

Introduction to the Proposed Consolidated Interim Storage Facility for Spent Nuclear Fuel in Lea County, New Mexico

Holtec International (hereafter referred to as Holtec) has submitted a license application for a Consolidated Interim Storage Facility (CISF) for approval by the United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) under the requirements specified in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 72, Licensing Requirements for the Independent Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel, High-Level Radioactive Waste, and Reactor-Related Greater Than Class C Waste. The proposed site for the Holtec CISF is located in Lea County, New Mexico.

Holtec's License Request

On March 30, 2017, Holtec submitted an application, including a Safety Analysis Report (SAR) and Environmental Report (ER), requesting that the NRC grant a license to Holtec for the construction and operation of a CISF for spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and reactor-related Greater than Class C (GTCC) low-level radioactive waste (LLRW) generated at commercial nuclear power reactors (referred to collectively as "SNF"). Holtec's application materials are available at: <https://www.nrc.gov/waste/spent-fuel-storage/cis/holtec-international.html>

- The proposed CISF would be located on approximately 420.9 ha [1,040 ac] of land in southeastern New Mexico. The land for the Holtec CISF is owned by the Eddy-Lea Alliance, but would be purchased by Holtec prior to construction; however, access to the site and a proposed rail spur would require a BLM easement.
- In its license application, Holtec requests authorization in the initial phase of the project to store 5,000 metric tons of uranium (MTUs) in approximately 500 canisters for a license period of 40 years. However, because the capacity of individual canisters can vary, the 500 canisters proposed in the Holtec license application have the potential to hold up to 8,680 MTUs. The NRC's safety and environmental analyses will take into account the maximum potential capacity of the facility. The larger capacity was clarified through NRC's Request for Additional Information (RAI) process.
- In addition to the first phase, Holtec has stated its intent to request license amendments in the future to expand the facility to eventually store up to 10,000 canisters of SNF. Additional NRC reviews would take place for subsequent license amendments.

NRC's Role and Licensing Action Review

The NRC licenses and regulates the nation's civilian use of radioactive materials to protect public health and safety, promote the common defense and security, and protect the environment. The NRC review of Holtec's application consists of a safety review and an environmental review to support a final licensing decision:

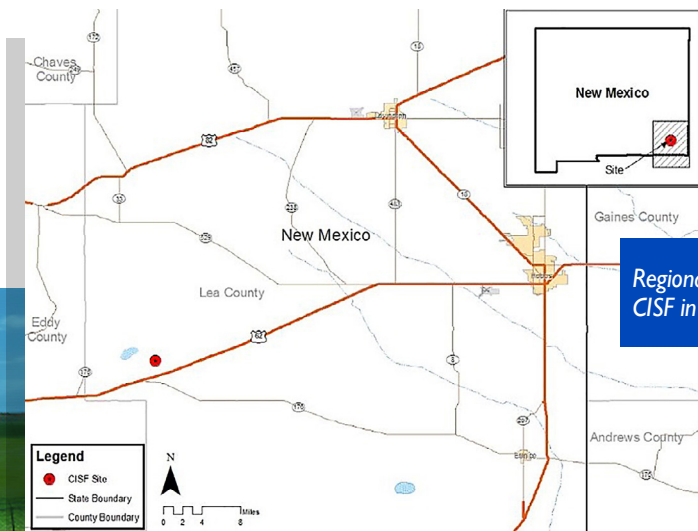
- Safety Review – A Safety Evaluation Report (SER) documents the NRC's evaluation of potential radiological consequences of Holtec's proposed action to determine if that action (constructing and operating the CISF) can be accomplished safely and securely.
- Environmental Review – The NRC's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) documents the NRC's thorough independent evaluation of the significance of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and reasonable alternatives to the proposed action. During this process, the public has the opportunity to comment on the scope of the review and on the draft report.

What the EIS Will Contain

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as well as NRC's NEPA-implementing guidance in NUREG-1748, Environmental Review Guidance for Licensing Actions Associated with NMSS Programs, the EIS contains:

- Descriptions of the Proposed Action, No-Action alternative, and Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action, as defined during the EIS scoping process
- Descriptions of the affected environment
- Evaluation of the potential environmental impacts that would result from the Proposed Action and No-Action Alternative
- Evaluation of the cumulative impacts of Holtec's proposed action and other reasonably foreseeable future actions in the vicinity of the proposed project

In developing the EIS, the NRC will consider input from other Federal, state and local agencies, tribal input from National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 activities, information from the NRC staff site visit and audit, the Holtec CISF application, and public comments. The draft EIS was issued for public comment on March 20, 2020. The EIS includes the NRC's preliminary recommendation of the preferred alternative, which is issuance of an NRC license to Holtec to construct and operate a CISF for SNF at the proposed location. Additional information and a readers guide can be found on the NRC public webpage for Holtec's application for the CISF at <https://www.nrc.gov/waste/spent-fuel-storage/cis/holtec-international.html>.



Regional Location of Holtec's Proposed CISF in Lea County, New Mexico

