

**Appendix C: Public Comments on the
Draft Environmental Assessment**

APPENDIX C PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Background:

The U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) staff published a notice in the Federal Register requesting public review and comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) on December 28, 2006 (71 FR 78231) and established February 8, 2007 as the deadline for submitting public comments on the Draft EA. Approximately 47 individual comment documents (i.e., letters, facsimiles, and e-mails) were received by the NRC. Also, 221 identical emails were submitted by various individuals. In addition, oral comments were received from 43 individuals at a public meeting conducted by the NRC on February 1, 2007.

In the public notice, the NRC staff provided information on where to obtain a free copy of the Draft EA. Additionally, copies of the Draft EA were mailed to approximately 27 individuals. An electronic version of the draft EA and supporting information (e.g., Draft Topical Report on Aviation Accidents and Natural Phenomena) was made accessible through the NRC's project-specific web site (<http://www.nrc.gov/materials/paina.pdf>) and through the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) database on the NRC's web site. All public comments and the public meeting transcript are available on this website and through ADAMS.

As discussed in more detail in Appendix B, the staff also issued a supplemental appendix to the Draft EA on June 8, 2007 (72 FR 31866) which presented the staff's consideration of terrorist acts on the proposed facility. The staff established July 9, 2007 as the deadline for submitting public comments on Appendix B and received comments from five individuals.

Comment Review:

The NRC staff reviewed each comment letter and the transcript of the public meeting. Comments relating to similar issues and topics were grouped. This appendix presents the comments, or summaries of comments, along with the NRC staff's corresponding responses. When comments have resulted in a modification to the Draft EA, those changes are noted in the staff's response. In cases for which the comments do not warrant a detailed response, the NRC staff provides an explanation as to why no further response is necessary. In all cases, the NRC staff sought to respond to all comments received during the public comment period.

Major Issues and Topics of Concern:

The majority of the comments received specifically addressed the scope of the environmental reviews, analysis, and issues contained in the Draft EA, including safety, need for an irradiator, accidents, and the NRC's environmental review process.

However, other comments addressed topics and issues that were not part of the review process for the proposed action. Those comments included questions about the NRC’s safety evaluation of the proposed facility, security concerns, general statements of support or opposition to irradiators, and statements about food irradiation. Because these issues did not directly relate to the environmental effects of the proposed action and were outside the scope of the NEPA review of the proposed action, the NRC staff did not prepare detailed responses to these comments.

Summarized below are the comments and NRC response. The complete comment letters are available as a matter of public record and are available from NRC’s public document room which is available online at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams/web-based.html>. Select the “Begin ADAMS Search” link. To find all publicly available documents type in “Docket “03036974” and click the “Search” link. This search may be narrowed by selecting the “Advanced Search” link, typing in “03036974” in the Docket Number field and any other appropriate keyword related to the subject of interest in the various fields that are present. The complete meeting transcript is available by typing ADAMS Accession Number “ML070590704” in the “Search” box. Table 1 provides a list of the public comments received during the draft EA comment period and the ADAMS Accession Numbers. Table 2 provides a list of the public comments received during the Appendix B comment period and the ADAMS Accession Numbers.

Table 1: Comments on Draft Environmental Assessment

Comment Number	Name	Affiliation	ADAMS Accession Number
1	Russell N. Stein	GRAY*STAR	ML070110438
2	Marci Muraoka	Member of the Public	ML070160436
3	Robert E. Potter	Member of the Public	ML070290585
4	Robert Arakaki	Hawaii State Senate	ML070290589
5	Lorraine Robinson	Kalihi-Palama Community Council	ML070290595
6	Karl Rhoads	House of Representatives	ML070330024

