

**GAO**

Resources, Community, and Economic  
Development Division

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August 1998

**Energy, Resources, and  
Science Issue Area**

**Active Assignments**

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# Foreword

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This report was prepared primarily to inform Congressional members and key staff of ongoing assignments in the General Accounting Office's Energy, Resources, and Science issue area. This report contains assignments that were ongoing as of August 17, 1998, and presents a brief background statement and a list of key questions to be answered on each assignment. The report will be issued quarterly.

This report was compiled from information available in GAO's internal management information systems. Because the information was downloaded from computerized data bases intended for internal use, some information may appear in abbreviated form.

If you have questions or would like additional information about assignments listed, please contact Victor Rezendes, Director, on (202) 512-3841; Barry Hill, Associate Director, on (202) 512-9775; Gary Jones, Associate Director, on (202) 512-3464; or Susan Kladiva, Associate Director, on (202) 512-7106.

The first part of the report deals with the general situation in the country. It is noted that the economy is still in a state of depression and that the government is facing a serious financial crisis. The report also mentions the political situation and the role of the military.

The second part of the report discusses the social conditions in the country. It is noted that the population is suffering from poverty and unemployment. The report also mentions the role of the church and the government in providing social services.

The third part of the report discusses the foreign relations of the country. It is noted that the country is in a state of isolation and that it is facing a serious international crisis. The report also mentions the role of the United States and the Soviet Union in the crisis.

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**ROLES AND MISSIONS**

**TITLE: IMPACTS OF INCLUDING PROPANE AS AN ALTERNATIVE FUEL UNDER EPACT ON EXISTING PROPANE CONSUMERS (141153)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Energy Policy Act of 1992 (EPACT) includes propane as an alternative fuel for transportation purposes. Some existing propane consumers have expressed concern that if the federal alternative fuel program is expanded, the demand for propane may increase, resulting in inadequate domestic supply, higher propane prices, and have an adverse impact on existing propane consumers. **Q:** Will including propane as an alternative fuel under EPACT impact existing propane consumers as well as supplies and prices?

**TITLE: REGIONAL EFFECTS OF PMA DIVESTITURE (141155)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Southeastern, Southwestern, and Western Area Power Marketing Administrations (PMA) sell wholesale power to utilities that, in most cases, resell the power to their retail customers. Many of these utilities, known as "preference customers," are smaller, serve rural or less densely populated areas, and purchase PMA power at below-market rates. Some PMA proponents are concerned that PMA customers may see large rate increases if the PMAs were divested. The key questions are: (1) how would preference customers' rates change, by state, if they paid market rates for all their power?, and (2) what are the demographics of the areas these customers serve?

**TITLE: ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF UNBUNDLED GAS SERVICES FOR SMALL CONSUMERS (141182)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Several states have introduced natural gas supply "unbundling" for small volume customers (residential and small commercial customers). Unbundling gives natural gas customers a choice of gas providers, and, in some instances, related services such as billing and metering. These programs mark a significant change from traditional regulation in which local distribution companies (LDCs) purchased gas supplies and provided related services for local gas customers. Proponents of unbundling believe that allowing customers service choices will increase competition and lower prices, without harming the reliability of service. (1) What are the initial experiences of competition in retail gas markets? (2) How have these initiatives affected small customers?

**MANAGEMENT PRACTICES**

**TITLE: MINERALS MANAGEMENT SERVICE'S PROPOSED OIL VALUATION REGULATIONS AND ROYALTY-IN-KIND INITIATIVES (141168)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Department of the Interior's Minerals Management Service (MMS) collects royalties--i.e., a share of production--from federal oil and gas leases. Believing that current rules allow industry to undervalue federal oil, MMS has proposed new valuation rules; in response, industry has proposed requiring MMS to take royalties in-kind (i.e., take oil and then sell it) rather than in-value. (1) What evidence did MMS use to justify the need for new oil valuation regulations? (2) Has MMS considered industry's and states' concerns in developing the new oil valuation regulations, and if so, how? (3) What do existing studies, pilot tests, and programs conclude about the administrative and economic feasibility of MMS taking royalties in-kind (RIK)?

