

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED CONSOLIDATION AND EXPANSION OF  
IDAHO NATIONAL LABORATORY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AT A  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS**

**Agency:** U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

**Action:** Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

**Summary:** DOE prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Consolidation and Expansion of the Idaho National Laboratory Research and Development at a Science and Technology Campus (STC) (DOE/EA-1555). The proposed action consists of consolidating and expanding existing laboratory and business capabilities and operations within a single geographic area, or central campus. The proposed action would accommodate anticipated program growth while allowing for the consolidation of various activities located in the Idaho Falls areas and selected low hazard activities from the Idaho National Laboratory Site located west of Idaho Falls. Research and development programs that would be conducted at the STC include microbiology (less than Bio safety level 3), geochemistry, materials characterization and testing, welding, ceramics, thermal fluids behavior, analytical and environmental chemistry, and biotechnology. Four alternatives were evaluated” Alternative 1 – Lease of privately owned and constructed facilities at a single location; Alternative 2 – DOE construction of facilities at a central location; Alternative 3 – Consolidation and expansion within current existing facilities; Alternative 4 – No action.

The EA was prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures (10 CFR Part 1021).

The draft EA was released for a 30 day public review and comment period on November 29, 2006. DOE received comments from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and one member of the public. DOE responded to those comments and revised portions of the EA, as appropriate. Based on the analysis in the EA, DOE had decided to pursue implementation of Alternative 1, Lease of private owned and constructed facilities at a single location.

**Selected Alternative:**

**Lease of Privately Owned and Constructed Facilities at a Single Location**

DOE will consolidate and expand INL laboratory and business operations in privately-owned and constructed facilities at a single geographic area, or central campus, in the city of Idaho Falls.

The location for the proposed central campus will be on privately-owned land primarily to the north and east of the existing Engineering Research Office Building in Idaho Falls. Currently, existing INL buildings in the general area will also be considered as integral parts of the STC. This will include both existing DOE-owned and the privately-owned buildings that are currently leased by the INL contractor. Work in the satellite leased

facilities in Idaho Falls will be relocated to either the IRC or central campus buildings, as appropriate.

**Analysis:** Based on the analyses in the EA, the selected alternative would not have, and would likely prevent, a significant effect on the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. The term “significantly” and the significance criteria are defined by the CEQ Regulations for implementing NEPA at 40 CFR Part 1508.27. The significance criteria are addressed below.

**1) Beneficial and adverse impacts [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(1)]:**

The selected alternative will provide additional and updated facilities to allow research and development activities to strengthen national and energy security (Section 1, pp.1, 2). The analysis indicates that there will not be any significant impacts from implementing the selected action (Section 4, pp 23-42).

**2) Public health and safety [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(2)]:**

The analysis indicates emissions of radiological and hazardous air pollutants are small and would not significantly affect public health (Section 4.2 pp 24-32). Modeling of off-site doses from radioactive emissions have been calculated and determined to be less than one percent of the regulatory limit despite the application of extremely conservative assumptions on radionuclide inventories and release parameters.

The increased number of buildings resulting from implementation of the selected alternative would result in a proportional increase in emissions from heating systems. These emissions would be similar to those of any other large, gas-heated building. The additional laboratory buildings would result in increased emission of volatile chemicals. Regulatory and administrative controls on these facilities would reduce the impacts from these materials to levels that would minimize or eliminate any quantifiable cumulative effect on air quality (Section 5, pp 43-44).

**3) Unique characteristics of the geographical area [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(3)]:**

The activity will not affect any unique characteristics of the area with the exception of approximately 75 acres considered to be prime farmlands if irrigated (Section 3.3, p 13, Section 4.1 p 23). Those lands are a very small fraction of the 178,000 acres of prime farmlands if irrigated found in Bonneville County. In addition, regardless of DOE’s decision on the proposed action, those lands are being rezoned for residential, commercial, and industrial purposes (Section 3.1 p 11, Section 3.3 p 13 and Section 4.1 p 23).

**4) Degree to which effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to become highly controversial [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(4)]:**

The analysis in the EA indicates implementing the selected alternative will result in no significant effects on the quality of the human environment and extent of public comment indicates that the selected action is not highly controversial.

**5) Uncertain or unknown risks on the human environment [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(5)]:**

There are no uncertain or unknown risks associated with implementing the selected alternative (Section 4, pp 23-42).

**6) Precedent for future actions [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(6)]:**

The selected alternative does not set a precedent for future actions.

**7) Cumulatively significant impacts [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(7)]:**

There would be no significant cumulative impacts associated with implementing the selected alternative (Section 5, pp. 43-46).

**8) Effect on cultural or historical resources [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(8)]:**

Impacts to cultural resources are not anticipated by the selected alternative. The canal identified in the cultural resources survey will be protected during development of the central campus. Current planning for the central campus can include a portion of the canal within the design in such a way that the effects to this historic property will not be adverse. In this context, the canal can be incorporated into drainage control for the area, serving a practical need for the new facilities and enhancing the surrounding landscaping. Installation of an interpretive sign near the old canal can commemorate the important role it played in shaping the future of the city of Idaho Falls and will provide an opportunity to demonstrate INL pride in the local community by taking a modest but active role in preserving its past (Section 4.8 p 40-41). In pursuing the selected alternative, the actions indicated herein will be negotiated into any lease agreement with developers to the full extent possible.

**9) Effect on threatened or endangered species or critical habitat [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(9)]:**

The selected alternative would not have an effect on threatened or endangered species or critical habitat (Section 4.4, p 35-36).

**10) Violation of Federal, State, or Local law [40 CFR Part 1508.27 (b)(10)]:**

The selection alternative would not violate any federal, state or local law (Section 6, pp 47-51).

**Determination:** Based on the analyses presented in the attached EA, I have determined that the selected alternative does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

Issued at Idaho Falls, Idaho on this 13 day of March, 2007.



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Manager, Idaho Operations Office

Copies of the EA and FONSI are available from: Brad Bugger, Office of Public Affairs, Idaho Operations Office, U.S. Department of Energy, 1955 Fremont Ave., Idaho Falls, ID 83415, (208) 526-0833 or the toll free citizen inquiry line at (800) 708-2680.

For further information on the NEPA process, contact: Jack Depperschmidt, NEPA Compliance Officer, Idaho Operations Office, U.S. Department of Energy, 1955 Fremont Ave., Idaho Falls, ID 83415, (208) 526-5053.