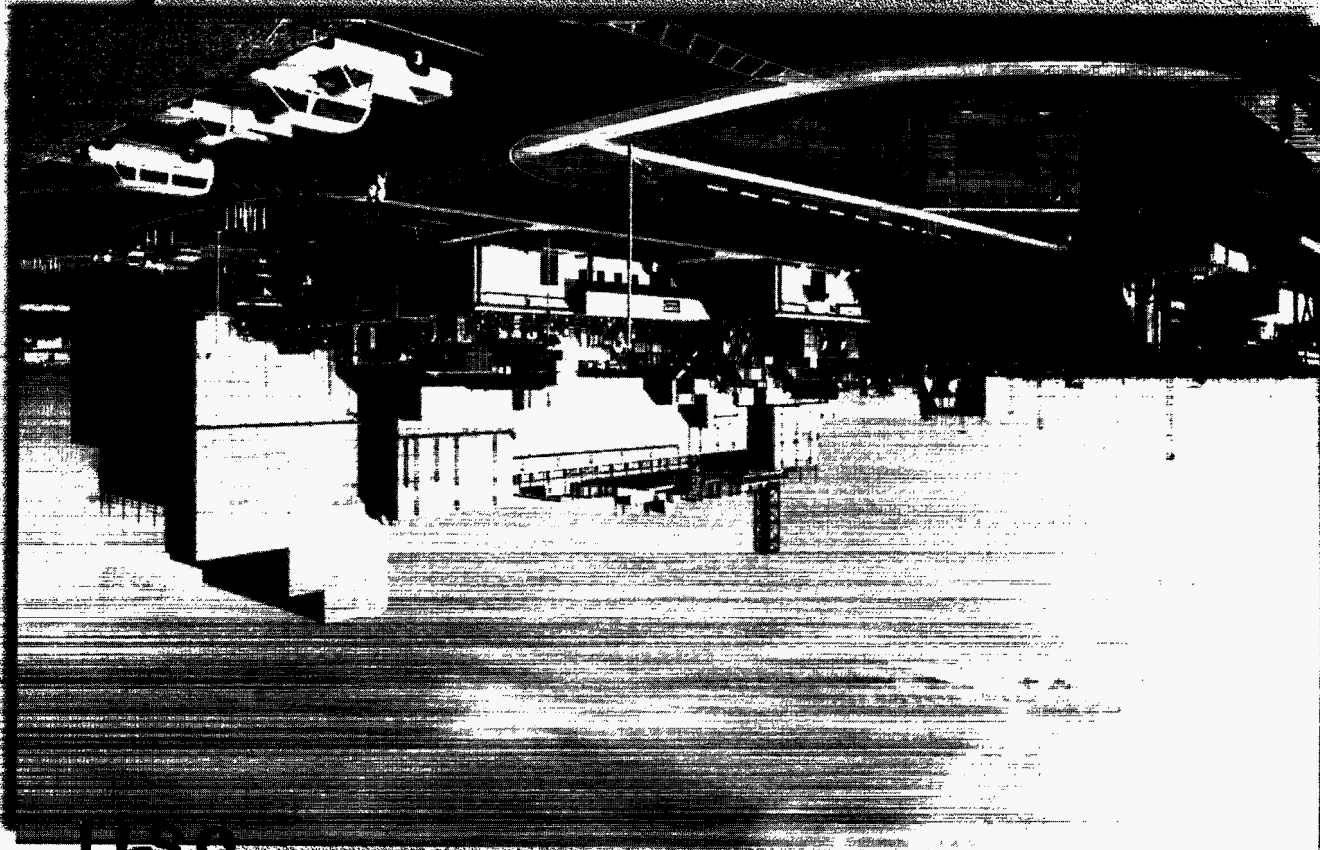


June 1997



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# Waste Management Progress Report



# Forward . . . . .



Department of Energy  
Washington, DC 20585

June 1997

As the Department of Energy's Environmental Management program shifts from one projected to span many decades to one designed to achieve cleanup and complete as much work as possible within the next decade, we are focusing on opportunities for greater productivity and reduced program costs.

The Department's waste management program represents about one quarter of the total environmental management budget. It is responsible for managing safely and efficiently the storage, treatment, and disposal of the Department's stored and newly generated wastes. The program's efforts are directed toward moving more and more waste out of storage and into treatment and disposal.