## ***Energy, Resources, and Science***

**TITLE: DEFERRED MAINTENANCE OF FEDERAL HYDROELECTRIC POWER PLANTS (141194)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** It is important that federal hydroelectric plants generate power reliably, because revenues earned from the sale of power are scheduled to repay billions of dollars of federal investment in power-related assets. Q1. Do the Bureau of Reclamation's and the Corps of Engineers' plants perform at different levels (as measured by availability and outage factors) than nonfederal ones, and if so, why? Q2. How do these agencies, as contrasted with nonfederal utilities, identify and plan for maintenance/repair of their hydropower plants? Q3. How much money do they estimate will be needed over the next 10 years to maintain/repair their plants? Q4. How does the reliability of federal power affect its marketability as well as the government's ability to repay its investment in hydropower assets?

**TITLE: CONTROLS OVER PROPERTY PURCHASED UNDER NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION GRANTS (141197)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The National Science Foundation (NSF) requested \$3.8 billion from Congress for fiscal year 1999. Of the \$3.8 billion, NSF requested \$735 million for research facilities including the construction of facilities and the operations and maintenance of the facilities. Additionally, NSF requested \$224 million to support 175 research centers operated primarily by universities. Some part of this \$224 million will be used for research equipment. (1) What is the value of the property and equipment funded through NSF grants, and (2) what controls does NSF have over this inventory?

**TITLE: CHANGES IN INDIRECT EXPENDITURES CHARGED TO FIVE FOREST SERVICE FUNDS (141208)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Work in Phase 1 of this request revealed that while indirect expenditures charged to five Forest Service funds have fluctuated widely over the past 5 years they have also increased significantly. Due to the concern that failure to control these costs is one reason that the timber program has lost money in recent years, we have been requested to continue with our efforts and answer the following: (Q1) what factors have caused indirect expenditures to fluctuate? (Q2) what actions have the Forest Service and others taken to reduce indirect expenditures? and (Q3) what potential measures can be taken to lessen the impact of the factors that cause indirect expenditures to fluctuate?

**TITLE: SUMMARY REVIEW OF THE CHANGES NEEDED TO DOE'S TRAINING PROGRAM (141214)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Department of Energy (DOE) spends more than \$400 million annually training federal and contractor employees. In a 1995 Departmental review, DOE recognized there were problems associated with its training. DOE noted, for instance, there was duplication and waste associated with the development and delivery of training for both federal and contractor employees. In addition, current contracts provide no incentive for contractor efficiency in training. DOE's plans to correct such training problems have not proven successful. Q(1) What DOE changes could be made to improve its training program in the short term? Q(2) What DOE changes could be made to improve its training program in the long term?



**TITLE: EFFECTIVENESS OF DOE'S EFFORTS TO IDENTIFY AND SURPLUS EXCESS PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT (141221)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** For fiscal year 1997, the Department of Energy (DOE) reported that it held \$20.8 billion in personal and real property. DOE also noted in its Federal Managers' Financial Integrity Act Report that an extensive amount of this property is no longer necessary. Furthermore, the report notes that the Department needs to verify property requirements and assess disposition options to combat the Department's increasing custodial liability. (1) What criteria does DOE use to facilitate the identification and disposal of surplus property? (2) Do DOE's property records reflect what is no longer needed to carry out its mission? (3) What does DOE perceive as challenges to identifying excess property and what innovative approaches are being used to dispose of this excess property?

**TITLE: HRA:14 STATUS OF DOE'S EFFORTS TO REFORM ITS CONTRACTING PROCESSES AND PRACTICES (141227)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Department of Energy (DOE) spends over \$15 billion through contracts. DOE's contracting practices and problems stem from the time of the Manhattan Project's development of the atomic bomb which involved special contracting arrangements, such as least interference in the contractor's work and indemnification of the contractor's liability. Although several Secretaries of Energy have instituted various reforms, it was not until 1994 that DOE laid out a comprehensive reform effort. While DOE has made progress, several recent reports identified some significant problems that continue. (1) What is the status of the various contract reforms that DOE has undertaken since 1994? (2) How effective have these reforms been in producing fundamental improvements in DOE's practices?

**NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ENERGY**

**TITLE: EFFECTIVENESS OF EM SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PROGRAMS (141094)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Since 1989, DOE's Office of Environmental Management (EM) has spent about \$2 billion on its Office of Science and Technology's (OST) program to develop new technologies. Dissatisfaction with EM's performance was the focus of Congressional hearings and led to this request for this review. (Q1) To what extent have EM-developed innovative cleanup technologies been deployed at DOE sites, and how does this deployment rate compare to other government organization that develop environmental technologies? (Q2) What obstacles exist to deploying innovative technologies? (Q3) What is EM doing to overcome obstacles to deploying innovative technologies? (Q4) What changes in EM processes or organizational structure should be made to increase the deployment of innovative technologies?

**TITLE: FINANCIAL ASSURANCE OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANT DECOMMISSIONING FUNDS IN AN ERA OF ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY RESTRUCTURING (141109)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Nuclear power plants must be "decommissioned" upon retirement. Limited experience shows that decommissioning costs may be higher than fund reserves required by NRC. Moreover, emerging competition in the retail electricity market may make high-cost nuclear plants uneconomical, resulting in some early plant retirements before adequate decommissioning funds have been accumulated. This assignment will address whether (Q1) estimated costs to decommission nuclear plants are reasonable and (Q2) NRC, in view of uncertainties such as possible early retirement of plants, is requiring owners of nuclear plants to reserve sufficient funds to pay decommissioning costs?

**TITLE: COSTS AND SCHEDULES FOR PIT PRODUCTION AT LOS ALAMOS TA-55 (141111)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Department of Energy's (DOE) Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program is responsible for providing the nation with nuclear-weapons and ensuring that those weapons remain safe and reliable. This is in response to direction from the President and Congress. An integral part of the program will be the production of plutonium pits to be used for the nuclear stockpile. The pits will be produced at the TA-55 facility at the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). We have been asked to examine DOE's plans for the TA-55 facility. Specifically, (1) What are the plans, costs (from FY 1996 forward), and schedules for pit manufacturing at LANL? and (2) Will the Department of Defense's stockpile requirements/needs be met by DOE's production plans?

**TITLE: DOE'S INITIATIVES FOR PROLIFERATION PREVENTION IN THE NEWLY INDEPENDENT STATES (141152)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** In 1994, DOE established the Initiatives for Proliferation Prevention (IPP) program. The program is designed to primarily engage Russian nuclear weapon scientists in peaceful applications of technology that are expected to lead to commercial benefits for both the United States and Russia. IPP is part of the U.S. Government's strategy to minimize the threat of nuclear weapons getting into the hands of terrorist organizations or hostile nations by employing Russian nuclear weapons scientists. Q1 What is the purpose and scope of the IPP program? Q2 What are the financial costs of the IPP program for fiscal years 1994-1998? Q3 What is the status of IPP projects and how are they being monitored? Q4 How is the program meeting its nonproliferation and commercialization objectives?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF DOE'S ABILITY TO CLOSE ROCKY FLATS ENVIRONMENTAL TECHNOLOGY SITE BY 2006 (141188)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** DOE is attempting to accelerate Rocky Flats closure from 2010 to 2006, at a projected \$1.3 billion savings. Rocky Flats is trying to achieve the 2006 closure goal, but cautions it is contingent upon DOE's ability to overcome a number of barriers. Because of these barriers, DOE's ability to close Rocky Flats by 2006 is questionable. (Q1) What will the status of the site be upon closure? (Q2) What major projects must be completed, how are they to be accelerated, and are there actual/potential slippages? (Q3) What on-site, complex-wide, and extra-departmental factors may impact closure? (Q4) What are the major stakeholders' views on accelerated closure of Rocky Flats? (Q5) What are the potential cost/savings implications of accelerated closure and possible slippages?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S (DOE'S) MANAGEMENT OF THE IN TANK PRECIPITATION (ITP) FACILITY (141189)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** DOE is responsible for managing the cleanup of the nuclear waste legacy created by nuclear weapons materials production. The In Tank Precipitation (ITP) facility was planned to be a principal component of the cleanup effort. However, in January 1998, after 15 years and over \$500 million, DOE acknowledged that the ITP will not properly function, due to significant safety problems (unsafe levels of flammable benzene gas and leaking waste tanks). (Q1) Why did it take so long to decide that ITP would not work? (Q2) What was DOE's oversight role during ITP's development? (Q3) How much has ITP cost? (Q4) How was the contractor's award fee affected? (Q5) How will Savannah River Site's high level waste activities be affected? (Q6) What are DOE plans for developing an ITP replacement?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF DEPT OF ENERGY'S ACCELERATED STRATEGIC COMPUTING INITIATIVE (141213)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Accelerated Strategic Computing Initiative program, a key part of DOE's Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program, is designed to produce high-speed computers (including software) to simulate nuclear weapon performance. The program's goal is a computer that is at least 100 times faster than existing machines (1 teraflop) by 2004. The total cost is estimated to exceed \$4 billion. (1) what is the status of the program in meeting its key milestones? (2) is hardware and software development and performance to date adequate? (3) is the program within its projected budget? (4) what are the most significant technical risks facing the program?

