

NRC Issues Final Environmental Impact Statement for Holtec's Consolidated Interim Storage Facility

We are pleased to announce that the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) has issued the final environmental impact statement (EIS) for Holtec International's proposed HI-STORE consolidated interim storage facility (CISF) for spent nuclear fuel in Southeastern New Mexico ([link to the document is here](#)).

The final EIS includes the NRC staff's recommendation that there are no environmental impacts that would preclude the NRC from issuing a license for environmental reasons. The NRC staff's recommendation is based on its review of Holtec's license application; consultation with Federal, State, Tribal and local agencies; input from other stakeholders; independent consultation with the New Mexico Bureau of Land Management; and the Commission's own environmental review which included land use, transportation, geology and soils, surface and groundwater, ecological resources such as threatened and endangered species, noise, historical and cultural resources, public and occupational health, environmental justice, socioeconomics, and other considerations. The final EIS also confirms that there are no adverse impacts to other enterprises in the area including oil and gas, ranching, and farming. Designed with safety and environmental stewardship as the overriding considerations, the completely welded and hermetically closed canisters that will be safely stored at the facility are designed, qualified, and tested to maintain their integrity and prevent the release of radioactive material under the most adverse accident scenarios postulated by NRC regulations for both storage and transportation.

Holtec International and its partner, the Eddy-Lea Energy Alliance (ELEA) of New Mexico, launched the initiative to establish the autonomous consolidated interim storage facility in Southeastern New Mexico on a parcel of land owned by ELEA in 2015. ELEA selected Holtec and its underground fuel storage system, known as HI-STORM UMAX, after determining it to be the safest technology for their community. The HI-STORE CISF will utilize the HI-STORM UMAX underground storage system that provides an unconditionally safe and secure, non-permanent, readily retrievable, and centralized facility for interim storage of the Nation's spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste until such time that a permanent solution is available.

"By establishing the HI-STORE CISF, Holtec offers the Nation a structurally impregnable, below-ground, disaster-immune, essentially zero dose emitting, and visually inconspicuous facility that will have zero impact on the local oil, gas or potash mining operations or the lives of local farmers and ranchers, while creating well-paying clean energy jobs in the host communities. We believe that aggregating used fuel from 75 dispersed sites across the Country is both a national security imperative and an essential predicate for the rise of renascent nuclear energy to meet our Nation's clean energy goals," says Holtec's CEO Dr. Kris Singh.

The initial application for the HI-STORE CISF includes storage of up to 8,680 metric tons of uranium in commercial spent nuclear fuel (500 canisters) with future amendments for up to a total of 10,000 storage canisters. The U.S. currently has more than 80,000 metric tons of spent nuclear fuel in storage and the inventory grows at the rate of 2,000 metric-tons per year. HI-STORE CISF is being licensed using Holtec's own funds with the enthusiastic support of the nuclear-savvy communities in Southeastern New Mexico incorporated as ELEA.

“The NRC’s final environmental impact statement confirms that the HI-STORE CISF will have no negative impact on our community,” said Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway. “Holtec has been a true partner on this important project, and we look forward to continuing to work together to bring jobs and economic growth to the area.”

Hobbs Mayor Sam Cobb commented, “Our community is pleased that the NRC has verified with the issuance of its Environmental Impact Statement that the HI-STORE CISF project is a safe project with no negative implications to our existing businesses or to the public. We look forward to working with Holtec as it moves forward in receiving the NRC license for a Consolidated Interim Storage Facility and the positive economic benefits it will bring to our area.”

Holtec is a global leader in fuel storage solutions, and the HI-STORE CISF builds on experience such as the recent completion of storage facilities in Ukraine that contributed to their energy security by freeing that country from chronic dependence on Russia. The HI-STORE CISF will utilize Holtec’s subterranean dry storage system, HI-STORM UMAX. Already in use at two sites in the U.S., the HI-STORM UMAX stores the stainless-steel canister containing the spent fuel or high-level waste entirely below-ground establishing a “security-friendly” storage facility, providing a clear, unobstructed view of the entire CISF from any location. The HI-STORM UMAX is physically sized to store all canisters currently licensed for storage of spent nuclear fuel in the U.S. and all nuclear fuel types currently in use in the Country, making it a truly universal spent fuel storage facility.

HI-STORE CISF is envisioned to unify the storage of all different storage canisters (those of which are both currently vertically and horizontally stored) in one standardized HI-STORM UMAX cavity system, simplifying operations and aging management activities. Storing the Nation’s spent nuclear fuel in the HI-STORM UMAX system is a temporary measure, as the stainless-steel canisters are easily retrievable and ready for transport pending the determination by the Department of Energy of a national strategy for a safe permanent solution.

John Heaton, Vice Chairman of the Eddy Lea Energy Alliance stated, “This is a great day for ELEA, the Holtec team and Southeastern New Mexico, as it is the beginning of the final steps leading to a license. When the ELEA board met with the NRC to understand the licensing process before embarking on this extraordinary venture, we all left the meeting with a renewed confidence in the NRC’s technical capability, engineering competence, and its total commitment to safety. The project will diversify our economy, generate 350 jobs and potentially be a \$3 billion investment in our area. Our area cannot stand still – we must continue to innovate and expand economic opportunities for our hard-working residents.”

To learn more about HI-STORE CISF, visit <http://www.historecifs.com>.