We are proud to report significant progress in the amount of waste material that has been treated and prepared for disposal in the first half of fiscal year 1997. This progress directly corresponds to the Department's commitments under key agreements. We have continued the treatment of high-level waste at the Defense Waste Processing Facility at the Savannah River Site, where through the end of May we have prepared 142 canisters of vitrified waste, and at the West Valley Demonstration Project, where 100 canisters have been prepared. We have begun treatment of low-level waste at the Effluent Treatment Facility at the Hanford Site; began preparing transuranic waste at the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory for shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant; treated 340 cubic meters of mixed low-level waste at the Toxic Substance Control Act incinerator at the Oak Ridge Reservation; and began treatment operations at the Consolidated Incinerator Facility at the Savannah River Site. In May, we received the Environmental Protection Agency's determination of completeness on our Certification of Compliance Application for the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant.

As we move ahead in accomplishing the goals of the waste management program, we have also, in parallel, completed a Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement which evaluates alternatives for the complex-wide storage, treatment and disposal of our nation's waste. In the months ahead, we will be making decisions, with the input of States, Tribal nations, regulators, and other stakeholders, on a national configuration of storage, treatment and disposal facilities. These decisions will position the program for even greater progress and more cost efficiencies.

Overall, I believe that the waste management program has shown significant progress in the first half of FY 1997. This progress is a key part of Assistant Secretary Alm's accelerated cleanup initiative.

With the help of our stakeholders, Congress, and our sister agencies, we believe we can achieve even greater results in the second half of FY 1997 and the years beyond. Working efficiently... working together... getting the job done!

Mark W. Frei  
Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary  
Office of Waste Management

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# Waste Management Progress Report

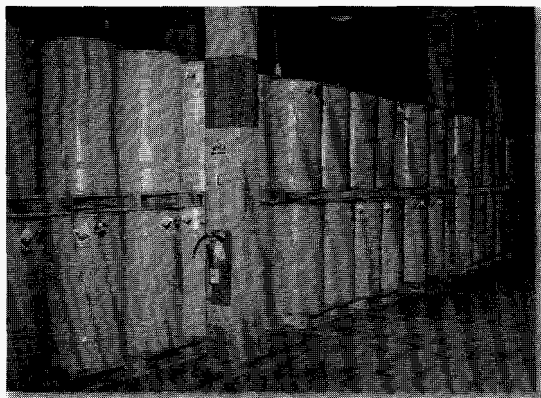
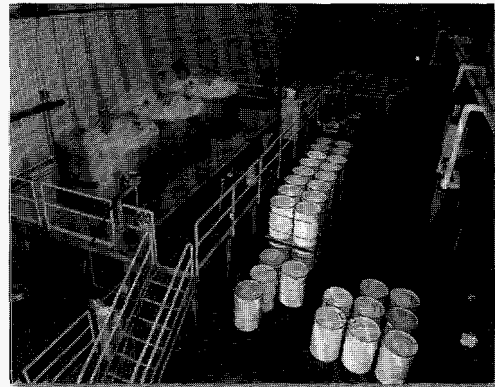
## I. Introduction

### Waste Inventory . . . .

During the Cold War era, when DOE and its predecessor agencies produced nuclear weapons and components, and conducted nuclear research, a variety of wastes were generated (both radioactive and hazardous). DOE now has the task of managing these wastes so that they are not a threat to human health and the environment.

The Waste Management program within DOE manages the following waste types and inventories:

- **High-Level Waste (HLW)** is highly radioactive waste material that resulted from the processing of spent nuclear fuel and irradiated targets in nuclear defense, research, and production activities. This waste is stored largely as a liquid or sludge, with some waste in the form of calcine. High-level waste will be treated (vitrified) and packaged for disposal in a licensed geologic repository. Currently, HLW is stored at the Hanford Site, Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL), Savannah River Site (SRS), and at the West Valley Demonstration Project (WVDP).
- **Transuranic Waste (TRU)** is material produced during research and development, nuclear weapons production, and fuel processing. It contains man-made elements with atomic numbers greater than that of uranium. Most of DOE's transuranic waste is stored at INEEL, Hanford Site, SRS, Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site (RFETS), and the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). Transuranic waste will be disposed of at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).
- **Low-Level Waste (LLW)** is composed of all radioactive waste not classified as high-level waste, transuranic waste, spent nuclear fuel, or natural uranium or thorium byproduct material defined under the Atomic Energy Act, as amended. Low-level waste comes from many sources, is in many different forms, and is present at many DOE sites. Low-level waste is disposed at SRS, Hanford Site, Nevada Test Site (NTS), LANL, INEEL, and the ORR. Some treatment of LLW occurs to reduce the volume needing disposal.



