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Feds weighing cleanup options for Rocketdyne's Area IV

By Darleen Principe darleen@theacorn.com

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The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will be soliciting public comments until Aug. 14 on the scope of an environmental impact statement examining cleanup options for a portion of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory.

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Area IV, which makes up 290 acres of the 2,850-acre field lab, includes the Energy Technology Engineering Center (ETEC), where nuclear research was conducted until 1988.

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Bill Taylor, DOE spokesperson, said Virginibased engineering consulting firm CDM will begin preparing a Draft EIS in late August-after the 90-day public review window required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA).

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"This is the most important part of the process because this is where we get to hear all of the public's concerns," Taylor said. "Right now, we have five preliminary alternatives. But we expect those are going to change once the public starts submitting their comments and concerns."

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The DOE's five preliminary alternatives include: taking no action, maintaining environmental monitoring but ceasing further cleanup, containing the area, disposing of contaminated facilities and media at an off-site location, or combining containment and off-site disposal.

"We have to start with the 'no action' option, in which we would say we're just done with that area," Taylor said. "We know that's not going to happen, but nonetheless it has to be one of our options."

The DOE issued a Notice of Intent to prepare the environmental document last week, four months after the department awarded the \$8.9-million task order to CDM.

The department will hold a total of six public scoping meetings in Simi Valley, Northridge and Sacramento this July, where department officials will discuss the cleanup alternatives in detail and gather ideas from the public, Taylor said.

Reading rooms with information about the SSFL Area IV are available to the public at the Simi Valley Library at 2969 Tapo Canyon Road, the Platt Branch Library of Woodland Hills at 23600 Victory Blvd. and the Oviatt Library at Cal State Northridge.

Two public scoping meetings will be held at the Grand Vista Hotel at 999 Enchanted Way on Tuesday, July 22.

The first meeting is from 2 to 4 p.m., and the second meeting is from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Additional information about the EIS and Area IV is available at www.ete.energy.gov.

To submit environmental comments to the DOE, contact Stephanie Jennings, NEPA document manager, at (818) 466-8162 or send an e-mail Stephanie.jennings@emcbc.doe.gov.

Representatives from Boeing Co. could not be reached for comment.

Options for the future of Area IV

- **Alternative 1:** No Action - Cessation of all DOE Management and Oversight of SSFL Area IV. The buildings would remain and would not be monitored or maintained. Unmitigated natural processes, including erosion, groundwater

transport of contamination and concrete degradation would be assumed to occur. The purpose of evaluating this alternative is to establish the baseline against which the environmental impacts from all other alternatives are compared. • **Alternative 2:** No Further Cleanup or Disposition of Buildings at SSFL Area IV. DOE would continue environmental monitoring and maintain security of SSFL Area IV. • **Alternative 3:** Onsite Containment at SSFL Area IV. Containment onsite of buildings, wastes, radiological and chemical contaminants, aligned with potential future land use scenarios including, but not limited to, agricultural, residential and open space. • **Alternative 4:** Off-site Disposal for SSFL Area IV. Demolition of buildings, removal of contaminated media aligned with potential future land use scenarios including, but not limited to, agricultural, residential and open space. Transportation of non-radiological wastes to approved disposal or treatment facilities and radiological wastes to an approved out-of-state disposal facility. • **Alternative 5:** Combination OnSite/OffSite Disposal Alternative for SSFL Area IV. Demolition of buildings, on-site containment of contaminated media aligned with potential future land use scenarios including, but not limited to, agricultural, residential and open space. Transportation of non-radiological wastes from building demolition to approved disposal or treatment facilities and radiological waste from building demo

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lition to an approved, out-of-state disposal facility.

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