7	Henry Delincee	Federal Research Centre of Nutrition and Food	ML070430123
8	Chris Trepal	Earth Day Coalition	ML070430125
9	Diane Duffey	Member of the Public	ML070430142
10	Macario Rio	Member of the Public	ML070430143
11	Katie Sirk	Member of the Public	ML070430146
12	Henry Curtis	Life of the Land-Hawaii	ML070430150
13	John Kaneko	Member of the Public	ML070430153
14	Kaitlyn McKee	Member of the Public	ML070470410
15	Cha Smith	KAHEA	ML070470417
16	Karen Arincorayan	Member of the Public	ML070470301
17	Adrian Chang	Member of the Public	ML070470305
18	Robert G. Briggs	Member of the Public	ML070470307
19	Vanessa Garner	Isaacson and Duffy, PC	ML070470308
20	Helen Kopp	Member of the Public	ML070470310
21	Dan Meier	Member of the Public	ML070470312
22	Judy Stover	Member of the Public	ML070470316
23	Lauren Guite	Member of the Public	ML070470319

24	Nadine Newlight	Member of the Public	ML070470320
25	Monica Keady	Member of the Public	ML070470323
26	Peter Camarda	Member of the Public	ML070470324
27	Monica Keady	Member of the Public	ML070470329
28	Aurora E. Hunter	Member of the Public	ML070470331
29	Bobby McClintock	Member of the Public	ML070470335
30	Ella Kay Elledge	Member of the Public	ML070470429
31	Mailie La Zarr	Member of the Public	ML070470366
32	Unsigned	Member of the Public	ML070470394
33	William J. Perritt	Member of the Public	ML070470399
34	Lorraine Medina	Member of the Public	ML070470403
35	Diane Pedersen	Member of the Public	ML070470284
36	Ron Kendzierski	Member of the Public	ML070470419
37	David Paulson	Member of the Public	ML070470427
38	Bobbie Deff	Member of the Public	ML070470438
39	Kaliko Armona	Member of the Public	ML070470453
40	Amy Y. Kimura	Member of the Public	ML070470464
41	Sherrie Ching	Member of the Public	ML070470472

42	David Henkin	Earthjustice	ML070470615
43	Cindy Goldstein	Member of the Public	ML070510201
44	Marie Riley	Member of the Public	ML070660050
45	Legault Xavier	Member of the Public	ML070660051
46	Kaitlyn L. McKee	Member of the Public	ML070660052
Comments 47-267	Various	Members of the Public	*ML070920341
268	Wenonah Hauter	Food & Water Watch	ML070950343
269	Barbara Vaile	Member of the Public	ML070950346
270	William B. Corbett	Member of the Public	ML070950350

*One example of the 220 similar emails received

Table 2: Comments on Appendix B: Consideration of Terrorist Acts

Comment Number	Name	Affiliation	ADAMS Accession Number
1	Sherwood Martinelli	Green Nuclear Butterfly	ML071660042
2	Dianne R. Nielson	Utah Energy Advisor	ML071870150
3	David A. Paulson	Member of Public	ML071910260
4	David L. Henkin	Earthjustice	ML071940241
5	Bernadette Young	Member of Public	ML071980068

6	Clyde W. Nāmu'o	Office of Hawaiian Affairs	ML072120024
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Comments and Responses:

NEPA

Comments: A number of commenters were concerned about the quality of the EA itself and its findings. Some commenters agreed with the FONSI, while others disagreed with it and commented that an EIS should be prepared. One commenter, for instance commented that “the expert reports” he’d enclosed with his comments “reveal substantial disputes with the NRC’s consultants over the reasonableness of the agency’s preliminary conclusion there would be no significant impacts.” Another commenter commented that “the EA violates NEPA’s command to take a ‘hard look at the effects from proceeding with [the proposed irradiator].” A third commenter commented that the EA concludes with a FONSI only because it narrowly defines “environmental impact.” Some commenters noted that, while determining the environmental impacts of the proposed action, the EA allows economic considerations to outweigh the risks to public health and safety. One commenter in particular stated that “the commissions charge should be to protect U.S. citizens and not to support the nuclear industry.” Finally, one commenter requested that the NRC “take the time to prepare a Final Environmental Assessment that includes sufficient facts and analysis to accurately determine whether an Environmental Impact Statement is warranted.”

