, land feature surveys, and an as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA) assessment were completed in compliance with the requirements in DOE O 458.1 *Radiation Protection of the Public and Environment* for the control, clearance, and release of DOE property containing potential residual radioactivity. There are no impacts to human health and safety resulting from the Proposed Action. There are no radiological sources within the FSA. Radiological impacts to future workers within the FSA from ongoing DOE activities at the Hanford Site are minimal and much lower than those due to natural background radiation. DOE also evaluated its facilities to determine potential accident risks to the FSA. Buildings 324 and 325 were determined to be the facilities with the highest risk potential. Radiological dose consequences from accidents for Buildings 324 and 325 (located 600 meters east of the FSA) are minimal and would not require any additional mitigation measures beyond safety measures normally provided to ensure the adequate protection of the public health, safety, and environment. Additionally, DOE's comprehensive emergency management program provides detailed, hazard-specific planning and preparedness measures for protection of public health and safety and the environment in the event of an emergency at the Hanford Site. Following implementation of the Proposed Action, DOE and the local and state agencies responsible for performing the function of emergency management would apply the same emergency planning and response actions to members of the public in the conveyed lands as applied to the population at large.

DETERMINATION: Based on the analysis presented in the Environmental Assessment and considering the public comments received, I have determined that the Proposed Action to convey approximately 1,641 acres of land to TRIDEC will not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required, and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Issued at Richland, Washington, this 30th day of September 2015.

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