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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**DOE SEEKS PUBLIC INPUT
FOR DEPLETED URANIUM HEXAFLUORIDE
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**
Public Meetings Planned in Portsmouth, Paducah, Oak Ridge

Oak Ridge, Tenn. -- The U.S. Department of Energy has issued a Notice of Intent to begin preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement which will cover construction, operation, maintenance, and decontamination and decommissioning of depleted uranium hexafluoride conversion facilities at Portsmouth, Ohio, and Paducah, Kentucky.

The Department of Energy (DOE) has a legacy of approximately 700,000 metric tons of depleted uranium hexafluoride that was created over the last 40 years, which is stored in 57,700 cylinders stored at Portsmouth, Paducah, and the East Tennessee Technology Park in Oak Ridge. This material was created at each facility during processing to make natural uranium suitable for use as fuel, such as that used in nuclear power plants.

Completion of an Environmental Impact Statement is a requirement under the National Environmental Policy Act in order to begin conversion of the depleted uranium hexafluoride inventory. DOE is seeking input from the public during a scoping period which is now underway through November 26.

The Notice of Intent (NOI) lists the DOE-preferred alternative as construction of two conversion facilities, one at the Paducah Gaseous Diffusion Plant site and another at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant site. The cylinders currently stored at Oak Ridge would be transported to Portsmouth for conversion. The conversion products, such as the depleted uranium, as well as fluorine components, would be stored, put to beneficial uses, or disposed of at an appropriate disposal facility.

The Department will have three public scoping meetings to provide the public with an opportunity to present comments on what should be included in the Environmental Impact Statement. The location, date, and time for these public scoping meetings are as follows:

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- **Portsmouth, Ohio:** Thursday, November 1, 2001, from 6-9 p.m., at the Vern Riffe Pike County Vocational School, 175 Beaver Creek Road (off State Route 32), Piketon, Ohio 45661.
- **Paducah, Kentucky:** Tuesday, November 6, 2001, from 6-9 p.m., at the Information Age Park Resource Center, 2000 McCracken Blvd., Paducah, Kentucky 42001.
- **Oak Ridge, Tennessee:** Thursday, November 8, 2001, from 6-9 p.m., at the Pollard Auditorium, Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education, 210 Badger Avenue, Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830.

DOE officials will be available at each meeting and public comments on the proposed scope of the document are welcomed. Comments may also be submitted directly to: Kevin Shaw, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management, Office of Site Closure - Oak Ridge (EM-32), 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874, fax (301) 903-3479 or e-mail to DUF6.Comments@em.doe.gov (please use 'NOI Comments' for the subject). To ensure consideration, comments must be postmarked, faxed or e-mailed by **November 26, 2001**.

The full text of the NOI, found in the September 18, 2001, edition of the Federal Register (66FR48123) is available on the Department's National Environmental Policy Act web site at <http://www.tis.eh.doe.gov/nepa>, and the depleted uranium hexafluoride project Web site at <http://web.ead.anl.gov/uranium>.

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