Department of the Navy

National Environmental Policy Act Record of Decision for Disposal of Decommissioned, Defueled Naval Submarine Reactor Plants

SUMMARY: This Record of Decision has been prepared on the proposed disposal of decommissioned, defueled naval submarine reactor plants, pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Part 1505) implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act NEPA). The Navy has decided to dispose of these reactor plants by land burial at Department of Energy (DOE) burial sites.

In accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Part 1501), the Department of the Navy served as the lead agency for preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on this subject. The Department of Energy (DOE) participated as a cooperating agency with respect to the alternative of land disposal at DOE burial sites. By participating as a cooperating agency, DOE EIS obligations under NEPA are fulfilled and no separate DOE is required.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: With 10 nuclear-powered submarine plants having been decommissioned and future decommissioning of additional ships in the offering a permanent means of disposal must be available that is environmentally acceptable. Following decommissioning, the submarines do not contain nuclear fuel, transuranic elements, or high-level radioactive material. They will, however, contain low-level radioactive material resulting from the operation of the reactors while the submarines were in commission.

The two basic methods for permanent disposal are land disposal and sea disposal. Permanent disposal can be achieved by removal of the submarine compartment that contains the defueled reactor, followed by shipment of the compartment by barge and overland transporter to either of two accessible Federal land burial sites used by the Department of Energy for burial of low-level radioactive waste. These sites are in Washington State (Hanford Site) and in South Carolina (Savannah River Plant). The submarine compartments contain classified design information so only government owned burial grounds may be used. The remainder of the submarine which contains no radioactive material, would either be disposed of by sinking it at sea or by cutting it up for sale as scrap metal. Radiation levels associated with the entire operation would meet applicable requirements of the Department of Transportation, Nuclear Regulatory Commission, and Department of Energy for transportation and disposal of solid low-level radioactive material.

Alternatively, permanent disposal of the defueled submarine reactor plants could be achieved by sinking the submarines in a deep ocean location that would be designated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Specifically, two disposal sites have not been proposed and a site-specific evaluation would be required prior to designation of a sea disposal site.

An alternative for temporary storage of these defueled submarine reactor plants would be to place each submarine in protective floating storage in a Navy facility for an extended period. This would allow radioactive material to decay under controlled conditions without release to the environment. However, this alternative would lead to other impacts and only postpone the decision for ultimate disposal, requiring the decision to be made sometime in the future. For this reason, this alternative is regarded as the non-action alternative because it represents the minimum action the Navy must take to ensure that the decommissioned submarines would be maintained without hazard to people or the environment. No other practical alternatives are known to exist for the final disposal of the reactor plants.

The Navy published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement which assessed these alternatives on December 22, 1982. This Draft EIS was widely circulated. Over 150 copies of the Draft statement were distributed to individuals, environmental organizations, state and local authorities for interested parties to comment on the draft EIS. More than 500 letters were received providing comments. The Navy held four public hearings in different parts of the country at which over 150 people presented statements.

All substantive comments received by the Navy were analyzed and addressed in the Final EIS which was published on June 4, 1984. Impacts assessed for each disposal alternative included expected commitment of resources, land use, transportation aspects, and environmental consequences, including occupational radiation exposure due to disposal activities, and possible radiation exposure to the public during and after transporation and disposal. The impact of radioactive material releases due to unexpected occurrences was also assessed. For each alternative considered, an assessment of the impact on the environment in the vicinity of disposal sites has been performed. The EIS also included information on the costs of the disposal alternatives. The Navy considers that permanent disposal would be environmentally safe and feasible using either the land burial or deep ocean option. There are no technical obstacles which would prevent successful disposal or environmental monitoring for either permanent disposal option. The highly conservative estimates used in the analyses of impacts is compensated for any uncertainties that may exist in man's knowledge relative to the impacts for either disposal option. No unacceptable environmental impacts associated with either option have been identified as a result of the analyses or through the public review process.

Since the Navy began its evaluation of disposal options, several developments associated with possible ocean disposal of low-level radioactive waste have occurred. These include Congressional action in December 1982 restricting the issuance of ocean disposal permits and requiring Congressional approval before any such permit may be issued by the EPA. In addition, the EPA has indicated additional regulations may be required before EPA could evaluate a permit request. In view of these and other uncertainties associated with the acceptance of the ocean disposal option, the Navy considers that allocation of additional funds to pursue this option further is not warranted at this time.