**TITLE: HRA:14 DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S PRIVATIZATION OF HANFORD'S TANK WASTE REMEDIATION PROGRAM (141217)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** In 1996, DOE selected a fixed-price contracting approach to treat 54 million gallons of high-level nuclear waste stored in 177 underground tanks at its Hanford, Washington site. DOE soon expects to award a long-term contract to a single contractor to process the waste. Because of continuing technological and management uncertainties and the high cost of this project, GAO has been asked to review (1) causes for any changes in the project cost and schedule; (2) DOE's oversight responsibilities and how DOE intends to carry these out; (3) DOE's responsibilities to support contractor operations and barriers to achieving these; and, (4) any changes in DOE's strategy from its original privatization concept.

**TITLE: HOW WILL SUCH NRC INITIATIVES AS RISK-INFORMED REGULATION, RULEMAKING FOR 50.59, AND INTEGRATED REVIEW PROCESS FOR NUCLEAR REACTORS AFFECT SAFETY PLANT OPERATIONS? (141218)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has a number of initiatives underway that could result in a less restrictive regulatory environment than has existed in the past. For example, NRC recently required utilities to certify that plants meet their licensed design basis, is moving toward more risk-informed regulation, and proposes to allow utilities to make changes to the plants without NRC review and approval (10 CFR 50.59). (1) Did utilities certify the design basis of operating plants? (2) Does NRC consider risk when regulating power plants? (3) What impact will (1) and (2) as well as the 10 CFR 50.59 rulemaking, assessment process for reactors, final safety analysis report requirements, and enforcement policy revisions have on safe plant operations?

**NATURAL RESOURCES**

**TITLE: ASSESSMENT OF FOREST HEALTH PROBLEMS AND INITIATIVES (141070)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** There is growing congressional and scientific concern that national forests administered by the Forest Service in the interior West have widespread, serious problems of disease, mortality, and resulting catastrophic fire hazard threatening the sustainability of all forest resources. There is also much controversy over adequacy and possible effects on other resources of actions to address these problems. We agreed to examine (1) what is known about the extent and seriousness of forest health problems on national forests in the interior West, (2) how different forests have responded to these problems, (3) what factors influence forests' responses and how, and (4) options which might improve effectiveness and efficiency of forests' responses.

**TITLE: IMPACTS AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FOREST SERVICE BUDGET REFORMS (141072)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Forest Service (FS) has been criticized for inadequate planning, inventory, and monitoring data used to support its decision-making. In FY 95, Congress created a budget line item for Ecosystem Planning, Inventory and Monitoring (EPIM) and made other budget reforms to provide greater flexibility in funding. FS requested these changes to better support its decision-making. In exchange, Congress required greater accountability for how funds are spent. Congress is now concerned that neither objective is being achieved. (1) Why were several budget line items consolidated? (2) How have reprogramming guidelines changed? (3) What controls are over how funds are allocated and spent? (4) How do they relate to GPRA requirements? (5) How have the budget reforms been implemented?

**TITLE: ECOREGIONAL ASSESSMENT AND FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT DECISION-MAKING (141095)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Many of the social and ecological issues facing federal land managers encompass large regions which include federal, other government, and privately owned land. Ecoregional assessments have been proposed to better address these issues. We have been asked to examine two of these: the President's Northwest Forest Plan (being implemented) and the Columbia Basin Project (being planned). (1) What is the cost to date to the federal government to develop and implement the assessments? (2) To what extent have the President's Plan objectives been implemented and how is this being measured? (3) What problems have been encountered implementing the plan? (4) What are likely problems to be faced during implementation of the Columbia Basin Project? (5) How will project implementation be monitored?

