Santa Susana Field Laboratory
Energy Technology Engineering Center
Removal of Building 4024

The Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to conduct the Decommissioning and Decontamination (D&D) of Building 4024 as a non-time critical removal action in accordance with requirements of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) and consistent with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). This approach allows for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) oversight and greater public participation.

Background

Nuclear research has been conducted by Atomics International (AI) at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) for the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), and later DOE, since the mid-1950s. The Energy Technology Engineering Center (ETEC) was later established in the mid-1960s as a center of excellence for liquid metals technology. ETEC is located within Area IV of SSFL, located in eastern Ventura County.

With the closing of DOE nuclear operations in 1988, the focus turned towards the disposition of government property, cleanup of facilities, the investigation and remediation of soil and groundwater, demolition of facilities and site restoration. All DOE facilities are included in this work activity known as ETEC Closure.

What is DOE proposing to do?

DOE is proposing to D&D Building 4024. This involves the complete removal of all above- and below-ground structural components as well as any radiologically impacted soil that may exist within the facility's footprint. The objective of the removal action is to completely remove Building 4024 and verify that the footprint meets the radiological standards for release for unrestricted use. A residential cleanup standard has been chosen that is protective of human health and the environment.

What is a non-time critical removal action?

A non-time critical removal action is performed when there is no immediate threat to the public or environment and where sufficient time is available for planning and community involvement. This removal action process provides an opportunity for interested persons to comment on the project objectives and the proposed removal action alternative for Building 4024.

What is an EE/CA?

An Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) is a document produced as part of the non-time critical removal action process.

The Building 4024 D&D EE/CA summarizes the objectives of the removal action and evaluates alternatives to implement the D&D.

The public is encouraged to comment on the preferred alternative presented in this EE/CA during the public comment period. After the public's comments are considered, an alternative will be chosen and the EE/CA will be used as the basis to implement the chosen approach.

Building 4024

Why is DOE using this approach?

DOE is using this approach to allow for EPA's oversight and more public participation. Use of removal action authority also is in accordance with the 1995 joint DOE/EPA Policy Memorandum on D&D in a manner that is consistent with CERCLA.

What alternatives did DOE consider?

Two alternatives are evaluated for their relative effectiveness, implementability and cost. The EE/CA identifies "demolition/removal

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and off-site disposal" as the preferred alternative compared against a "no action" alternative.

What was the building used for?

This building supported the Systems for Nuclear Auxiliary Power (SNAP) program. SNAP reactors were developed in the 1960s as a nuclear power source for space vehicles. SNAP reactors were tested in a simulated outer-space environment in Building 4024. Today, Building 4024 consists of an above-grade high-bay and below-grade test vaults.

Is Building 4024 contaminated?

All SNAP units and associated test equipment have been removed from the building. The testing of the SNAP nuclear reactors (illustrated in figure at right) caused low levels of radiological contamination within the inner 15 inches of the vault walls, floors and ceiling. The walls range from 2.5 to 9 feet thick. Prior surveys suggest that contamination is contained within the building, however soil sampling during the D&D will be conducted to verify this.

Is EPA involved?

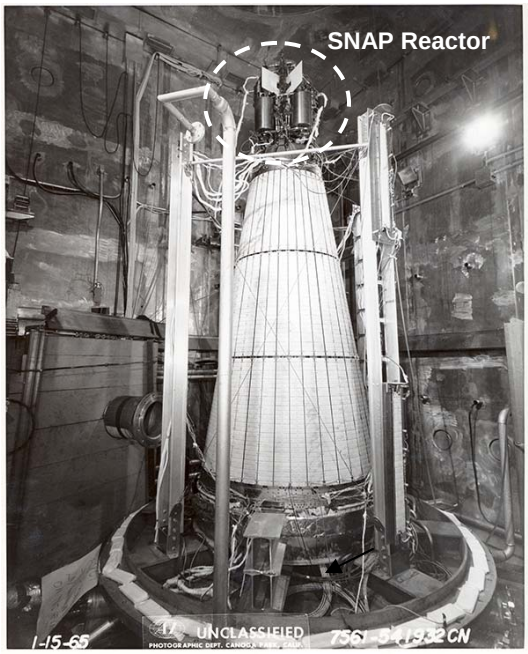
Yes, EPA reviewed and commented on the Building 4024 EE/CA. The DOE and EPA have worked together in a similar manner at other sites.

Where can I get a copy of the EE/CA?

Copies of the EE/CA are available at the February 21, 2007, community meeting. The EE/CA, including supporting documents (Administrative Record), is available at the DOE ETEC website at:
http://apps.em.doe.gov/ETEC

In addition, you may review the EE/CA and Administrative Record at the following information repositories:

Simi Valley Library
2969 Tapo Canyon Road
Simi Valley, CA 93063
805/526-1735



1965: Testing the SNAP 10 at Building 4024

California State University, Northridge
Oviatt Library
2nd Floor, Room 265,
Northridge, CA 91330
818/677-2285

Platt Branch Library
23600 Victory Boulevard
Woodland Hills, CA 91367
818/340-9386

How do I comment on the EE/CA?

Verbal comments will be received during the February 21, 2007, community meeting. Written comments may be submitted in person at the community meeting, mailed or emailed to DOE's project manager:

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The public comment period ends on February 28, 2007.