Based on a consideration of all current factors bearing on a disposal action of this kind contemplated, the Navy has decided to proceed with disposal of the reactor compartments by land burial. Land burial is the method currently used in the United States for disposal of low-level radioactive waste and this disposal action would comply with existing requirements for use of the government burial grounds. Land burial of the reactor compartments would be environmentally safe at both of the government burial grounds which were evaluated in the final EIS. However, with all but one of our ten decommissioned nuclear submarines currently in storage on the West Coast, the federal burial ground at Hanford, Washington is the site appropriate for use in the near future. This approach will allow permanent disposal of the
form of low-level radioactive material to proceed with no unacceptable environmental impacts.


John Lehman,
Secretary of the Navy.

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

Centers for Independent Living; Funding Priorities

AGENCY: Department of Education.

ACTION: Notice of proposed funding priorities for fiscal year 1985.

SUMMARY: The Secretary proposes annual funding priorities for grants for establishing and operating Centers for Independent Living. The Secretary proposes two priorities to direct funds to the areas of greatest need during Fiscal Year 1985 to ensure effective use of program funds. The priorities will extend independent living services to additional groups of disabled persons and will assist severely handicapped persons in making the transition from school or institution to community living or employment. The Secretary proposes to give absolute preference to applications meeting these priorities.

DATE: Interested persons are invited to submit comments or suggestions regarding the proposed priorities on or before January 7, 1985.

ADDRESSES: All written comments and suggestions should be sent to Harold F. Shay, Director, Division of Special Projects, Rehabilitation Services Administration, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW., (MS 2512) Washington, D.C. 20202.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Harold F. Shay, Telephone: (202) 732-1332.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Grants for Centers for Independent Living are authorized by Title VII, Part B of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (29 U.S.C. 796e). Program regulations are established at 34 CFR Part 365. The purpose of the Centers for Independent Living Program is to establish and operate Centers designed to provide a combination of services to severely handicapped individuals to enable them to live more independently in family and community or to secure and maintain appropriate employment. The Act requires each Center established and operated under this authority to have substantial involvement of handicapped individuals in policy direction and management of the Center.

Eligible Applicants:

The designated State unit of the State vocational rehabilitation agency is the principal eligible applicant for grants under this program. However, if in any fiscal year the designated State unit has not applied for a grant within six months after the date on which the Secretary begins to accept applications, then any local public or private nonprofit agency within that State may submit an application.

Available Funds:

The Congress has appropriated $27,000,000 for Independent Living in Fiscal Year 1985. The Rehabilitation Amendments of 1984 Pub. L. 98-321, include an authorization of $22,000,000 for the Centers for Independent Living Program; of this amount, approximately $20,100,000 will be required to continue existing projects as mandated by section 711(f) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. It is estimated that the total amount to be reserved for the proposed priorities announced in this notice will be up to $1,900,000. These estimates do not bind the Department of Education to a specific number of grants or to the amount of any grant.

Proposed Priorities:

In accordance with the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) at 34 CFR 75.105(c)(3), the Secretary proposes to give an absolute preference to applications submitted in Fiscal Year 1985 in response to priorities to be established. An absolute preference in one which permits the Secretary to reserve all or a part of a program's funds solely for applications that meet announced priorities. The Secretary proposes to reserve part of the funds appropriated for the Centers for Independent Living Program in Fiscal Year 1985 to support projects in which specific project components or activities, i.e., not an entire project, implement announced program priorities. All applications will be evaluated according to selection criteria contained in program regulations at 34 CFR 365.31.

The proposed priorities are as follows:

Priority 1: Expanding Services to Additional Groups of Disabled Persons

This proposed priority is intended to enable those existing Centers for Independent Living that have focused in the past on a limited number of disabilities because of tradition, lack of resources, or lack of specially trained staff to expand services to additional disability populations with service needs which require specialized staff, techniques, equipment or other resources.

Examples of the type of program expansion to which this proposed priority is addressed are programs currently serving mobility impaired persons that wish to expand coverage to persons with mental handicaps; programs currently serving orthopedically or neurologically impaired persons that wish to expand to serve physically disabled individuals; programs currently serving children that wish to expand to serve youths and adults; or programs currently serving younger populations that wish to expand to serve older persons, especially older blind persons.

Services to be developed under this proposed priority will enable additional numbers of severely handicapped persons to live more independently in family and community or to secure and maintain employment.

Priority 2: Transition from School or Institution to Community Living or Employment

Priority will be given to proposals that will enable existing Centers for Independent Living to provide independent living services cooperatively with services of other community programs so as to enhance the abilities of severely disabled persons leaving school or institution to live more independently in the community or to seek and maintain employment. Examples of other community services which should be effectively integrated into a comprehensive approach are local housing and transportation authorities; State or county Medicaid agencies that can assist in the provisions of personal care attendant or home based services; State vocational rehabilitation agencies; technical or vocational schools and community colleges; agricultural extension services in rural areas; as well as any other service or income maintenance programs which

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