- **Mixed Low-Level Waste (MLLW)** contains both radioactive and hazardous components. Mixed low-level waste is considered separately from other LLW because the presence of Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)-regulated constituents is a major factor in determining how it is managed. It is generated during a broad spectrum of processes and activities. This waste is currently stored at several DOE facilities and is being treated so that the hazardous and radioactive components can be dispositioned in accordance with RCRA and the Atomic Energy Act, respectively.
- **Hazardous Waste (HW)** is non-radioactive waste containing chemical constituents managed under RCRA. It exists in a variety of forms such as laboratory solutions, acids, bases, and degreasing agents. These wastes are managed differently from other waste types because they do not contain a radioactive component and DOE can more easily release them for private sector treatment and disposal. Prior to their release, the wastes are stored and characterized by DOE to comply with RCRA regulations and to verify that they do not contain radioactive material.

### Waste Management Current and Projected Inventories<sup>1</sup>

(Measured in terms of volume, which is cubic meters)

Waste Type	1996	2006
MLLW	59,710	12,465 *
LLW	74,039	33,686 *
TRU	109,000	72,270
HLW	345,270	298,198

<sup>1</sup> The Waste Management program does not include waste generated from the Environmental Restoration program.

\* May include waste from other Environmental Management programs.

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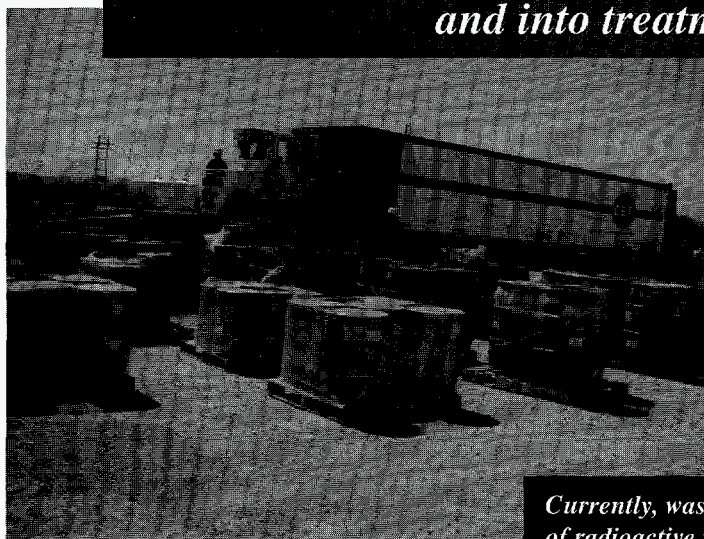


## *. . . . Program Mission*



*The mission of the Office of Waste Management program is to protect people and the environment from the hazards of chemical and radioactive waste by providing an effective and efficient system that minimizes, treats, and stores all of these wastes and disposes most of the wastes as soon as possible. The Waste Management program is responsible for the storage and treatment of high-level waste so that it is in "road ready" condition for disposal.*

*The major focus is to move more waste out of storage and into treatment and disposal.*



*Currently, waste management facilities store and manage about 600,000 cubic meters of radioactive waste and a wide variety of hazardous chemical waste at more than 40 sites nationwide. Of this amount of waste, about 80 percent is also mixed with hazardous chemicals.*

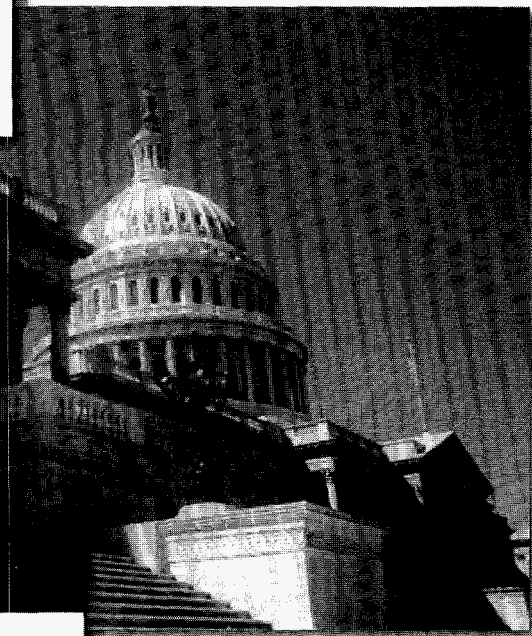
## Key Drivers . . . .