**TITLE: ISSUES RELATED TO MUNICIPAL WATERSHEDS IN WESTERN OREGON (141096)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** During February 1996, western Oregon experienced severe flooding. Forest management activities on federal and nonfederal lands may have exacerbated the floods because some activities, such as roads and timber harvests, can reduce a watershed's ability to absorb water, leading to floods and reduced water quality. This is a problem in watersheds that provide municipal drinking water. (1) What factors impact water quality and quantity in the Pacific Northwest? (2) What effect do timber management practices, both past and present, have on water quality and quantity? (3) How do federal land managers and municipal decision makers interact in regard to management activities on public lands?

**TITLE: FEDERAL COMPENSATION TO COUNTIES BY THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND FOREST SERVICE (141117)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Congress enacted numerous statutes to provide compensation to counties for the tax-exempt status of federal lands and this compensation totals hundreds of millions of dollars annually. We have been asked to provide information on the federal compensation to the counties in California, Oregon, and Washington. Specifically, we will provide information on: (1) What is the process and methodology used by Interior and Forest Service to compensate counties? (2) What is the process and methodology used by California, Oregon, and Washington to allocate the federal moneys to the counties? (3) How much were California, Oregon, and Washington counties entitled to under the federal programs for fiscal years 1995-97 compared to what they received from their respective states?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF THE RECREATION FEE DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM IN FOUR LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCIES (141128)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** In 1996 Congress authorized four land management agencies (the National Park Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management in the Department of Interior, and the Forest Service in the Department of Agriculture) to begin a fee demonstration program in which agencies could initiate or raise fees at recreation areas and keep the additional revenues generated for use in the area. Q1: How have each of the four agencies implemented its new fee authority? Q2: What additional revenues were generated and what costs were incurred? Q3: How has each agency used or planned to use the additional revenues? Q4: Have the increased fees significantly affected the visitation to the areas involved?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF FEDERAL/STATE TRUSTEE COUNCIL'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE EXXON VALDEZ \$900 MILLION OIL SPILL SETTLEMENT (141149)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** In 1991, Exxon agreed to pay the U.S. and Alaska \$900 million in settlement for damage caused by the Exxon Valdez oil spill. A federal and state Trustee Council was established to administer the distribution of the settlement payments received to restore and replace injured resources. Q1 How much has Exxon paid through September 1997 and to whom were these funds dispersed? Q2 Has the Trustee Council funded activities that may not be consistent with the MOA and its implementing policies? Q3 How do the prices paid for land acquisitions to replace damaged habitat compare with government land appraisals? Q4 Is the public process for habitat acquisition similar to the process for other types of restoration projects? Q5 Are trust funds invested in a way to maximize returns?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF THE CONDITION OF NATIONAL PARK SERVICE LODGING (141179)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Concerned about the cleanliness and maintenance of lodging by the National Park Service (NPS), we were requested to address the following questions: (1) What common standards does the industry use to maintain the condition of hotels and motel rooms?, (2) Do lodging facilities in various national parks meet these standards?, and (3) Determine what, if any, standards the NPS, or individual parks, have for their lodges and how they are applied?

**TITLE: ADEQUACY OF RECREATION FUNDING FOR THE SAWTOOTH NATIONAL RECREATION AREA (141207)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Congress created the Sawtooth National Recreation Area to protect fish and wildlife, and other resources and to enhance recreational values. The surrounding communities depend on the economic activity generated by the area's one million visitors. Concerns have been raised over the adequacy of recreational funding (Q1) funds allocated to the recreation area during fiscal years 1993-97 and the justification for changes; (Q2) area funds not allocated or taken back from the area and what was done with the unallocated funds; (Q3) funds spent to enhance recreation, to preserve conservation values, and on commodities, and what was accomplished; and (Q4) provide examples of potentially adverse effects on individuals, companies, and communities economically dependent on the area.

