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To the United States Department of Energy
Office of Fissile Materials Disposition
P.O. Box 23786
Washington DC 20026-3786

I am seriously concerned about the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the Department of Energy regarding Storage and Disposition of Weapons-Usable Fissile Materials.

Although I recognize the need to assure safe, secure, long-term storage and disposition of the significant quantities of surplus fissile materials, I believe this document fails to address very important issues. Additional alternative sites must be considered. 1/01.04.00

In reviewing the alternative for the possible future of the Pantex site in the Texas Panhandle, it becomes evident that all of the nation's weapons-usable plutonium not in active warheads would be stored at Pantex.

Before 1989, plutonium pits were never stored at Pantex. But with the closing of Rocky Flats, Pantex has become the interim storage site for at least 12,000 pits. Now this document proposes storing not only plutonium pits, but other more undesirable forms of plutonium.

Pantex is being considered for a plutonium pit disassembly/conversion facility to cut the pits and process them into metal or oxide, a plutonium conversion facility to process other types of Plutonium, a facility to mix plutonium with uranium, nuclear power reactors, and storage of spent fuel from the reactors, and storage of all mixed waste generated from these processes.

The document fails to address the impact on agricultural products produced in the Texas Panhandle. 2/09.09.04 And it fails to address the location of Pantex above the Ogallala aquifer, which provides groundwater for the plains of Texas and seven other Midwestern food producing states. Pantex has already contaminated the fine-grained layer of water-bearing sands above the Ogallala aquifer with high explosives, chemicals, solvents, and radionuclides. With the downward migration of the recharging waters, how long will it be before the Ogallala is contaminated? 3/09.04.04

Food is our nation's most important product and must be protected.

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01 04 00 **Comment Number 1**

Comment noted.

09 09 04 **Comment Number 2**

The PEIS considers and analyzes the impacts to prime farmlands potentially caused by air emissions and radiation releases to determine any effects on agricultural products. Statements can be made that part of a region's economy (for example, agriculture) would be adversely impacted by a release of nuclear material.

09 04 04 **Comment Number 3**

Current and future operations at Pantex are not expected to affect the water quality of the Ogallala Aquifer. However, since this aquifer is being depleted (that is, the current withdrawal is exceeding the current recharge), Pantex operations contribute to the depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer and are analyzed in the PEIS.

The Texas Panhandle is too valuable an agricultural area to be jeopardized by using it for plutonium storage, processing and waste. 4/08.03.01

Sincerely

Patrick Bonner

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08 03 01 Comment Number 4

The Department of Energy acknowledges the commentor's opposition to new missions at Pantex. Decisions on storage and disposition of weapons-usable fissile materials will be based upon environmental analyses, technical and economic studies, national policy considerations, and public input.