



# STURGIS Environmental Assessment

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT

In 2013, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers conducted an Environmental Assessment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). During this assesment, the Corps of Engineers evaluated the potential effects associated with the proposed decommissioning and disposal of the STURGIS on cultural resources; water resources; biological resources; air quality; waste management; and health and safety.



While preparing the Environmental Assessment, the Corps of Engineers reviewed and referenced the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) General Environmental Impact Statement (GEIS) on the decommissioning of nuclear facilities, 1988, and a supplement issued in 2002. The NRC GEIS can be found here: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/sr0586/>.

The NRC's GEIS looked at impacts to public health during the decommissioning of nuclear facilities. The NRC determined that the inhalation radiation dose to the public from airborne radionuclide releases is minor. According to the NRC GEIS, these minor exposures to the public would be offset by the benefit of permanently removing the waste from the vessel and properly disposing of it. The NRC GEIS concluded that decommissioning activities would not significantly impact public health and safety.

Additionally, the Corps of Engineers used the NRC's Regulatory Guidance (NUREG)-1748 Environmental Review Guidance for Licensing Actions Associated with Nuclear Material Safety and Safeguards Programs (NMSS) and the NRC Consolidated Decommissioning Guidance NUREG-1757 in preparing the STURGIS Environmental Assessment and decommissioning planning.

Table 1.2 of NUREG 1757, Volume 1, Rev 2, shows that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the STURGIS Project, which is designated as a Group 3 decommissioning as described in the Decommissioning Plan for the MH-1A Nuclear Power Reactor and STURGIS Barge, March 2014. Table 1.2 also by reference incorporates the approaches and methodologies of NUREG 1748, Environmental Review Guidance for Licensing Actions Associated with NMSS Programs, which are also consistent with 40 CFR NEPA regulations and endorsed by the Army Reactor Office.

The NRC's Regulatory Guidance documents can be found here: <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/doc-collections/nuregs/staff/>

## ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS

So as not to unnecessarily limit the geographic alternatives that a contractor might use to perform the work, the Environmental Assessment evaluated four alternative locations near Corps of Engineers District offices in the vicinity of existing shipyard infrastructure compatible with the project need. The decommissioning locations

evaluated included Galveston, Texas; the Hampton Roads Metropolitan Area, Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; and Charleston, South Carolina. Coordination occurred in each of the alternative locations and a notice was sent to interested parties.



On Jan. 26, 2014, a public notice was posted in all four major newspapers in the potential areas, announcing a 30-day public comment period, which ran from Jan. 27 to Feb. 25, 2014. The public notice also was sent to federal and state elected officials representing each of the four potential decommissioning sites. No comments were received during this period. Therefore the Corps of Engineers signed a Finding of No Significant Impact. Both the Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact are located on the project website in the Project Documents section: <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental/Sturgis.aspx>.

## **CONTACT**

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