



Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant

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A Partnership for Safe Chemical Weapons Destruction

www.pmacwa.army.mil

Environmental Assessment of Proposed Installation and Operation of Explosive Destruction System and Explosive Destruction Technology at U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), to which the United States is a party, requires complete destruction of the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile by the final extended deadline of Apr. 29, 2012. U.S. Public Law 110-116 (Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2008) mandates that chemical weapons destruction be completed by the final extended CWC deadline of Apr. 29, 2012 or in no case later than Dec. 31, 2017. The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) is on pace toward completing destruction of 90 percent of the nation's chemical weapons stockpile by the Apr. 29, 2012 final extended CWC deadline. The Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (ACWA) program, whose two facilities are currently under construction, is slated to complete destruction of another eight percent of the nation's stockpile at its Colorado facility in 2017 and the final two percent at its Kentucky facility in 2021. Current forecasts indicate that there will be periods of time or intervals after CMA's completion of destruction, while the ACWA facilities are finalizing start-up preparations, when no chemical weapons destruction will be taking place in the United States.

On Oct. 1, 2009, the Office of the Secretary of Defense requested that the ACWA Program Manager study how to maintain continuity of destruction operations between CMA completion and ACWA start-up, consistent with ongoing efforts to accelerate destruction operations in both Colorado and Kentucky while maintaining the program's exemplary safety record. The result of the ACWA study identified proposed alternatives which utilize explosive destruction technologies, first in Colorado and later in Kentucky, to augment the currently planned destruction technology of neutralization followed by biotreatment in Colorado and neutralization followed by supercritical water oxidation in Kentucky.

To meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act and Title 32 Code of Federal Regulations Part 651, the U.S. Army conducted an environmental assessment to evaluate the environmental impacts of the proposed acceleration of the construction and operation of explosive destruction technology systems including the U.S. Army's Explosive Destruction System, or EDS. The environmental assessment concludes that no significant environmental impacts would occur as the result of the construction and operation of the EDS and/or other explosive destruction technology systems.

The ACWA facility under construction in Colorado is the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant, or PCAPP, located at the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot (PCD). In the nearly 60 years since PCD began stockpiling these chemical weapons, a small number have been found to be leaking and required additional containment or "overpacking" for continued safe storage. In addition, a munitions sampling campaign was conducted in the 1970s and 1980s to verify the condition of the agent throughout the Army's stockpile. These rounds were also overpacked as a precaution. All overpacked munitions are stored separately from the remaining stockpile.

The highly-automated PCAPP will use hydrolysis to neutralize the mustard agent, followed by biological treatment to treat the resulting wastewater called hydrolysate. However, because of age and physical deterioration, it is expected that some munitions will be unable to be processed mechanically, thus becoming "rejects" that must be destroyed by other means. There is a potential that additional leaking munitions will be discovered during PCAPP operations and overpacked, and thus will have to be destroyed separately. As part of the original plant design, it was agreed that explosive destruction technology would be employed to treat the rejects and overpacked munitions. This course of action remains unchanged.

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Under the preferred alternative being evaluated for possible use, the first phase of augmenting stockpile destruction would be to treat the existing overpacked munitions. The second phase, in advance of PCAPP start of operations, would be to treat boxed munitions. Once PCAPP is operational, the rejects and any additional overpacked munitions will be processed in an explosive destruction technology system as originally planned.

The proposed action would support the overall goals of (1) increasing the program's confidence to complete destruction of the PCD inventory of chemical weapons by 2017, (2) maintaining the continuity of U.S. chemical weapons destruction operations and (3) conducting the destruction activities in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD: The public comment period on the draft "Finding of No Significant Impact" is Feb. 27 through Apr. 27, 2010.

COPIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND DRAFT "FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT" MAY BE VIEWED AND/OR DOWNLOADED FROM THE ACWA WEB SITE AT www.pmacwa.army.mil.

COPIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION MAY BE VIEWED AT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION REPOSITORIES:

- **Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library**
100 East Abriendo Avenue
Pueblo, CO
- **Avondale Water and Sanitation District**
321 3rd Street
Avondale, CO
- **Boone Community Center**
421 East First Street
Boone, CO

COPIES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION MAY ALSO BE VIEWED AT THE FOLLOWING LOCATION:

- **Pueblo Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office**, 104 West B Street, Pueblo, CO

PUBLIC MEETING: A public meeting is scheduled for Mar. 18, 2010 from 6–8 p.m. at the Olde Towne Carriage House, 102 S. Victoria Ave., in Pueblo. The meeting will begin with an informal poster session, followed by formal presentations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Call the Pueblo Chemical Stockpile Outreach Office at (719) 546-0400 or visit www.pmacwa.army.mil.

COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO:

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