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## Energy, Resources, and Science

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**TITLE: EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT USE OF FLOOD RECOVERY APPROPRIATIONS AT YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK (141216)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** In early 1997, devastating flooding occurred at Yosemite National Park. As a result of this disaster, the Congress passed Public Law 105-18 to provide \$187 million in emergency supplemental appropriations, the majority of which was for Yosemite. We were asked to examine several allegations made regarding the appropriate use of the appropriated funds. Q1. Are the actual and planned expenditures consistent with planning documents guiding the development of the park such as the general management plan? Q2. Do the costs of the various disaster recovery projects at the park appear reasonable?

**TITLE: IDENTIFICATION AND ESTIMATION OF THE BENEFITS TO BE DERIVED FROM THE PROPOSED LEWIS & CLARK RURAL WATER SYSTEM (141230)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Lewis and Clark project sponsors are requesting a non repayable Federal grant to cover 80% of the cost of planning and constructing a \$283 million water supply system to provide a supplemental supply of drinking water to 22 communities in three states. A traditional benefit study has not been performed. Instead, a willingness and ability to pay study was conducted. Question 1: What are the direct benefits for non federal beneficiaries - a) who benefits from the project and b) what is the nature of the benefits? Question 2: how do water experts consider and weigh these benefits relative to one another when they are evaluating water projects?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF INDIAN CONTRACT SUPPORT COSTS FOR BIA AND IHS (141235)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** There is a growing funding shortfall for contract support costs for Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Service programs administered by Indian tribes under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. For FY1999, the projected shortfalls are \$13 million and \$131 million for BIA and IHS, respectively. (1) What are the current methods for calculating contract support costs for Indian contracts/compacts for BIA and IHS programs? (2) Over the past decade, what changes have occurred in the amount of contract support cost funds needed and why? (3) What are the estimates of future contract support cost funding needs under existing calculation methods? (4) What have been the impact of shortfalls in contract support cost funding on Indian tribes?

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**TITLE: REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF LABORATORY MANAGEMENT AND REGULATION (141136)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Studies completed by various blue ribbon panels have found that DOE laboratories are not managed as effectively as possible and have made recommendations for improvement. The research questions are: (1) What specific recommendations have been made by past and current advisory groups to address DOE laboratory management weaknesses? (2) How have DOE and the laboratories responded to these recommendations, including recommendations not accepted? (3) What are the views of experts as to the adequacy of DOE's responses, including reasons some recommendations were not accepted? (4) What are our observations on the progress of DOE in implementing the recommendations and any additional actions that may be needed?

**TITLE: ANALYSIS OF SPENDING FOR INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENTS (141173)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The U.S. government funded 805 international science and technology (S&T) agreements with 78 countries in fiscal year (FY) 1995, through 13 federal agencies. The agreements are important to American foreign policy and diplomacy, provide access to U.S. R&D programs, and jointly address global problems. Q1. How many international S&T agreements did federal agencies participate in and/or fund during FY 1997 and what were the purposes of these agreements? Q2. How much money did agencies spend during FY 1997 for activities that directly and indirectly supported international S&T agreements? Q3. What are the responsibilities of the Departments of State and Commerce, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the U.S. Trade Representative for activities pertinent to S&T agreements?

**TITLE: NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES: OPENNESS AND INTEGRITY OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS (141178)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The National Academy of Sciences (NAS), a private, nonprofit institution, provides advice on science, technology & medicine to the federal government and others. From July 1996-June 1997, NAS issued more than 340 studies with federal revenue of over \$144 million. These studies often result in congressional action, federal policy changes or have other influences on public policy. Legislation was signed in December 1997 exempting NAS from government control under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). This raised questions about the openness of the NAS advisory process. (Q1) What are the processes by which the NAS provides advice to federal agencies and Congress? (Q2) How is NAS implementing the recently passed amendment to FACA (PL 105-153)?

**TITLE: FEDERAL TECHNOLOGY LICENSING UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER 12591 AND THE BAYH-DOLE ACT (141200)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Bayh-Dole Act of 1980 allows universities, other nonprofit institutions and small businesses to retain title to and commercialize inventions they create under federally-funded research projects. Executive Order 12591, issued in 1987, extended the same basic benefits to larger, for-profit corporations. Q1: How do federal agencies ensure that corporations are complying with the provisions of EO 12591 regarding inventions created under federally-funded projects? Q2: How are federal agencies exercising their rights to and using their royalty-free licenses available under the provisions of the Bayh-Dole Act and EO 12591?