A few commenters commented that the EA does not consider enough alternatives and that those considered were not done so in depth. Some comments stated that there is a lack of information provided in the EA, including comments that no new data were measured or derived as part of the EA. One commenter requested that the NRC “comply with NEPA by providing a full range of alternatives, giving the technological analysis, food restrictions, environmental impacts, and all other relevant information for each alternative.” Another commenter commented that “The draft EA fails to consider reasonable alternatives that would avoid impacts inherently associated with Pa’ina’s preferred technology (a Co-60 irradiator) and location (a site subject to aviation accidents and natural disasters).” Comments about how the location will affect Hawaii’s economy were made by several commenters. Commenters are concerned about building the facility in the urban area. Another commenter said that the close location to Pearl Harbor and Hickam can put well trained teams and equipment on scene in a matter of moments to handle much bigger problems than a Co-60 issue. Finally, another commenter expressed concern for the facility being located near the ocean.

The NRC received a number of comments, stating that the EA does not properly assess the impacts of the proposed action. One commenter comments that “The EA underestimates the magnitude of the potential beneficial impacts.” Another commenter comments that the EA fails to consider the impacts if the company goes bankrupt due to the potential lack of a market for irradiated products. One commenter comments that

the EA does not adequately evaluate the impacts nor provide the analyses used to make a determination that the impacts are not significant.

Finally, one commenter asked for the justification for the proposed action. Another commented that "Since the irradiator and the contemplated sale of irradiated food 'are inextricably intertwined,' they 'are "connected actions" within the meaning of the CEQ regulations,' requiring the draft EA to analyze potential health impacts."

NRC Response: *NRC has determined by regulation that certain licensing and regulatory actions are categorically excluded from an environmental review. The NRC has determined that these categorical exclusions do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment. The NRC's Statements of Consideration (49 FR 9352, March 12, 1984) explains that personnel exposures during the use of irradiators are less than 5% of the limits described in Title 10 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 20, and Standards for Protection Against Radiation. In addition, there are no effluent releases resulting from the operation of irradiators. Based on this, the NRC regulations specifically exclude irradiator licensing actions from the need to develop an environmental assessment.*

However, the NRC staff entered into a settlement agreement with Concerned Citizens of Honolulu, the interveners in the adjudicatory hearing to be held on the license application. The settlement agreement included a provision for the NRC staff to prepare an environmental assessment and hold a public comment meeting in Honolulu, Hawaii prior to making a final decision.

NRC does not normally consider alternative locations in our environmental assessments. This is generally reserved for Environmental Impact Statements. The rationale being that if there are no significant impacts there is no need to consider other locations, also NRC has no authority to prescribe a different location.

NRC has issued Orders, to large panoramic and underwater irradiator licensees, requiring them to implement additional compensatory measures for enhanced security. A brief look at some (not all) of these facilities located in the U.S. and Canada revealed 8 irradiator facilities located near airports (5 of them near international airports) at distances ranging from 0 to 5 miles. One of these facilities is located 0.3 miles from an active runway of an international airport.

Food irradiation is a process in which food products are exposed to a controlled amount of radiant energy to kill harmful bacteria such as E. Coli, Campylobacter, and Salmonella (FDA, 2000). The process also can control insects and parasites, reduce spoilage, and inhibit ripening and sprouting. NRC's role in irradiation, food or otherwise, is to assure that facilities are constructed and operated safely. Thus, NRC does not have a position on irradiation of food. However, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved irradiation of meat and poultry, certain types of seafood, fresh fruits, vegetables, and spices. The FDA has determined that this process is safe and helps to kill bacteria and insects. Irradiation does not make food radioactive. The

process may cause a small loss of nutrients but no more than with other processing methods such as cooking, canning, or heat pasteurization (FDA, 2000). Also, federal rules require irradiated foods to be labeled as such to distinguish them from non-irradiated foods.

Public Health And Safety

Irradiated Food

Comments: Some commenters expressed concern about the potential to develop cancer from the consumption of irradiated food. Other comments talk about the possibility of developing birth defects, health problems, and the risk of death as a result of the consumption of food treated with an irradiator. One commenter asked who would be responsible for any health problems or deaths that come as a result of the consumption of these products. One commenter asked about the adverse effects that irradiation has on food. Another commenter said that irradiation contributes to a significant loss of nutrients and food flavor. A commenter stated that irradiation may be used as a substitute for handling and sanitation. Another commenter agreed with the construction of the irradiator because many products from Hawaii must be irradiated before being exported to the rest of the United States.

