ROD. The actions will involve the continued operation of the existing cross-site transfer system (ECSTS) until replaced by the construction and operation of a new replacement crosssite transfer system (RCSTS) consisting of buried, double-wall, insulated pipes, and continued operation of the mixer pump installed in Tank 101–SY to mitigate the unacceptable accumulation of hydrogen and other flammable gases.

Pending resolution of a recently identified safety issue, DOE is deferring a decision on the retrieval of solids from Tank 102–SY, and limiting the transfer of wastes through Tank 102–SY to noncomplexed wastes. Evaluation of this issue will be addressed under DOE's NEPA procedures as necessary. DOE and Ecology have determined that new storage tanks will not be necessary at the present time to mitigate the flammable gas safety issue, based on the demonstrated success of the mixer pump.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on DOE and Ecology activities related to this project or copies of the Final SIS EIS, please contact: Carolyn Haass, U.S. Department of

Energy, PO Box 550, MSIN S7-51, Richland, WA 99352, (509) 372-2731

Geoff Tallent, Washington Department of Ecology, PO Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504–7600. (360) 407–7112

For further information on DOE's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, please contact: Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH–42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585–0002, (202) 586– 4600 or (800) 472–2756.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: DOE has prepared this ROD pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing the provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500-1508) and the DOE NEPA regulations (10 CFR part 1021). The ROD is based on the analyses of environmental impacts identified in the Final SIS EIS (DOE/EIS-0212); consideration of project costs; compliance requirements for systems involved in the handling, transport, and storage of high-level mixed radioactive waste, and public, agency, and tribal comments.

Because NEPA and SEPA are very comparable in their purpose, intent, and procedures, Ecology and DOE decided to prepare one EIS addressing the requirements of both SEPA and NEPA. In February 1994, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed between the DOE, Richland Operations Office and Ecology. The MOU called for the joint preparation of the SIS EIS, the contents of which have been determined to satisfy both SEPA and NEPA requirements.

Purpose and Need

DOE and Ecology identified the need to continue to provide safe storage of high-level radioactive tank wastes while supporting tank farm management and operations prior to implementing decisions made in the ROD for the Tank Waste Remedial System (TWRS) EIS. The TWRS EIS is evaluating the alternatives for permanent disposal of wastes currently stored in tanks at the Hanford Site. To minimize the risk of managing tank wastes prior to the TWRS ROD, a modern, safe, reliable, and compliant replacement cross-site transfer capability is needed to move wastes between the 200 West and 200 East Area tank farms. This transfer capability is required because the 200 West Area has far less useable double shell tank (DST) capacity than there is waste in single shell tanks (SSTs).

The replacement waste transfer capability would provide the means to move waste from the 200 West Area to the available DST capacity located in the 200 East Area.

The ECSTS has been used to transfer wastes from the 200 West Area to the 200 East Area for the past 40 years. This underground pipeline system is at the end of its original design life. Currently, four of six lines are out of service and unavailable to perform transfers due to plugging. The two useable lines do not meet current engineering standards such as, double containment and leak detection, required for waste management facilities.

Based on current tank waste management and operation activities, the SIS EIS addressed the need to do the following:

• Remove Salt Well Liquids (SWLs) from older SSTs to reduce the likelihood of liquid waste escaping from the corroded tanks into the environment. Many of these tanks have leaked and new leaks are developing in these tanks at a rate of more than one per year.

• Provide ability to transfer the tank wastes via a compliant system to mitigate any future safety concerns and use current or future tank space allocations.

• Provide adequate tank waste storage capacity for future waste volumes associated with tank farm operations and other Hanford facility operations.

• Mitigate the flammable gas safety issue in Tank 101–SY.

Summary of Alternatives and Impacts

DOE and Ecology have identified four action alternatives in addition to the no action alternative to satisfy the need to continue to provide safe storage of highlevel waste until decisions are made based on the TWRS EIS. The alternatives consist of the preferred alternative, truck transfer alternative, rail transfer alternative, and new storage alternative. DOE evaluated the construction and operation phases of each alternative to assess potential impacts to the following environmental categories:

- Geology, Seismology, Soils.
- Population and Socioeconomics.
- Water Resources and Hydrology.
- Transportation.
- Air Quality.
- Land Use.
- Radiation.
- Cultural Resources.
- Noise.
- Health Effects.
- Biological Resources.

The impact analysis showed that there would be no impacts related to geology, seismology, water resources and hydrology, radiation, noise, population and socioeconomics, or cultural resources for any of the alternatives. Environmental categories where potential impacts were identified are discussed under each alternative as applicable.

Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative consists of the following components:

• Construction and operation of the RCSTS for cross-site transfer of SWLs, and 200 West Area Facility wastes from Tank 102–SY to DSTs in the 200 East Area;

• Construction of a waste retrieval system in Tank 102–SY to retrieve solids;

• Continued operation of a mixer pump in Tank 101–SY;

• Transfer of liquid wastes through the ECSTS until the proposed RCSTS becomes operational in 1998.

Transuranic solids from Tank 102–SY would be retrieved, transferred via the RCSTS and consolidated in 200 East Area DSTs to provide space for transfer of complexed SWLs. The consolidation of tank waste is an ongoing tank farm management action evaluated under prior environmental impact statements and a supplement (ERDA 1538, DOE/ EIS-0063, DOE/EIS-0113). Although such retrieval is addressed in the decisions resulting from these NEPA documents, the retrieval of Tank 102-SY sludge was discussed in the SIS EIS for a comprehensive consideration of impacts.