### Major Compliance Agreements

- Hanford Tri-Party Agreement - provides a schedule for site activities to achieve compliance for major waste streams managed at the Hanford Site.
- DOE/Navy/State of Idaho Settlement Agreement - accelerates waste treatment and disposal of TRU waste and MLLW by several years, beginning in 1999, and ending with the offsite shipment of waste by the year 2018; requires initiation of transuranic waste shipments to WIPP by April 1999.
- Compliance Orders and Site Treatment Plans for mixed waste under the Federal Facility Compliance Act of 1992 - provide compliance requirements and milestones for the treatment of mixed waste at a given site.

### Congressional Directives

- Congressional Appropriations for FY97
  - Appropriated more than \$1.5 billion dollars to carry out Waste Management mission activities involving storage, treatment, and disposal of all waste types.
- Defense Authorization Act of 1997
  - Support production at Defense Waste Processing Facility.
  - Provide support to the State of New Mexico for WIPP impact assistance.
  - Prepare INEEL transuranic waste for shipment to WIPP.
  - Develop treatment technologies at the Hanford Site.
- WIPP Land Withdrawal Act of 1992, as amended
  - Begin disposal operations at WIPP no later than November 30, 1997, provided that all applicable laws and regulations have been satisfied.





## Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board Recommendations

### **Recommendation 90-7:**

In 1996, the Waste Management program completed action in response to the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board (DNFSB) Recommendation 90-7 concerning ferrocyanide safety issues related to a few HLW tanks at the Hanford site. This is the first of the five high-priority safety issues at Hanford to be closed and represents a major achievement relative to reduction of urgent risks at the Hanford Site. The DNFSB gave high praise to the scientists and engineers that worked on this program.

### **Recommendation 92-4:**

In 1992, the DNFSB issued Recommendation 92-4, which focused on the Hanford Site's Multi-Function Waste Tank Facility (MWTF), a project to expand high-level waste storage capacity. The recommendation called for improvements in systems engineering, project management, and personnel qualifications. Although the MWTF project was since cancelled, the Waste Management program instituted a site-wide systems engineering program and personnel training and qualification program which is now being applied to the Tank Waste Remediation System. A revised Implementation Plan will be submitted in late FY 1997.

### **Recommendation 93-5:**

In 1993, the DNFSB issued Recommendation 93-5, which called for a reexamination and restructuring of the program to characterize the Hanford high-level waste tanks with the objective of accelerating the rate of sampling of the waste tanks at the Hanford Site. Twenty-two additional HLW tanks will be characterized by the end of this fiscal year. The Board has been notified that certain technical issues associated with flammable gas tanks have jeopardized the 1998 commitment to sample the high priority tanks. Other safety-related issues will cause delay in completing Implementation Plan commitments for 1997. A modification to the Implementation Plan is being developed.

### **Recommendation 94-2:**

In 1994, the DNFSB issued Recommendation 94-2, which concluded that the LLW program was not in step with commercial practices and was in need of vast improvements. Since that time, the Waste Management program and DNFSB have worked cooperatively to achieve an improved, technically-based, and efficient LLW management program. These revised program elements are being incorporated in DOE's revised Radioactive Waste Management Order, which was submitted to the Under Secretary in February and is currently under review by DOE programs.

### **Recommendation 96-1:**

In 1996, the DNFSB issued Recommendation 96-1, which focused on the planned use of the In-Tank Precipitation (ITP) System at the Savannah River Site because of its importance to removal of high-level radioactive waste from storage tanks at the Site, and because certain unique hazards are associated with the ITP process. Generation and release of unexpectedly large amounts of benzene into the process tank's vapor space prompted a shutdown of operations at ITP in December 1995 and the subsequent issuance of Recommendation 96-1. The Department accepted the recommendation on September 16, 1996. The Board accepted the Implementation Plan for Recommendation 96-1 on January 6, 1997. To date all deliverables for Recommendation 96-1 have been completed and transmitted to the Board on or ahead of schedule.



# Waste Management Progress Report

## ***FY96 Waste Management Results . . . .***

**FY 1996 Planned vs. FY 1996 Actual Data**  
**Mixed Low-Level Waste, Low-Level Waste, High-Level Waste**  
*(Volume in Cubic Meters)*

Waste Type	FY 1996 Planned	FY 1996 Actuals
HLW		
Canisters Produced		
DWPF	60	64 *
WVDP	26	26
MLLW		
Treatment	3,500	2,903
LLW		
Treatment	22,000	16,000 **
Disposal	46,000	32,065 ***

\* Exceeding our initial goal of 60 canisters produced was a significant achievement for the Waste Management program given the initial start-up difficulties associated with this first-of-a-kind U.S. facility.

