

National Nuclear Security Administration/Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement FAQ's

1. Q) What is a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement (SWEIS)?

A) An environmental impact statement (EIS) describes potential effects on the human environment that would occur as a result of a proposed federal action. A SWEIS assesses and describes the potential outcomes of a specific facility's operations and proposed activities that may have potential impacts on the environment over a period of ten to fifteen years.

2. Q) What is the purpose of conducting a SWEIS for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL)?

A) To allow the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to make a decision about the nature and extent of future work to be conducted at LLNL, and to ensure that it can be done safely and within environmental, health and safety regulatory limits and guidelines. That decision is usually, though not limited to, one of two studied alternatives: a No Action Alternative or a Proposed Action Alternative. The SWEIS will also help improve and coordinate NNSA plans, functions, programs and resource utilization at LLNL. If other alternatives are developed during the scoping process, they will also be analyzed in the SWEIS.

3. Q) Who is preparing the SWEIS for LLNL?

A) The SWEIS is being prepared by NNSA's Livermore Field Office (LFO) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)* Implementing Regulations, Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations, and DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures. These require the federal government to evaluate the potential effects of its activities on the environment and to consider alternative courses of action. NNSA is using an independent contractor to analyze data concerning the impacts of LLNL operations.

4. Q) Do other similar facilities go through this process?

A) Yes. NNSA has prepared Site-Wide NEPA documents at various sites – Los Alamos National Laboratory, Sandia National Laboratories, the Nevada National Security Site, and elsewhere. All federal agencies must comply with NEPA.

5. Q) What will be considered in the SWEIS?

A) In its evaluation of current and foreseeable operations and activities at LLNL, NNSA will consider the following alternatives:

- 1) No Action Alternative - includes current LLNL operations and activities for which separate NEPA reviews are already underway or were recently completed. The No Action Alternative includes the construction of new

facilities, modification/upgrade of existing facilities, operational changes, and decontamination and decommissioning (D&D) of excess facilities.

- 2) Proposed Action Alternative - increases the limits on LLNL activities up to the capacity of current facilities. It would also allow for operations reasonably foreseeable over the next 15 years that may require new or modified facilities. The Proposed Action includes projects, activities, and facilities described in the No Action Alternative, as well as the construction of new facilities, modification/upgrade of existing facilities, operational changes, and D&D of excess facilities.
- 3) Other alternatives developed during the scoping process.

6. Q) Has a similar environmental review ever been conducted at LLNL?

A) Yes. The first comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement for LLNL was completed in 1982. An Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report for Continued Operation of LLNL were completed in June 1992. In addition, a Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement for Continued Operation of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory and Supplemental Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement was completed in March 2005.

7. Q) What is a scoping process? And what input are you soliciting for the SWEIS?

A) The scoping process is an opportunity for members of the public, civic and community organizations, Native American tribes, governmental offices and regulatory agencies and others, to provide input on the scope of alternatives and environmental resource areas that are proposed to be analyzed in the SWEIS. If any reasonable alternatives are developed during this process, they will be analyzed in the SWEIS along with the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives.

The SWEIS project team will present an overview of the SWEIS and its approximate timelines. All stakeholders are encouraged to participate, either by commenting during an online virtual scoping meeting on September 2, 2020, or by submitting comments or questions by mail or email as instructed on the DOE/NNSA SWEIS website <https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/nnsa-nepa-reading-room>.

All comments will be noted and addressed in the draft SWEIS, which is scheduled to be publicly available next year.

8. Q) What about future work not covered by the SWEIS?

A) Work not covered by the SWEIS will require separate environmental review under NEPA. Public notification and participation will be conducted in accordance with the DOE NEPA requirements.

9. Q) Will classified projects be included in the SWEIS?

A) Yes. The SWEIS evaluates the environmental impacts of all LLNL operations. NNSA will review classified projects during the preparation of the SWEIS, and the public will be provided unclassified information on the environmental or public health impacts associated with them. Any classified materials essential to the preparation of the SWEIS will be retained in classified reference documents, available only to authorized reviewers.

10. Q) Will the public have an opportunity to read and comment on the SWEIS?

A) Yes. The NEPA process encourages the public, civic and community organizations, Native American tribes, governmental offices and regulatory agencies, and others to participate in the environmental review process. The LLNL SWEIS process began with the publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register on August 5, 2020. This was followed by a 45-day public comment period and one virtual public scoping meeting. Another public comment period and public meetings will be scheduled following the issuance of Notice of Availability of the Draft SWEIS. A final SWEIS will also include a minimum 30-day comment period before DOE/NNSA issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD). All comments received will be responded to the extent practicable.

11. Q) Why is a SWEIS being prepared now?

A) The current 2005 SWEIS was prepared in 2005 using 2002 as the baseline data. It was last evaluated in 2011 by means of a Supplement Analysis (SA), which included new information that was not available for consideration when the 2005 SWEIS was prepared. The SA concluded that the 2005 SWEIS remained adequate for LLNL for the next five years. In 2016, a team of NNSA Livermore Field Office (LFO) and Lawrence Livermore National Security, LLC, subject matter experts then began working on a new SA. Although this more recent SA process was not completed, the team reached a consensus that a new SWEIS would provide numerous programmatic and operational benefits for the expanding LLNL national security missions.

12. Q) Will the SWEIS evaluate environmental justice issues as required by federal regulations?

A) Yes. Environmental Justice will be evaluated in the SWEIS. The SWEIS will identify any low-income, minority, and Native American tribes within a 50-mile radius of the Livermore Site and Site 300 near Tracy, CA.

13. Q) Will the SWEIS assess the risks of potential security or terrorist threats to the Livermore site or Site 300?

A) Yes. LLNL continually assesses security issues and provides appropriate security measures as needed to protect its facilities, personnel, and the public. The SWEIS, a

public document, cannot discuss security measures that could reveal threat vulnerabilities. However, results of the impacts analysis for what are termed Intentional Destructive Acts will be made unclassified to the extent practicable.

14. Q) Will the SWEIS address accident scenarios in and around the Livermore site and Site 300?

A) Yes. A variety of accident scenarios will be analyzed and included in the SWEIS.

* The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) [Pub. L. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, with subsequent amendments] was enacted by Congress in 1969 in part to promote efforts that will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment, and improve our understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the nation.