DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
NATIONAL NUCLEAR SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Proposed Gas Main and Distribution System Upgrade for Pantex Plant, Amarillo, Texas

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT: The *Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Gas Main and Distribution System Upgrade (DOE/EA-* 1533) (attached) provides sufficient evidence and analysis for the Department of Energy (DOE)/National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) to conclude that potential adverse effects from the upgrade of the distribution system within plant boundaries and the construction of a 10-inch gas main off the plant site for a length of 8.6 miles would be minimal, under normal conditions. A Finding Of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate for the Proposed Action.

Engineering and administrative controls or mitigating activities that serve to lessen any potential for adverse environmental effects will be incorporated into the Proposed Action. Examples of mitigating activity are: preconstruction surveys of prairie dog towns for nesting burrowing owls; the use of Best Management Practices to prevent surface soil erosion and sediment migration where soil disturbance is unavoidable; the use of standard dust suppression measures during construction to minimize the generation of fugitive dust; and the reseeding with native grasses of disturbed habitats other than croplands. The EA considered the cumulative effects of the Proposed Action and determined that the impacts from the construction and operation of the new gas pipeline would be temporary and would not contribute significantly to cumulative impacts from all area activities within the past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future.

No floodplains or wetlands would be affected by the proposed project. Therefore, a separate Floodplains and Wetlands Assessments was not conducted.

PRE-DECISIONAL DRAFT REVIEW: In a letter dated June 23, 2005, the DOE/NNSA invited review and comment on the pre-decisional EA from the landowners who would be directly affected by the proposed project. Shortly thereafter, a Notice of Availability of the pre-decisional EA was published in local newspapers, and the document was made available to the general public by placing it in the DOE Public Reading Rooms located in the cities of Amarillo and Panhandle, Texas. It was also accessible on the Pantex Plant website at www.pantex.com. The review and comment period ended on July 29, 2005.

AGENCY CONSULTATIONS: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) was engaged in informal consultation under the provisions of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, as amended. The Service concurred with NNSA's determination that federally listed threatened and endangered species are not likely to be encountered during project construction and that the proposed action would not significantly affect wetlands and other important fish and wildlife habitat.

The Panhandle Regional Planning Commission received a copy of the pre-decisional EA in its capacity as the Single Point of Contact for the State of Texas but waived review.

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department did not comment on the pre-decisional EA.

The route of pipeline construction avoids approaching within one-fourth of a mile of any playa lake, which eliminates the most likely sites for encountering cultural resources in the general area of the project, as determined by past archeological surveys. In the Cultural Resource Management Plan for Pantex Plant, dated April 2004, the Texas State Historic Preservation Office concurred with the playa lake settlement theory on which the determination of no effect on cultural resources is based.

PRE-DECISIONAL DRAFT COMMENTS: No negative comments were received from the public, state and federal agencies, or interested parties. No changes were made to the content of the final EA as a result of public review.

FINDING: Based on the EA, which analyzes the consequences of the relevant issues of environmental concern for the Proposed Action, DOE/NNSA finds that there would be no significant impact from proceeding with its proposal to update the Pantex Plant gas main and distribution system. This FONSI is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 [42 U.S.C. 4321 et. seq.], the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act [40 CFR 15OO], and the Department of Energy National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures [1O CFR 1021]. No environmental impact statement is required for this proposal.

Signed in Amarillo, Texas this 1st day of September 2005.

Daniel E. Glenn

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Manager

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: For further information on the proposed project, this FONSI, or the EA for the proposed project, please contact:

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Copies of this FONSI with attached EA will be available for public viewing at the following Department of Energy reading rooms:

U.S. Department of Energy Reading Room, Lynn Library/Learning Center, Amarillo College, Washington Street Campus, 2201 S. Washington St., Amarillo, Texas (806) 371-5400.

U.S. Department of Energy Reading Room, Square House Museum, Corner of 5th Street and Highway 207, Panhandle, Texas (806) 537-3524.