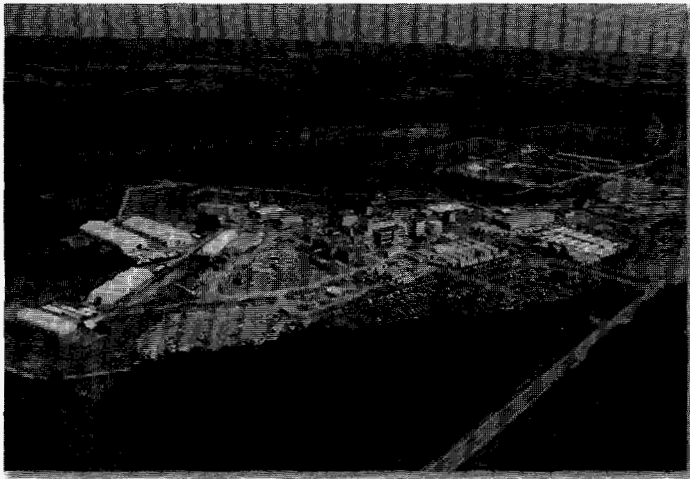
\*\* The volume of LLW treated in FY 1996 was below plan due to shutdown of operations at Savannah River Site's In-Tank Precipitation (ITP) facility in December 1995.

\*\*\* The Saltstone facility was not operating at projected capacity since the ITP facility was shutdown.

## *.... FY97 Performance Commitments*

For FY97, the Secretary of Energy's agreement with the President includes making progress on the treatment, storage, and disposal of radioactive wastes. The Office of Waste Management is measuring its performance on volumes of waste treated and disposed in FY97.

The key performance commitments for FY97 are:

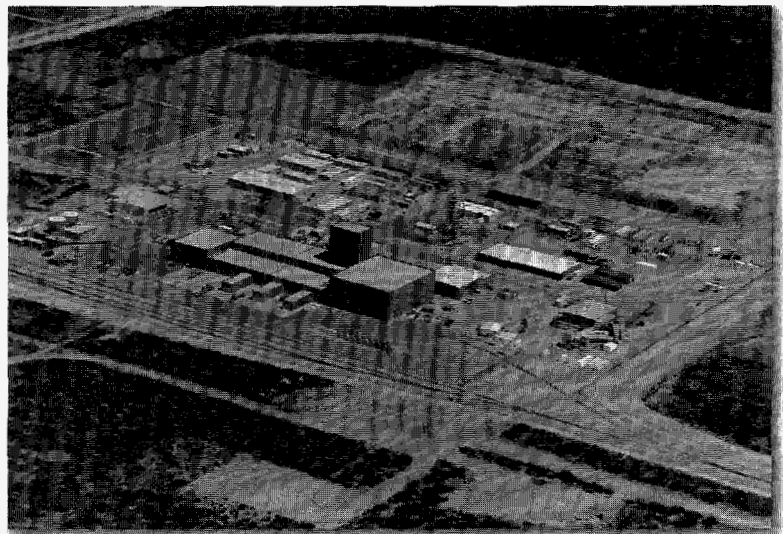


### *Operational*

- Produce 270 canisters of vitrified high-level waste for future repository disposal.
- Treat approximately 6,000 cubic meters of mixed low-level waste.
- Dispose approximately 38,000 cubic meters of low-level waste.

### *Programmatic*

- Issue Final Waste Management Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement by June 1997.
- Issue the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant Disposal Phase Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement by August 1997.
- Issue Records of Decision on treatment, storage, and disposal of transuranic waste by September 1997.



# Waste Management Progress Report

## FY97 Performance Measures . . . .

**Table 1. High-Level Waste Canister Production**

**FY 1997 Secretary's Agreement with the President:**

*Produce 270 canisters of vitrified High-Level Waste for future repository disposal*

FY 1997 Performance Measures	
Defense Waste Processing Facility Savannah River Operations Office	150 canisters
West Valley Demonstration Project Ohio Operations Office	120 canisters
<b>Total</b>	<b>270 canisters</b>

**Table 2. Mixed Low-Level Waste Treatment\***

*(Volume in cubic meters)*

**FY 1997 Secretary's Agreement with the President:**

*Treat approximately 6,000 cubic meters of Mixed Low-Level Waste*

FY 1997 Performance Measures		
Operations Office	Treat	Dispose On-site or Commercial
Albuquerque	121	166
Chicago	310	97
Idaho	199	13
Nevada	288	0
Oakland	1,311	1,248
Oak Ridge	173	141
Ohio	0	0
Richland	9,800	22
Rocky Flats	0	2,430
Savannah River	338	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,540</b>	<b>4,027</b>