NRC Response: *Food irradiation is a process in which food products are exposed to a controlled amount of radiant energy to kill harmful bacteria such as E. Coli, Campylobacter, and Salmonella. The process also can control insects and parasites, reduce spoilage, and inhibit ripening and sprouting. As stated above, NRC does not have a position on irradiation of food. NRC's role in irradiation, food or otherwise, is to assure that facilities are constructed and operated safely. However, the FDA has approved irradiation of meat and poultry, certain types of seafood, fresh fruits, vegetables, and spices. Many health experts agree that using irradiation can effectively reduce food-borne hazards and ensure that harmful organisms are not in food we buy (FDA, 2000). The FDA has determined that this process is safe and helps to kill bacteria and insects. Irradiation does not make food radioactive. The process may cause a small loss of nutrients but no more than with other processing methods such as cooking, canning, or heat pasteurization. Also, federal rules require irradiated foods to be labeled as such to distinguish them from non-irradiated foods (FDA, 2000).*

Leaking Problems

Comments: Some commenters expressed concern about the potential for radioactive material to leak from the facility. Several comments ask about what is going to happen if radioactive material leaks to the surrounding environment. One commenter expressed concern about the effect of radioactive leaks on the international airport.

NRC Response: *There will be multiple systems and layers of protection at the Pa'ina facility to prevent contamination of the pool water and leakage of the pool liner. In*

addition, the licensee will have continuous monitoring systems in place to detect radioactivity in the pool water and to detect loss of water from the pool. However, if contaminated water did leak from the pool, the licensee would be required to take corrective action (e.g., remediation of groundwater contamination). The proposed Pa'ina irradiator pool consists of multiple layers of steel and concrete which makes pool leakage highly unlikely. However, even if the pool were to leak water, the radioactive source encapsulation would also have to fail in order to cause any groundwater contamination. If a source encapsulation were to leak into the pool water, the radiation monitors would be activated and the irradiator would be shut down and the leaking sources would be removed. The three layers of the pool's construction provide barriers to any water leaking from the pool to the surrounding environment. The pool construction method permits verification of the pool integrity prior to and during installation on-site. However, if contaminated water did leak from the pool, the licensee would be required to take corrective action (e.g., remediation of groundwater contamination).

Additionally, NRC plans to have inspectors with expertise in geotechnical issues, concrete, and construction methods conducting oversight of the pool construction. NRC inspectors will also be present during other key portions of the construction phase, loading of sealed sources, and pre-operational testing. NRC inspectors will conduct unannounced inspections during operations to assure compliance with the terms and conditions of the license and NRC regulations.

Occupational Problems

Comments: Some commenters expressed concern about the risk of serious health problems that could affect workers and people at the facility. One commenter expressed concern of the effect of losing control of radioactive material.

NRC Response: *The transport and handling of radioactive material is strictly regulated by both the NRC and the U.S. Department of Transportation. The design of the Pai'na facility does not involve the constant movement of the radioactive sources, rather the sources are always underwater in a "shielded" position which results in very low radiation levels at the pool surface. The likelihood of accidents involving exposure of workers to lethal doses from this specific irradiator design is expected to be low. Access controls for workers, visitors, and the public are required to ensure that radiation doses to these groups are within the limits prescribed by regulation and are as low as reasonably achievable. These controls consists of specialized training, radiation monitoring, personnel monitoring, audit programs, access barriers, and other engineering controls to reduce radiation doses.*

Exposure to Radiation

Comments: Some commenters expressed concern about whether the people that live around the facility are going to be exposed to radiation. One commenter expressed concern about the possibility of globalization and consolidation of the food industry. One

commenter asked what are going to be the end products of the process.

