

U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

*Santa Susana Field Laboratory Area IV
Community Built Alternatives Series
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DOE NEPA Overview

Regulatory Framework

- Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508)
- DOE NEPA Regulations (10 CFR Part 1021)
- DOE Order 451.1B, NEPA Compliance

Basic NEPA Principles

1. Full disclosure/public participation

- **Better decision-making based on:**
 - Understanding of purpose and need for agency action
 - Understanding of alternatives and associated environmental impacts
 - Public input and scrutiny
 - Expert review and comment

Basic NEPA Principles

2. Explore the range of reasonable alternatives

- The “Heart” of the NEPA process
 - Alternative ways of meeting the agency’s purpose and need
 - Includes No Action alternative
 - Rigorous, objective evaluation
- **“Reasonable” has a specific meaning under NEPA**
- A reasonable alternative should:
- Be feasible (technically, economically, environmentally, etc.)
 - Respond to the “purpose and need” for agency action

Basic NEPA Principles

3. Assess environmental impacts

- Level of analysis commensurate with significance of impacts/issues
- “Reasonably foreseeable” impacts include those from low-probability, high-consequence accidents and terrorism

4. Consider mitigation

- Ways to reduce/avoid impacts

5. Weigh options/explain decisions

- Balance environmental/technical/cost and other considerations

Environmental Impact Statement

An EIS

“Tells the story” of a proposed project

- Designed for **many different readers** (public and government decision makers)
- Begins with a statement of **the purpose and need** that provides an explanation of why agency action is needed
- Describes a **proposed action and alternatives** intended to meet the purpose and need
- Analyzes **potential environmental impacts**

Santa Susana Field Laboratory Area IV EIS

What is the status of DOE EIS and related NEPA activities for the cleanup of Santa Susana Field Laboratory Area IV?

Santa Susana Field Laboratory Area IV EIS

Brief history of actions related to Area IV NEPA process:

- *March 2003* – DOE Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact
- *May 2007* – Court Order; DOE required to prepare an EIS
- *October 2007* – DOE issues Advance Notice of Intent; input from public about scoping
- *May 2008* – DOE issues Notice of Intent; public scoping conducted
- *June 2009* – site radiological characterization (completed early 2012)
- *December 2010* – Administrative Consent Order signed by DOE and California

Area IV EIS – Alternatives Development

- ❖ Purpose and need for site remediation at Santa Susana Field Laboratory Site IV is based on the 2007 and 2010 Administrative Consent Orders.

- ❖ DOE's proposed action
 - Removal of all structures, and remediation of groundwater contamination in compliance with the 2007 Order.
 - Cleanup of soil to requirements as described in the 2010 Order.

- ❖ Reasonable alternatives need to be developed that provide a range of ways by which DOE will be able to meet these requirements.

Area IV EIS – Alternatives Development

❖ *Community Built Alternative Series*

- Continue collaboration with community and stakeholders
- Direct public involvement in developing a range of reasonable alternatives
- June 7th and June 9th Workshops; register at:
<http://communitybuiltalternatives.eventbrite.com/>

❖ Future Area IV EIS public input

- Community-developed alternatives to be considered for further refinement and public input
- DOE will issue an Amended Notice of Intent
- Goal: late 2012
- Public scoping comment period/meetings

DOE NEPA Resources

DOE NEPA Website: energy.gov/NEPA

- Regulatory Requirements
- Extensive Guidance
- DOE NEPA Documents
- Public Comment Opportunities
- Lessons Learned Program
- NEPA Office Staff List
- AskNEPA@hq.doe.gov