

# LLNL SWEIS: NEPA Process



The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) was enacted by Congress to ensure that federal agencies assess the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions and alternatives prior to making decisions.

The Department of Energy’s NEPA implementing procedures (10 CFR 1021.330(c)) states, “DOE shall prepare site-wide EISs for certain large, multiple-facility DOE sites.” Under NEPA, the term “environment” encompasses both the physical environment (e.g., air, water, geography, and geology) and the human environment (e.g., health and safety, jobs, housing, schools, transportation, and cultural resources).

In November 2022, NNSA published the Draft Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL) Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS) (DOE/EIS-0547). This new SWEIS (DOE/EIS-0547) is the third comprehensive SWEIS prepared for the Laboratory (DOE/EIS-0157 in 1992 and DOE/EIS-0348 in 2005). The Draft LLNL SWEIS analyzes the impacts of reasonable alternatives for continuing LLNL operations for approximately the next 15 years.

The major steps in the NEPA process for preparing the SWEIS are: issuing a Notice of Intent (NOI) to begin the SWEIS process; holding a public scoping process to gather input on the scope of the SWEIS from federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes, the public, and other stakeholders; preparing and publishing the Draft SWEIS; receiving comments on the Draft SWEIS during a public comment period; responding to those comments in a Final SWEIS; and issuing a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will explain the agency’s decision, which is based on the SWEIS and other related information (e.g., mission requirements, technical factors, and costs). The decision will be on the alternatives and specific projects (as needed).

## NOTICE OF INTENT

NNSA published the NOI for the LLNL SWEIS in the Federal Register on August 5, 2020, to inform the public that the SWEIS will be prepared and to formally announce the beginning of the scoping process. The NOI described the preliminary alternatives that NNSA was considering and provided information on issues and potential impacts that would be analyzed in the SWEIS. The scoping process invited comments, questions, and suggestions (both written and verbal) on the scope of the SWEIS.

Due to health concerns associated with the COVID-19, NNSA elected to hold

online scoping meetings instead of in-person meetings. That approach allowed NNSA to reach a broader audience with the same presentation. NNSA held the first online scoping meeting on September 2, 2020, to discuss the SWEIS and to receive comments on the potential scope. In response to public comments, NNSA held a second online scoping meeting on October 5, 2020. In addition to these scoping meetings, the other methods for submitting comments on the LLNL SWEIS scope were available (i.e., email or postal mail).

## DRAFT LLNL SWEIS

The Draft SWEIS describes, analyzes, and compares the potential environmental impacts of the alternatives.

## PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE DRAFT LLNL SWEIS

Now that the Draft SWEIS has been published, NNSA is soliciting public comments on the draft document.

During this public review process, NNSA will hold two in-person meetings and one online meeting to receive comments on the Draft SWEIS. Other methods to submit comments on the Draft SWEIS will include U.S. mail and email. All comments received will be considered in the preparation of the Final LLNL SWEIS.

## FINAL LLNL SWEIS

Following the public comment period, NNSA will prepare the Final SWEIS. The Final SWEIS will reflect consideration of all comments received on the Draft SWEIS, contain NNSA's responses to those comments, and reflect updated and revised analyses.

## RECORD OF DECISION

Once the Final LLNL SWEIS is completed, NNSA will wait a minimum of 30 days before issuing a ROD, which will be published in the Federal Register. The ROD will notify the public of the decision(s) made on the SWEIS and the reasons for the decision(s). In addition to potential environmental impacts, the ROD will include consideration of other decision factors such as technical feasibility, agency statutory mission and national objectives, and cost. The NEPA process does not dictate that an agency select the most environmentally preferable alternative. The purpose of the NEPA process is to ensure that accurate environmental studies are performed, that there is public involvement, and that public officials, like those at NNSA, make decisions based on an understanding of environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives.

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## HOW TO PROVIDE COMMENTS:



**At the public meeting**



**By email:**

LLNLSWEIS@nnsa.doe.gov



**By U.S. mail:**

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LLNL SWEIS Document  
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Comment period ends on  
**January 3, 2023**

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## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Livermore Field Office:

P.O. Box 808, Livermore, CA 94551  
(833) 778-0508

Copies of the Draft LLNL SWEIS are available for review at the Livermore Public Library, 1188 South Livermore Avenue, Livermore, California, and the Tracy Public Library, 20 East Eaton Avenue, Tracy, California.

Copies are available electronically at:

<https://www.energy.gov/nepa/doeeis-0547-site-wide-eis-continued-operation-lawrence-livermore-national-laboratory-livermore>