NRC Response: *Facilities are constructed to standard designs with multiple safeguards to protect worker health and safeguard the community. The NRC's regulations limit the exposure of members of the public from the operation of a licensed facility to no more than 100 millirem each year. For comparison purposes, the average annual radiation exposure from natural sources to an individual in the United States is about 300 millirem. Exposures from this facility are expected to be indistinguishable from background radiation and thus a very small fraction of the 100 millirem limit. Licensees are required to demonstrate compliance with this limit by a combination of mathematical calculations and radiation surveys.*

Transportation

Comments: Some commenters expressed concern about how Co-60 is going to be transported to and from the facility and how it is going to be stored.

NRC Response: *Radioactive materials required for irradiators are transported in lead-shielded steel casks. These casks are designed to withstand the most severe accidents, including collisions, punctures, and exposure to fire and water depths. Large quantities of radioactive material are safely shipped all over the world to supply some 170 irradiators processing a variety of goods. Radioactive source suppliers are required to ensure that shipping packages containing sources are sufficiently robust and meet all applicable NRC standards. They must also transport radioactive materials in accordance with U.S. Department of Transportation regulations. The sources are typically returned to the supplier once their radioactivity levels have dropped to the point where they can no longer efficiently irradiate product material. Again, NRC and Department of Transportation requirements on the shipment of such materials must be met when they are returned to suppliers. Transportation impacts from Pa'ina's normal operations would be small. Radioactive Co-60 sealed sources would be shipped approximately once per year. Using RADTRAN 5.3, staff estimated the maximum dose for a full initial shipment would be 0.4 millirem/year to a member of the public. The limit for an individual member of the public is 100 millirem/year. Therefore, the NRC staff determined that the proposed Pa'ina irradiator would have no significant impacts from transportation of the sources or additional products.*

Economy

Socioeconomics

Comments: Some commenters expressed concern about how tourism will be affected when tourists see the facility next to the airport. Other commenters were concerned about Hawaii's dependence on tourism. Other commenters were concerned about how the proposed facility will affect the agricultural economy. One commenter stated that this irradiator will be a benefit to the Hawaiian economy, extending and diversifying the Hawaiian economy beyond tourism. Another commenter stated that people with MCS

can't ingest irradiated foods. This was seen as putting the poor at a distinct disadvantage as they cannot afford to buy better quality/organic food. Some commenters said that the installation of a commercial irradiator will greatly benefit agriculture in Hawaii in the same way it will benefit farmers. Another commenter stated that the construction of the irradiator in Hawaii will create new satisfying jobs allowing Hawaii to compete in the global market. Finally, another commenter stated that historically, food irradiation companies across the United States have faltered financially.

NRC Response: *The proposed irradiator would potentially have small beneficial impacts to socioeconomics because more products would have the potential to be exported to different parts of the United States. While the proposed irradiator will not diminish the existing population of invasive species, it is seen as one tool in preventing the further introduction and spread of invasive pests. Invasive species pose a large threat to Hawaii's native ecology. When invasive species are found there are typically three options for importers: they return the product to the sender; they can destroy the product; or they can treat it with methyl bromide. Shipping the product back to the sender involves additional freight cost and increased product degradation due to time delays, while destruction results in the total loss of the product. Treatment by methyl bromide is an alternative; however it has some drawbacks such as increased cost, product degradation, and potential damage to the Earth's ozone layer.*

The applicant has also formed Pacific Agriculture Research Company to conduct research to benefit Hawaii's agriculture community. In addition, the proposed irradiator could serve the University of Hawaii for its research needs.

In terms of tourism, there is no reason to believe that the irradiator would have any effect. There are currently several others irradiators in Hawaii along with numerous medical, academic, and industrial licensees. The proposed irradiator would be visually indistinguishable for other typical industrial buildings in the area.

Ecology

Comments: A few commenters commented that the proposed action would benefit Hawaii's ecology, while others commented that the effects of the proposed action would be detrimental to the ecology. Those in favor of the proposed action commented that Hawaii lacks an effective and comprehensive way to protect against invasive species. These commenters state that by using the irradiator to disinfect incoming shipments, the unique Hawaiian ecology will be protected.