**TITLE: SMALL BUSINESS INNOVATION RESEARCH (SBIR) PROGRAM REVIEW (141228)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Program, up for reauthorization in 1999, has made 43,000 awards worth \$7.5 billion. The Technology Transfer (STTR) Program is much smaller. Q1: What is the total number of SBIR (and, if data are available, STTR) awards to companies (including new entrants, long-term participants, and graduates), their geographic locations, and the dollar value of their awards? Q2: Is funding for administrative support sufficient to conduct outreach and other basic program activities? Q3: How effective are agency efforts to monitor commercialization of SBIR awards?

**OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS**

**TITLE: REVIEW OF THE FOREST SERVICE'S DISTRIBUTION OF TIMBER SALE RECEIPTS FOR FISCAL YEARS 1995-97 (141176)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Forest Service annually receives about \$650 million in timber sale receipts. By law, the receipts are distributed to specific Forest Service funds and accounts and any remaining receipts are transferred to the Treasury's General Fund. In light of concerns about the Forest Service's financial accountability, we were asked to update information in our September 1995 report on the distribution of timber receipts. (1) What was the amount of the Forest Service's timber sale receipts for fiscal years 1995 through 1997, the outlays associated with those receipts, and the amount of those receipts distributed into specific Forest Service funds or accounts? (2) What amounts were transferred to the General Fund of the Treasury for fiscal years 1995 through 1997?

**TITLE: MANAGMENT ISSUES INVOLVING THE CHERNOBYL CANCER STUDIES (141219)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Department of Energy (DOE) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) are funding studies on the health effects of ionizing radiation in the U.S. and as a result of the 1986 Chernobyl accident in the former Soviet Union. The studies are being conducted by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). Poor management of these studies may lead to delays in performing the research and reporting its results that could have a significant impact on the treatment of exposed persons. Q1. What policies and procedures govern the release of information on the effects of radiation on humans? Q2. What funding has been provided for these studies by each of the agencies listed above and what is the status of these funds?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF BIA'S METHOD OF APPRAISING THE RENTAL VALUE OF INDIAN LANDS (141220)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Bureau of Indian Affairs manages about 55 million acres of land owned by Indian tribes and individuals. As of 1996, about 23 percent of the Indian land was leased for such uses as agriculture, grazing, and businesses. BIA is responsible for assuring that Indian landowners receive a fair rental value from their land. (1) To what extent does BIA's valuation of Indian lands for rent hinder their leasing? (2) What appraisal method does BIA use, and has it tried to improve that method? (3) How does BIA's method compare to that used by private and other federal appraisers? (4) What do lessees of Indian lands think are impediments to leasing those lands? (5) What alternatives exist for appraising Indian lands, and what possible legal or regulatory changes would be needed to adopt them?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF THE TRAVEL COSTS INCURRED BY CONTRACTORS OPERATING DOE FACILITIES (141222)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The contractors operating DOE's facilities spend about \$250 million annually on travel costs. Opportunities for reducing these costs may exist because the contractors' travel rates are generally higher than federal travel rates. Further, the amount and purpose of the contractors' travel may be a concern. (Q1) What is the extent of travel--in terms of cost and number of trips--incurred by DOE contractors in FY 1996 and 1997; (Q2) To where and for what reasons do contractor staff travel, and what travel and per diem rates are allowed; (Q3) What efforts are undertaken to minimize costs; and (Q4) How many contractor employees from DOE field facilities work in Washington, D.C. and at what cost.



**TITLE: REVIEW OF EFFECTS OF LIFTING BAN ON EXPORTING ALASKAN NORTH SLOPE OIL (141229)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** Over 1 million barrels per day of crude oil are produced on Alaska's North Slope and transported over the 800-mile Trans-Alaska Pipeline for shipment to various domestic (West Coast and Hawaii) and international destinations. The Export Administration Act of 1979 banned export of this oil. In 1995, the Congress lifted the ban, allowing North Slope oil to be exported. (1) To what extent, if any, has oil production in Alaska and California changed as a result of lifting the export ban. (2) What are the effects of lifting the ban on refiners, the shipping industry (i.e., shipping, shipbuilding, ship repair), and consumers on the West Coast and in Hawaii.