**Table 3. Low-Level Waste Disposal\*\***

*(Volume in cubic meters)*

**FY 1997 Secretary's Agreement with the President:**

*Dispose of approximately 38,000 cubic meters of Low-Level Waste*

FY 1997 Performance Measures		
Operations Office	Dispose On-site or Commercial	Shipped to DOE Site for Disposal
Albuquerque	5,500	3,777
Chicago	367	813
Idaho	1,813	19
Nevada	24,166	0
Oakland	317	30
Oak Ridge	16	2,030
Ohio	0	0
Richland	6,951	0
Rocky Flats	0	608
Savannah River	7,862	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>47,119</b>	<b>7,277</b>

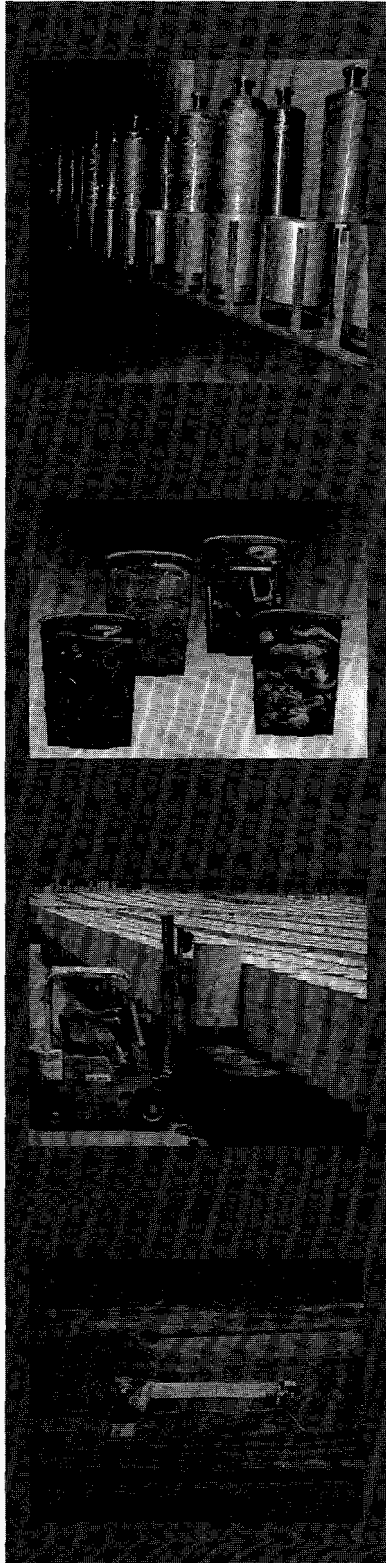
\* 1997 MLLW performance measures modified from FY96 to exclude wastewater.

\*\* Volumes represent off-site shipments to other DOE disposal sites. These volumes are tracked separately to avoid double counting of waste by both off-site generators and disposing sites.

**Note:** FY97 performance measures vary from FY96 due to modified definitions of waste type-specific functions.

## II. Progress Toward Mission Completion

### *... Waste Management Progress At-A-Glance*



#### ***High-Level Waste***

- As of mid-FY97, produced 126 canisters of HLW at the West Valley Demonstration Project and the Defense Waste Processing Facility.
- Initiated the first HLW tank closure in the DOE complex at the Savannah River Site.
- Achieved net reduction of 330,000 gallons of liquid waste in the tank farm at INEEL, meeting the operational goal of the Settlement Agreement 338 days ahead of schedule.
- Executed the contract for the Tank Waste Remediation System project at Hanford which was awarded in September 1996. The privatization initiative includes a demonstration of separation and treatment of up to 13% of the HLW stored in the tanks.

#### ***Transuranic Waste***

- Submitted the Compliance Certification Application for the WIPP to EPA in October 1996 and issued Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for the WIPP Disposal Phase for public comment. The targeted date for beginning disposal operations at WIPP is May 1998.
- Began preparing transuranic waste at the INEEL for shipment to WIPP and funded the State of New Mexico for WIPP impact assistance.
- Awarded a contract for the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment Facility in December 1996. The privatization initiative includes obtaining all necessary permits to design, construct, and operate the facility at INEEL.

#### ***Mixed Low-Level Waste***

- Operating three treatment facilities -- at INEEL, ORR, and SRS.
- Increased the use of commercial facilities for treatment.
- Treated 340 cubic meters of MLLW at the Toxic Substance Control incinerator at ORR.