One commenter opposed the proposed action and commented that the irradiation facility would be an "awful sight to see." She also commented that if the irradiator contaminates the ground or explodes it will be an act of disrespect to the land and Hawaii will never be the same. If the land is harmed, the commenter feels she would have failed to take care of her land.

NRC Response: *The proposed irradiator will satisfy several needs which benefit Hawaii's Ecology in controlling invasive species (Wong, 2006). Invasive species are those species non-native to the reference ecosystem and whose introduction causes economic, environmental or human health harm (USDA, 2006). It has been estimated that over 2,500 insect species have been introduced to Hawaii and account for 98% of the pest species in the state (Pimentel et al., 2005). In California, over 600 invasive pests account for 67% of all crop losses (Pimentel et al., 2005). The objective of the proposed irradiator is to control invasive species on fruits, vegetables and cut foliage on both imports and exports helping prevent the further introduction and spread of these species. Invasive species pose a large threat to Hawaiian Ecology, and for this reason the proposed action will be beneficial to Hawaii. Also, this is a preventive action for the mainland U.S. and other countries because the irradiation of Hawaii products will help prevent the further introduction of invasive species in these areas.*

Off-Normal Operation

General Accidents

Comments: Some general comments regarding the discussion of accidents are that building that facility would be “tempting fate” and that “The agencies have not been forthright in provided studies of the consequences of contamination for natural causes, human error, or terrorist attacks.” One commenter suggested that studies be conducted to assess measures to reduce threats through evacuation plans and safeguards. Another commenter commented that the EA lacks sufficient data to back up its claims of public safety under accident scenarios and terms such as “small,” “highly unlikely,” “improbable,” and “significant forces” are not well defined in the EA.

NRC Response: *The licensee will be required to have emergency procedures for a variety of emergencies. The robust physical design of individual sources, the storage arrangement, and the pool must be designed and constructed in an effort to minimize the likelihood and severity of emergencies.*

The NRC requires that irradiator operators have emergency procedures that include coordination with local and state emergency response agencies. Companies that operate irradiation facilities are required to have emergency procedures for a variety of emergencies, including leaking sources and low water or leakage from the storage pool. No license for possession and use of sealed sources is issued unless satisfactory emergency procedures have been developed.

The terminology in the EA has been edited for consistency. The term “small” is a term of art commonly used in NRC environmental review documents. Specifically, the term is used when “the environmental effects are not detectable or are so minor that they will neither destabilize nor noticeably alter any important attribute of the resource” (NRC, 2003). The terms “highly unlikely” and improbable” have been replaced with “unlikely.” The use of “unlikely” is a qualitative description of probability used to indicate a low probability of occurrence based on staff experience and the scenarios reviewed.

Airplane Accidents

Comments: A number of commenters expressed concern about the potential dangers if an aircraft were to impact the proposed facility. One commenter asked what would be the outcome of such an impact and whether it could set off a chain of explosions affecting the weapons at the nearby military bases. Another commenter commented that “A news article stated that the airport control personnel must rely on sight vs. radar to track aircraft.” He inquired, “How does this lend to increased risk?” Finally, another commenter noted that the “Potential for airplane crash estimates given in the EA” are too low.

NRC Response: *The irradiator facility does not contain explosive material (i.e., the radioactive Co-60 can not explode, it is a chemically inert metal slug). As described in more detail in the Safety Topical Report (CNWRA, 2007), the probability of an aircraft crash into the proposed Pa’ina facility is conservatively estimated at 2.1×10^{-4} (i.e., about once every five thousand years). It should be noted that the probability that an aircraft will crash into the proposed facility does not reflect the potential for release or dispersal of the radioactive Co-60 from the doubly-encapsulated sources. The source plenum is located under 12-18 feet of water. Additionally, the Co-60 sealed sources in the source plenum are not mechanically coupled to the plenum structure and the plenum structure is not coupled to the rest of the building. In the event of damage to the plenum structure the sources would either remain in the source rack/holder or fall to the floor of the irradiator. The Co-60 sources are doubly-encapsulated and have been tested to withstand significant forces. A significantly larger force must be generated by an aircraft crash because much of the force will result in damage to the building and other ground-level structures of the pool. Transferring the force to the bottom of the pool will also result in significant absorption of the force. For these reasons it is unlikely that a Co-60 sealed source would be breached in the event that an aircraft crashes into the proposed facility. The NRC staff finds that potential aviation accidents would have no significant impacts on public health and safety from the proposed Pa’ina irradiator.*

