DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

AGENCY: Department of Energy. **ACTION:** Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The Department of Energy (DOE) announces its intent to prepare a Stockpile Stewardship and Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (SSM PEIS). The end of the Cold War has brought about significant changes in the requirements for the nation's nuclear deterrent, including substantial reductions in the nuclear weapons stockpile. To fulfill its responsibilities for ensuring the safety and reliability of the stockpile without underground nuclear testing, DOE proposes the Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program.

Stockpile Stewardship includes activities required to maintain a high level of confidence in the safety and reliability of nuclear weapons in the absence of underground nuclear testing, and to be prepared to resume nuclear testing if so directed by the President. Stockpile Management activities include dismantlement, maintenance, evaluation, and repair or replacement of weapons and their components in the

This Notice of Intent, the initial step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, informs the public of the PEIS proposal, announces the schedule for scoping meetings, and solicits public input. Following the scoping period, the Department will prepare and issue an Implementation Plan (IP) to describe the scope of the PEIS, the alternatives that will be analyzed, and the schedule for completing the PEIS.

existing stockpile.

DATES: Comments on the proposed scope of the SSM PEIS are invited from the public. To ensure consideration in the preparation of the IP, comments must be postmarked by August 11, 1995. Late comments will be considered to the extent practicable. DOE will hold interactive public scoping meetings at sites that may be affected by the proposed action to discuss issues and receive oral and written comments on the scope of the PEIS. These meetings will provide the public with an opportunity to present comments, ask questions, and discuss concerns with DOE officials regarding SSM activities. The locations, dates, and times for these public meetings are included in the Supplementary Information section of this notice, and will be announced by additional appropriate means.

The Department is also requesting federal agencies that desire to be designated as cooperating agencies on the SSM PEIS to contact the Office of Reconfiguration at the address listed below by August 11, 1995.

ADDRESSES: General questions concerning the SSM program can be asked by calling the toll-free telephone number at 1–800–776–2765, or by writing to: Stephen M. Sohinki, Director, Office of Reconfiguration, U.S. Department of Energy, P.O. Box 3417, Alexandria, VA 22302.

As an alternative, comments can also be submitted electronically by using the Federal Information Exchange bulletin board and following the instructions listed below:

Modem: Dial Toll Free (800) 783–3349. Local (301) 258–0953. (Modem parameters set at: '8' data bits, '1' stop bit and 'N' parity at 1200, 2400 or 9600 baud.)

InterNet: Telnet or Gopher to: fedix.fie.com or 192.111.228.33
Hours: Available 24 hours a day. A Help Line, (301) 975–0103, is available weekdays between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. EST, except Federal holidays.
Costs: Free, no cost to users. No telephone, registration, access, or downloading fees.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information on the DOE NEPA process, please contact: Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, EH–42, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC 20585, (202) 586–4600 or 1–800–472–2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

In January 1991, the then-Secretary of Energy announced that the Department would prepare a PEIS examining alternatives for the reconfiguration of the Department's nuclear weapons complex (the Complex). The framework for the Reconfiguration PEIS was described in the January 1991 Nuclear Weapons Complex Reconfiguration Study (Reconfiguration Study), a detailed examination of alternatives for the future Complex. Because of significant changes in the world since January 1991, especially with regard to projected future requirements for the United States' nuclear weapons stockpile, the Department concluded in October 1994 that the framework described in the Reconfiguration Study no longer fit current circumstances or supported any realistic proposal for reconfiguration of the Complex (59 FR 54175, October 28, 1994). Contributing

factors to that conclusion included public comments at the September-October 1993 Reconfiguration PEIS scoping meetings, the fact that no production of new nuclear weapons types was required for the foreseeable future, budget constraints, and the Department's decision to prepare a separate PEIS on Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Nuclear Materials (Notice of Intent published June 21, 1994, 59 FR 17344).

As a result of these changed circumstances, the Department separated the previously planned Reconfiguration PEIS into two new PEISs: (1) a Tritium Supply and Recycling PEIS; and (2) a Stockpile Stewardship and Management PEIS. The Draft PEIS for Tritium Supply and Recycling was issued in March 1995 (60 FR 14433, March 17, 1995), public hearings were held in April 1995, and a Final PEIS for Tritium Supply and Recycling is expected in October 1995.

With regard to the SSM PEIS, during the past six months the Department has been developing the new framework to support the SSM program. That resulting framework, described in a DOE report entitled "The Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program" (May 1995), is available on the Internet under DOE's Home Page for Defense Programs (www.dp.doe.gov). That document was mailed to individuals who had previously requested information on the SSM program. Other individuals who would like to receive that document can contact the Office of Reconfiguration at the address listed above or by calling the program's toll free number at 1-800-776-2765.

On May 19, 1995, the Department held a pre-scoping workshop with interested members of the public to discuss the framework of the SSM program and the information contained in "The Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program". While a wide range of specific issues were discussed during that meeting, general concerns centered on: Future stockpile planning, including the basis for selecting the baseline stockpile size of the future; whether the Department would evaluate a range of stockpile sizes in the PEIS; the relationship between the SSM PEIS and the Department's other Programmatic and Site-Wide EISs; and whether the Department would evaluate underground nuclear testing in the PEIS. Comments received from that prescoping workshop have been taken into account in developing this NOI.

Purpose and Need for the SSM Program. Under the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 USC 2011 et seq.), DOE is charged with providing