

accomplished, individuals reviewing the medical examination cannot be readily assured of the medical qualifications of the individual. Without this process the individual applying to any of these programs could not have a medical qualification determination. It is essential that individual's have a medical qualification determination to ensure compliance with the physical standards established for each respective military service program.

Pamela Fitzgerald,

Air Force Federal Register Liaison Officer.

[FR Doc. 03-8873 Filed 4-10-03; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 5001-05-P

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Defense Logistics Agency

Notice of Availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement; Mercury Management

AGENCY: Defense National Stockpile Center, DLA, DoD.

ACTION: Notice of availability of a Draft Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) announces the availability of its Draft Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS). This announcement is pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality's regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508) and the Defense Logistic Agency's (DLA) regulations (DLAR 1000.22) that implement the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Defense National Stockpile Center (DNSC) inventory of elemental mercury (approximately 4,436 metric tons) is currently stored in enclosed warehouses at four sites in the United States: Near New Haven, IN; in Oak Ridge, TN; in Hillsborough, NJ; and near Warren, OH. Because the mercury has been declared in excess of national defense needs, DNSC must decide on a strategy for the long-term management of this excess commodity. The Draft EIS analyzes three alternatives for managing the National Defense Stockpile inventory of excess mercury: (1) No action, *i.e.*, leave the mercury at the existing storage locations, (2) consolidated storage of the mercury stockpile at one site, and (3) sale of the stockpile. DNSC's preferred alternative is (2) consolidated storage. The Draft EIS evaluates a range of locations that would be acceptable consolidation sites.

Public comments are invited and encouraged concerning the analysis of environmental and socioeconomic

issues, as well as the management alternatives considered in the Draft EIS.

DATES: Public meetings are scheduled to be held as follows: May 20, 2003 in New Haven, IN; May 22 in Niles, OH; June 10 in Hawthorne, NV; June 12 in Tooele, UT; June 17 in Hillsborough, NJ; June 24 in Washington, DC; and July 1 in Oak Ridge, TN. The times and locations of the meetings are provided in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section of this announcement. The comment period ends on July 18, 2003. Comments on the Draft EIS must be postmarked, e-mailed, or otherwise submitted no later than this date.

ADDRESSES: Paper copies and computer disks (CD) of the Draft EIS (about 450 pages) and Executive Summary are available by writing to: Attention: Project Manager, Mercury Management EIS; DNSC-E; Defense National Stockpile Center, 8725 John J. Kingman Road, Suite 3229, Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-6223, or calling toll free at 1-888-306-6682. Electronic versions of the Executive Summary and the Draft EIS are found on the internet at www.mercuryeis.com. Copies of the Draft EIS may also be reviewed at locations listed in the **SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION** section. Written comments on the Draft EIS should be sent to the above address, faxed to 1-888-306-8818, or posted to the Mercury Management EIS website at www.mercuryeis.com. Comments may be dictated by calling toll free at 1-888-306-6682.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Requests for information can be made by: Leaving a voice message at 1-888-306-6682; faxing a message to 1-888-306-8818; e-mailing a request to information@mercuryeis.com; or accessing the Mercury Management EIS website at www.mercuryeis.com.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Defense National Stockpile Center (DNSC) is responsible for the disposition of stockpiled materials declared in excess of national defense needs. The United States Congress has determined that the U.S. Department of Defense no longer needs to maintain a stockpile of mercury because of the increased use of mercury substitutes and because of increases in the nation's secondary mercury production through recovery and recycling. The DNSC excess mercury was offered for sale in open competitions until 1994 when concerns over mercury accumulation in the global environment prompted DNSC to suspend sales. The DNSC inventory of mercury (approximately 4,436 metric tons) is stored in enclosed warehouses at four sites in the United States: New

Haven, IN (557 metric tons); Oak Ridge, TN (699 metric tons); Hillsborough, NJ (2,617 metric tons); and Warren, OH (564 metric tons).

As custodian of the mercury, DNSC must decide on a strategy for long-term management of this material. In compliance with NEPA and DLA Regulation 1000.22, "Environmental Considerations in DLA Actions in the United States," DNSC has prepared the Draft EIS to evaluate the environmental impacts of a range of reasonable alternatives for long-term management (*i.e.*, 40 years) of the excess mercury. The alternatives are: (1) No action, *i.e.*, maintaining storage at the four existing sites; (2) consolidation and storage at one of the three current DNSC mercury storage sites or at one of three other candidate locations; and (3) sale of the mercury inventory. The agency's preferred alternative is (2) consolidated storage. The Draft EIS evaluates a range of locations that would be acceptable consolidation sites. If a site other than those evaluated is selected, further environmental analysis would be required.

The Draft EIS also describes the potential environmental, human health, and socioeconomic impacts of these alternatives, together with cost considerations. Several treatment technologies were considered as possible alternatives for mercury management. Based on the immaturity of bulk mercury treatment technologies and the lack of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved path forward, bulk treatment and disposal of elemental mercury is not considered viable at this time and is not evaluated in detail in the Draft EIS.

The Department of Energy (DOE) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are cooperating agencies in the preparation of this Draft EIS. DOE is recognized because of their special expertise and because some of the DNSC excess mercury is stored at their Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. EPA is recognized because of their special expertise in the areas of mercury fate and effects in the environment, mercury stabilization and disposal technologies, and the regulation of hazardous material.

This Draft EIS is being distributed for public review and copies are also available at the following locations:

Allen County Public Library, 435 Ann Street, New Haven, Indiana 46774.
Bridgewater Branch Library, N. Bridge Street and Vogt Drive, Bridgewater, New Jersey 08807.
Fairfax County Public Library, 12000 Government Center Parkway, Suite 324, Fairfax, VA 22035.