Terrorism

Comments: Many commenters expressed concern about the potential for terrorist attacks on the proposed irradiator facility and commented on the way this potential is addressed in the EA. Some commenters suggested that not going forth with the proposed action because of fear of a terrorist attack would be letting the terrorists win. Others suggest that too much detail in the EA about security would potentially make the facility more susceptible to attack. One commenter suggested that the EA can address terrorism by pointing out “that while the report does not specifically address intentional acts of terrorism the EA does evaluate the outcome of events that might conceivably be driven by terrorists. This commenter also suggested that information be provided in the EA to describe how the NRC and the Department of Homeland Security address the issue of terrorist acts.

Some comments specifically questioned the potential for certain types of terrorist attacks and their outcomes. The types of attacks in question are a "Timothy McVey-type" bomb used on the facility, an airplane crashed intentionally into the facility, and whether Co-60 from the facility could be used to make a "dirty bomb," to contaminate the water supply, or to make a thermal nuclear device. Some comments stated that the NRC does not address acts of terrorism and does not explain the roles of Federal agencies in the war against terrorism. One comment stated that it is impossible for anyone to dive down the bottom of the pool to steal the Co-60, because it would make them sick and weakened within minutes. Finally, one commenter noted that a terrorist attack could take place on New Year's Eve amidst the sounds of the exploding fireworks and Hawaiians would not know the attack was happening. One comment questioned the transparency and objectivity of the staff's terrorism assessment while several other comments cited the NRC for a failure to disclose assumptions, and methodologies while generally citing the NRC's failure to provide full disclosure and a set of references. Other comments cited the NRC's failure to quantify risk of terrorist attack and to quantify terrorist impacts on shipments of Co-60.

NRC Response: *As a result of the events of September 11, 2001, NRC embarked on an extensive review of its security program and has taken a number of steps to enhance security at licensed facilities. These have included Threat Advisories which called on licensees to take certain prudent steps to enhance their security posture as well as Orders imposing requirements on certain classes of licensees. The NRC has also developed additional security measures which irradiator facilities will be required to implement. These measures are designed to either discourage terrorist attacks or minimize the potential for damage from such an attack. This facility will be designed with many of those measures in mind. The measures will be developed taking into consideration the threats as we know them and the potential vulnerabilities of these facilities. The NRC will issue an Order to Pa'ina Hawaii, LLC, which will impose, by means of a license condition, those additional security measures on the facility, if the license is issued.*

The radiation safety regulatory requirements, as well as the security and control enhancements implemented by licensees in response to Orders, are designed to prevent unintended radiation exposure and to prevent and mitigate deliberate malicious acts, which have the potential to result in significant injuries from radiological exposure.

A more complete discussion of terrorist actions has been included in Appendix B of this Final EA. Due to the sensitive nature of this information, many of the details can not be provided in publicly available documents.

In Appendix B, the staff provided the NRC's process for selecting and analyzing the types of attacks or the consequences without revealing protected information. Although the staff could not provide all the details of referenced documents and analyses, the general methodology and analyses relied upon were referenced.

The staff notes that there is no design basis threat for irradiators. Following the

issuance of the 2003 security orders for irradiators, the NRC used a security assessment framework as a screening and assessment tool to determine whether additional security measures, beyond those required by regulation and security orders, were warranted for irradiators. Initially, NRC screened threat scenarios to determine plausibility. For those scenarios deemed plausible, NRC assessed the attractiveness of the facility to attack by taking into account such factors as iconic value, complexity of planning required, resources needed, execution risk, and public protective measures. The staff has discussed these factors to the extent possible considering the nature of the protected information (i.e., much of the information is protected as either Safeguards Information, SUNSI, or classified as Confidential or Secret).