**TITLE: REVIEW OF FUSRAP MANAGEMENT COST, SCHEDULE, AND TRANSITION (141234)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** In October 1997, the Congress transferred the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP) from the DOE to the Army Corps of Engineers. For Fiscal Year 1998, the Congress appropriated the program \$140 million. Under FUSRAP, the Corps is cleaning up sites contaminated during early atomic energy activities. Q1) What issues remain in the transition of the FUSRAP program from DOE to the Corps? Q2) What is the basis for the Corps' revisions to the estimates of time and cost to clean up individual FUSRAP sites? Q3) Under the Corps' management of the FUSRAP program (in contrast to prior DOE management) what is the status of Corps' efforts to a) meet program goals and objectives, b) reduce overhead costs, and c) streamline environmental document preparation?

**TITLE: REVIEW OF SELKIRK MOUNTAINS WOODLAND CARIBOU: RECOVERY FUNDING AND RESULTS (141236)**

**KEY QUESTIONS :** The Selkirk Mountains population of the woodland caribou was granted Endangered Species Act (ESA) protection in 1983. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has responsibility for coordinating caribou recovery. FWS' recovery plan calls for various actions such as augmenting the caribou population in the U.S. by transplanting animals from British Columbia. To date, caribou have been transplanted into northern Idaho and northeastern Washington. Despite these efforts, the population has not increased significantly. (1) What funding has been appropriated, allocated and expended on the caribou recovery program since the caribou was granted ESA protection in 1983? (2) What was the source of that funding? (3) What have been the results of the recovery program to date?

1. The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions and activities. It emphasizes that this is essential for ensuring transparency and accountability in the organization's operations.

2. The second part of the document outlines the various methods and tools used to collect and analyze data. It highlights the need for consistent and reliable data collection processes to support effective decision-making.

3. The third part of the document focuses on the role of technology in data management and analysis. It discusses how modern software solutions can streamline data collection, storage, and reporting, thereby improving efficiency and accuracy.

4. The fourth part of the document addresses the challenges associated with data management, such as data quality, security, and integration. It provides strategies to overcome these challenges and ensure the integrity and availability of data.

5. The fifth part of the document discusses the importance of data governance and the role of leadership in establishing a strong data management framework. It emphasizes the need for clear policies and procedures to guide data handling practices.

6. The sixth part of the document explores the benefits of data-driven decision-making and how it can lead to improved performance and competitive advantage. It provides examples of successful data-driven initiatives and the impact they have had on the organization.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the future of data management and the emerging trends in the field. It highlights the growing importance of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and big data in shaping the future of data management.

8. The eighth part of the document provides a summary of the key points discussed throughout the document. It reiterates the importance of data management and the need for a proactive and strategic approach to data handling.

9. The ninth part of the document offers practical recommendations and best practices for implementing effective data management strategies. It provides a checklist of key actions to take and a timeline for implementation.

10. The tenth part of the document concludes with a final statement on the importance of data management and the role of the organization in ensuring its success. It expresses confidence in the organization's ability to overcome challenges and achieve its goals through effective data management.

11. The eleventh part of the document provides a list of references and sources used in the document. It includes books, articles, and reports that provide further information on the topics discussed.

12. The twelfth part of the document provides a list of contact information for the author and the organization. It includes email addresses, phone numbers, and website URLs for further inquiries.

13. The thirteenth part of the document provides a list of acknowledgments and thanks to the individuals and organizations that supported the research and writing of the document.

14. The fourteenth part of the document provides a list of appendices and additional resources. It includes supplementary data, charts, and tables that provide further detail on the topics discussed.

15. The fifteenth part of the document provides a list of glossary terms and definitions. It includes key terms and concepts used throughout the document and provides clear definitions for each.

16. The sixteenth part of the document provides a list of index entries and page numbers. It includes a comprehensive index of the document's content and provides the page numbers where each entry can be found.

17. The seventeenth part of the document provides a list of footnotes and endnotes. It includes additional information and references that are not included in the main text of the document.

18. The eighteenth part of the document provides a list of page numbers and a table of contents. It includes a detailed table of contents that lists the page numbers for each section of the document.