#### ***Low-Level Waste***

- Continue to dispose of low-level waste at six DOE sites.
- Began treatment at the Effluent Treatment Facility at the Hanford Site.



## *Program Efficiencies . . . .*

As part of the DOE Office of Waste Management's commitment to improve its business framework and reduce support costs, the Waste Management program is taking advantage of opportunities to privatize some of its work, integrate its program activities, re-engineer the process for handling newly generated waste, and implement other program efficiencies. These cost reduction initiatives will allow the Office of Waste Management to perform more mission direct activities while continuing to focus on risk reduction activities.

### **Privatization and Contractor Reform**

At many sites, steps have been taken to transfer functions traditionally performed by DOE management and operating contractors to private companies who will provide the service on a competitive, fixed price basis. Work has already been privatized for some of the projects underway in the Waste Management program. For example, under the Richland Operations Office, mixed low-level waste thermal treatment projects and laundry services have been privatized. Other privatization projects, such as the Hanford Tank Waste Remediation System and the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory's Advance Mixed Waste Treatment Project have been initiated. These and other privatization initiatives are expected to result in a savings of more than \$1 billion over a ten year period as compared to traditional contracting approaches.

### **Complex-Wide Integration**

#### ***Within the Office of Waste Management . . .***

Historically, the Waste Management program has managed wastes on a site-by-site basis. For example, rather than shipping all low-level waste for treatment to one site, each site treated its own waste. Addressing challenges from an integrated, complex-wide perspective will allow the Waste Management program to achieve program efficiencies by integrating the management of similar waste, eliminating redundant facilities and using available capacity, crossing program boundaries, taking advantage of the collective learning curve, applying site successes nationwide, employing innovative technologies, and using national procurements to meet unique needs. By integrating waste management activities, the program could realize significant efficiency savings and avoid life-cycle costs.

A cost study within the Office of Waste Management is underway which focuses on the cost of low-level waste disposal at six waste management disposal sites. This study will benchmark the cost of disposal by comparing sites to each other and developing projected costs for alternative disposal scenarios. The final report will be issued in June 1997. This data will be factored into the Record of Decision on low-level waste disposal based on the Waste Management Programmatic EIS.

#### ***Throughout the Office of Environmental Management . . .***

In July 1996, senior executives of the major Environmental Management site contractor organizations were challenged by Assistant Secretary Alm to look for innovative breakthrough strategies to achieve the vision of maximizing cleanup in a decade. The result of this challenge was formation of a contractor team to independently identify, analyze, and recommend technical integration opportunities which reduce costs and risks, shorten cleanup schedules, and further EM program goals. Using a systems engineering approach, this contractor team identified numerous opportunities, which, if adopted, could result in significant potential cost savings over the life-cycle. Recommendations of the contractor team have been developed independently and must now be carefully evaluated by EM and discussed fully with stakeholders in the months ahead. Some of the recommendations may be in conflict with existing regulatory compliance agreements and commitments. The Department intends to fully honor all of its existing agreement, but that does not preclude further evaluation and discussion of these recommendations. The Office of Waste Management has been tasked by Assistant Secretary Alm to now lead the efforts in the future to make program integration part of EM's corporate business culture.

## Reduction of "Uncosted Balances"

In recent years, DOE's Waste Management program has been working to reduce the amount of funds that are committed to an activity but not actually spent in a given fiscal year. Uncosted balances are carried forward from one year to the next. Understanding these balances is critical to managing our resources and defending our budget to Congress and the Office of Management and Budget. From 1994 to 1996, the uncosted balances have been reduced by over \$500 million in the Waste Management program. We will continue to scrutinize uncosted balances in order to ensure that the end-of-year levels are within the guidelines determined by Environmental Management and the General Accounting Office.

## Waste Management Process Improvements

DOE's Waste Management program is continually seeking ways to enhance its waste management processes to achieve greater performance and cost efficiency. In March 1997, DOE's Los Alamos National Laboratory, along with partners from private industry, completed a "Waste Management Benchmarking" study that identified process improvements expected to save more than \$4 million over the next three years. These improvements are now being implemented.

## Re-Engineering Waste Management

Waste Management's re-engineering effort seeks to return the responsibility for newly generated waste to the generator. By encouraging waste generators to minimize waste generation, future costs to DOE will be reduced. This effort requires transferring the budget for treatment, storage, and disposal of newly generated waste from EM to the appropriate mission program. In January 1997, the Office of Management and Budget agreed to support these transfers at five DOE sites for FY 1998.

