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BOATMEN'S FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF AMARILLO

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U.S. Department of Energy
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I appreciate the chance to comment on the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEIS's), Stockpile Stewardship and Management (SSM) and Storage and Disposition (S&A) of Weapons - Usable Fissile Materials. These three areas affect Pantex, Amarillo, and the Panhandle area in a significant manner.

One of my concerns is the continuing expansion and operation of Pantex that would be conducive to the environment and health matters. This continued operation and expansion of Pantex must be conducted in a safe and environmentally sound manner with proper evaluation and research being completed. 1/09.00.04

The decision by the DOE to select Pantex as the preferred alternative for assembly and disassembly is certainly appreciated and I think this reflects the confidence in Pantex. Also, the cost related to moving this facility would be prohibitive. However, by failing to recognize Pantex as the preferred site for new stockpile management facilities the DOE has overlooked the best site to attain maximum efficiencies and cost savings.

I am sure Pantex is the most cost effective facility for any new construction of SSM facilities such as labor costs, utility rates and water and land availability at Pantex. It would be a natural to consider Pantex for an alternative site to compliment the activities at the Los Alamos National Laboratory. DOE makes no mention of a strategic plutonium reserve that is necessary to meet future national security needs, even though the PEIS mentions that strategic storage should be co-located with disassembly. Pantex should be a preferred site for such a project in coordination with the management functions. When the basic technical capabilities are already located at a site such as Pantex with its excellent

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09 00 04 **Comment Number 1**

The Department of Energy is committed to maintaining existing facilities to ensure safe operation for the life of the facilities. For all storage and disposition alternatives being evaluated at Pantex, compliance with all Federal, State, and local regulations and DOE Orders is an integral and important part of each storage or disposition facility design.

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record it would be most cost effective to use that location. In their discussion process, DOE should use budgetary comparisons, and capital requirements, available transportation, skilled people, and other costs.

For basically the same reason mentioned above the High Explosives (HIE) fabrication should remain at Pantex. The SSM draft admits that Pantex must retain HE capabilities to process the inventories already on site from the dismantling process which certainly would be the least expensive alternative. When everything is considered transferring the HE function from Pantex would cost taxpayers over $40M. Also, if it becomes necessary for new weapon production, it would be very important to have the HE facilities at the weapons production and assembly site.

With Pantex being the only authorized facility for assembly and disassembly of nuclear weapons, they have maintained an excellent record of safety and efficiency for over 40 years. DOE is considering several option regard Plutonium Storage and Disposition (PEIS) which is a result of the dismantling. Pantex could continue to store plutonium which is already at the site and upgrade the facility for an and all storage being considered by the DOE with minimized cost. It makes no sense at all to recreate storage facilities at another location and then unnecessarily transport large amounts of plutonium across the country from Pantex. 2/08.03.01

Based upon these reasons, I respectfully urge DOE to designate Pantex as the preferred alternative site for all existing and new stockpile management and stewardship foundations as well as consolidation of all plutonium storage and disposition and related functions.

Thanks for allowing individuals to express their thoughts.

Sincerely,

Joe M. Stange
Vice President

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08 03 01 **Comment Number 2**

The Department of Energy acknowledges the commentor's support of Pantex. Decisions related to future missions at Pantex will be based upon environmental analyses, technical and economic studies, national policy considerations, and public input.