characterization activities at Yucca Mountain and the continued accumulation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste at commercial storage sites and DOE facilities. Spent nuclear fuel and highlevel radioactive waste would continue to be managed for the foreseeable future at existing commercial storage sites and DOE facilities located in 34 States. The No Action alternative, although contrary to the Congressional desire to provide a permanent solution for isolation of the Nation's spent nuclear fuel and highlevel radioactive waste, provides a baseline against which the implementation alternatives can be compared.

At the Yucca Mountain site, the surface facilities, excavation equipment, and other support facilities would be dismantled and removed for reuse or recycling, or would be disposed of in solid waste landfills. Disturbed surface areas would be reclaimed and excavated openings to the subsurface would be sealed and backfilled.

At commercial reactors, spent nuclear fuel would continue to be generated and stored in either water pools or in canisters, until storage space at individual reactors becomes inadequate, at which time reactor operations would cease. DOE-owned spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste would continue to be managed at three primary sites—the Hanford Reservation, Savannah River Site, and the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory.

## Environmental Issues To Be Examined in the EIS

This EIS will examine the site-specific environmental impacts from construction, operation, and eventual closure of a repository for spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste disposal at Yucca Mountain, Nevada. Transportation-related impacts of the alternatives will also be analyzed. Through internal discussion and outreach programs with the public, DOE is aware of many environmental issues related to the construction, operation, and closure/post-closure phases of such a repository. The issues identified here are intended to facilitate public scoping. The list is not intended to be allinclusive or to predetermine the scope of the EIS, but should be used as a starting point from which the public can help DOE define the scope of the EIS.

• Radiological and non-radiological releases. The potential effects to the public and on-site workers from radiological and nonradiological releases;

• Public and Worker Safety and Health. Potential health and safety

impacts (e.g., injuries) to on-site workers during the unloading, temporary surface storage, and underground emplacement of waste packages at Yucca Mountain;

• Transportation. The potential impacts associated with national and regional shipments of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste from reactor sites and DOE facilities to the Yucca Mountain site will be assessed. Regional transportation issues include: (a) technical feasibility, (b) socioeconomic impacts, (c) land use and access impacts, and (d) impacts of constructing and operating a rail spur, a heavy haul route, and/or a transfer facility;

• Accidents. The potential impacts from reasonably foreseeable accidents, including any accidents with low probability but high potential consequences;

• Criticality. The likelihood that a self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction could occur and its potential consequences;

• Waste Isolation. Potential impacts associated with the long-term performance of the repository;

• Socioeconomic Conditions. Potential regional (i.e., in Nevada) socioeconomic impacts to the surrounding communities, including impacts on employment, tax base, and public services;

• Environmental Justice. Potential for disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority or low-income populations;

• Pollution Prevention. Appropriate and innovative pollution prevention, waste minimization, and energy and water use reduction technologies to eliminate or significantly reduce use of energy, water, hazardous substances, and to minimize environmental impacts:

• Soil, Water, and Air Resources. Potential impacts to soil, water quality, and air quality;

• Biological Resources. Potential impacts to plants, animals, and habitat, including impacts to wetlands, and threatened and endangered species;

• Cultural Resources. Potential impacts to archaeological/historical sites, Native American resources, and other cultural resources;

• Cumulative impacts from the proposed action and implementing alternatives and other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions;

• Potential irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.

Under the No Action alternative, potential environmental effects associated with the shutdown of site characterization activities at Yucca Mountain will be estimated. Potential environmental effects from the continued accumulation of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste at commercial reactors and DOE sites will be addressed by summarizing previous relevant environmental analyses and by performing new analyses of representative sites, as appropriate. At the Yucca Mountain site, the potential environmental consequences from the reclamation of disturbed surface areas, and the sealing of excavated openings following the dismantlement and removal of facilities and equipment, will be quantified. These analyses would be similar in level of detail to the analyses of the implementing alternatives. At the commercial reactor and DOE sites, the potential environmental consequences will be addressed in terms of risk to the environment and the public from longterm management of spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste. In addition, the loss of storage capacity, the need for additional capacity, and their potential consequences to continued reactor operations, will be described.

## **Consultations With Other Agencies**

The NWPA requires DOE to solicit comments on the EIS from the Department of the Interior, the Council on Environmental Quality, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (42 U.S.C. § 10134(a)(1)(D)). DOE also intends to consult with the Departments of the Navy and Air Force and will solicit comments from other agencies, the State of Nevada, affected units of local government, and Native American tribal organizations, regarding the environmental issues to be addressed by the EIS.

## **Relationship to Other DOE NEPA Reviews**

DOE is preparing or has completed other NEPA documents that may be relevant to the Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management Program and this EIS. If appropriate, this EIS will incorporate by reference and update information taken from these other NEPA documents. These documents (described below) are available for inspection by the public at the DOE Freedom of Information Reading Room (1E–190), Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. and will be made available in Nevada at locations to be announced at the public scoping meetings. These documents include the following:

• Environmental Assessment, Yucca Mountain Site, Nevada Research and