FY 2000 is the target year to complete the transition of transferring from EM to the generators accountability and responsibility for newly generated waste management activities.

# Waste Management Progress Report

## III. Mid-FY97 Accomplishments

Actual data on volumes of waste treated and disposed as of mid FY 1997 were not available for this Report but will be presented in the next Waste Management Progress Report scheduled for issuance following the end of FY 1997. Nevertheless, the Waste Management program achieved the following key accomplishments during the first half of FY 1997.

### Richland Operations Office

- Began operation of the Waste Receiving and Processing Facility, meeting both Tri-Party Agreement and Project Hanford Management milestones.
- Began treatment of low-level waste at the Effluent Treatment Facility at the Hanford Site.
- Issued the Record of Decision on the final Tank Waste Remediation System Environmental Impact Statement in February 1997.
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission Memorandum of Agreement for the Tank Waste Remediation System Privatization was signed in January, 1997 by both DOE and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

### Oakland Operations Office

- The Federal Facilities Compliance Act Compliance Order for the Site Treatment Plan for Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory was signed in February 1997.

### Nevada Operations Office

- Issued the Nevada Test Site Record of Decision for the Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement in December 1996.

### Albuquerque Operations Office

- Completed the Pantex Site-Wide Environmental Impact Statement
- Initiated the retrieval of TRU waste at LANL to support preparation for shipment to WIPP in FY 98.

### Carlsbad Area Office

- Submitted the WIPP Compliance Certification Application to EPA in October 1996. EPA's certification is needed to begin transuranic waste disposal operations. (In May, 1997 EPA issued its completeness determination on the Application.)
- Designed and fabricated two full-scale prototypes of a new container called "halfpacks" to complement the existing Transuranic Package Transporter (TRUPACT II) used for shipping DOE's contact-handled transuranic waste to the WIPP.
- Completed the Disposal Operations Final Safety Analysis Report for the WIPP facility.

## Idaho Operations Office

- Awarded a \$1.18 billion contract for the Advanced Mixed Waste Treatment facility for treatment of transuranic and mixed low-level wastes at the INEEL.
- Achieved a net reduction of 330,000 gallons of liquid waste in the tank farm at the Idaho Chemical Processing Plant by operating the High Level Liquid Waste Evaporator at INEEL, achieving the operational goal of the Settlement Agreement 338 days ahead of schedule.

## Chicago Operations Office

- Completed two waste management construction projects: upgrade of the Laboratory Wastewater Treatment Plant at Argonne National Laboratory-East and completed construction of a Waste Management Facility project at Brookhaven National Laboratory.

## West Valley Demonstration Project

- Produced 62 canisters of solidified liquid high-level waste at the West Valley Demonstration Project.
- Completed the first off-site shipment of low-level radioactive waste in February 1997.

## Savannah River Operations Office

- Produced 64 canisters of vitrified high-level waste at the DWPF.
- Initiated the first high-level waste tank closure in the DOE complex at SRS.
- Began treatment operations at the Consolidated Incinerator Facility in April 1997.

## Oak Ridge Operations Office

- Treated 340 cubic meters of mixed low-level waste at the TSCA incinerator at the K-25 facility.
- Fabricated the first three Recycled Shielded Storage Containers at ORNL and shipped the containers to INEEL for use in storing remote-handled transuranic waste currently being stored in Intermediate Level Transuranic Storage facility vaults.
- Issued Invitation for Bid for Oak Ridge TRU Treatment and Disposal Privatization Project.
- Issued Request for Proposal for the National Broad Spectrum Treatment Privatization Project.

## Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Center

- Shipped about 1,000 cubic meters of low-level waste and mixed low-level waste offsite for disposal.
- Initiated TRU waste certification to meet WIPP Waste Acceptance Criteria.
- Completed construction modifications to Building 440 for additional LLW and TRU storage capacity.
- Submitted final Site Treatment Plan rebaseline to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for approval.



## **IV. Future Outlook**

**DOE's Waste Management Program will continue efforts to reduce risks, reduce fixed costs, meet regulatory commitments, and work collaboratively with regulators and stakeholders.**

**The focus will continue to be moving more waste from storage into treatment and disposal particularly through the next ten years, and seeking a more integrated system of treatment, storage, and disposal resulting in cost efficiencies that can be applied to accelerating cleanup and site closures across the EM complex.**

**The next report will provide actual, year-end FY97 performance data and key performance objectives for FY98.**