Additionally, the staff has assessed likely modes of attack, weapons and vulnerabilities of irradiators. Appendix B discusses this analysis, however, due to the nature of the protected information, the staff is not at liberty to share those details in a publicly available document. All documents used in the staff's analysis were referenced in Appendix B. As previously discussed in the ongoing hearing process the shipment of radioactive materials is outside the scope of this environmental assessment. These sources have been previously licensed for shipment with adequate consideration of environmental impacts.

Natural Disaster

Comments: There were a few comments regarding the ability of the proposed facility to withstand the effects of a natural disaster such as a hurricane, tsunami, or flood. One comment stated that the EA underestimates potential hurricane damage by not including effects from increased buoyancy, forceful winds, and fires and that a break in the pool lining below the floor level could severely reduce shielding, threatening radiation exposure. The same commenter states that tsunami run-up's are underestimated in the EA to be 3-4 feet, when records show they can go as high as 31 feet. Finally, this commenter notes that, the EA should include a consideration of "the failure of peripheral equipment, power and back up generators, dispersal of leaking pool water, and grounded aircraft or equipment carried and crushing against the irradiator facility, which could affect the integrity of the pool, draining the water below the minimum level needed to shield the Co-60 sources when the flood waters recede."

NRC Response: *The Final EA has been updated to include a more complete discussion of types of impacts that may have off-site consequences. The scenario of main concern is the loss of control of the Co-60 sealed sources. Loss of control occurs when radioactive material is physically removed from the pool or when water becomes contaminated and is released from the pool. In order to remove radioactive material from the pool, the source retaining mechanism and lock must be overcome, the plenum must be removed, the source must be removed from the source rack, and the radioactive material must be lifted out of the pool. For the irradiator pool water to become contaminated, the two stainless steel capsules must be breached to expose the radioactive Co-60 slug and allow it to corrode in the water. Even if the building is completely destroyed and the pool damaged by the accident or natural phenomenon,*

control of the sealed source is not lost unless the source material is removed from the pool or allowed to corrode in the pool water. Similarly, the loss of operating monitoring equipment during an accident or natural phenomenon does not lead to the loss of control of radioactive material. Finally, a reduction in the water level results in increased dose rates in a well collimated beam directly above the pool. For example, a loss of 6 feet of pool water would result in a dose of approximately 300 millirem/hour (NRC, 2007). However, due to the highly collimated beam, and the ability to easily add water, the increased dose rate will not be sufficient to have a significant environmental effect on the area around the proposed facility. In addition, worker doses should not be significantly increased in the area around the pool and the debris around the pool will act as barriers to restrict inadvertent access to the areas of elevated radiation directly above the pool.

As described in more detail in the Safety Topical Report (CNWRA, 2007), fluid dynamic calculations were conducted to determine impacts from potential tsunami-generated wave run-ups. These calculations were performed to determine the wave velocity necessary to pull a Co-60 source up to the pool opening. These wave velocities were then evaluated with respect to potential tsunami-generated waves. The NRC staff found that potential tsunami activity would have no significant impacts on public health and safety from the proposed Pa'ina irradiator.

A complete description of hurricanes around Hawaii is provided in the Safety Topical Report (CNWRA, 2007). In summary, the wave velocity associated with a storm surge is significantly less than that associated with a tsunami. The probability of a large tsunami removing a Co-60 source from the bottom of the proposed irradiator pool is considered negligible. Therefore, the likelihood of a storm surge associated with a hurricane resulting in the release of a Co-60 source is also considered negligible. The NRC staff finds that potential hurricane activity would have no significant impacts on public health and safety from the proposed Pa'ina irradiator.

As described in more detail in the Safety Topical Report (CNWRA, 2007), a seismically-induced radiological accident is considered negligible due to the nature of the proposed facility and the seismic hazard for the site. The radiological sources at the facility are passive and shielding or containment of the Co-60 sources does not rely on active systems to mitigate potential radiological releases. The earthquake ground motions for the site are insufficient to damage the proposed facility to the degree necessary to dislodge Co-60 sources from the pools. The NRC staff finds that potential seismic activity would have no significant impacts on public health and safety from the proposed Pa'ina irradiator.

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