change in the basin radioactivity levels. Currently, a steady increase in basin radioactivity levels always follows shutdown of the RBOF filtration system. This increase is due to the constant release of fission products by failed fuel in the basin. DOE believes that the source of this radioactivity is the TRR fuel, because the average RBOF water radioactivity levels more than doubled when the TRR spent fuel was placed in storage in the early 1990s.

**Environmental Analysis**

The CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA, 40 CFR 1502.9(c), direct federal agencies to prepare a supplement to an EIS when an agency ''makes substantial changes in the proposed action that are relevant to environmental concerns, or there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts.'' The DOE regulations for compliance with NEPA, 10 CFR 1021.314, direct that when it is unclear whether or not a supplemental EIS is required, the Department is to prepare a supplement analysis.

This Supplement Analysis (Analysis) evaluates new information regarding the condition of TRR spent fuel. In addition, this Analysis compares this new information with the IMNM EIS' evaluation of failed TRR spent fuel.

In the IMNM EIS, DOE evaluated the impacts of several stabilization alternatives (i.e., Processing to Metal, Processing to Oxide, Improving Storage, Processing and Storage for Vitrification in the Defense Waste Processing Facility, and Vitrification in F-Canyon) and a ''No Action'' alternative. For each alternative, the IMNM EIS estimated the potential impacts of stabilizing all of the TRR spent nuclear fuel (both failed fuel and that believed to be intact), including normal operations, waste generation, potential accidents, and cumulative impacts. In each case, the potential impacts for each stabilization alternative were estimated based on the entire SRS inventory of TRR spent fuel. As a result, the potential impact of stabilizing all the TRR spent fuel by Processing to Metal, as well as the potential impacts from the other alternatives, was analyzed and documented in the IMNM EIS.

Since discovering that additional TRR fuel has failed, DOE has re-evaluated the stabilization alternatives in the IMNM EIS to ensure that the analysis remains valid. In the IMNM EIS, DOE concluded that these alternatives would take from four to nine years to implement completely for the TRR spent nuclear fuel, while the preferred alternative of processing TRR spent fuel to a metal could be implemented more quickly. DOE believes that the estimates of time to implement TRR spent nuclear fuel stabilization alternatives in the IMNM EIS are still accurate. DOE expects that stabilization of the remaining TRR spent fuel in RBOF could be completed in 6 to 12 months.

**Conclusion**

Based on the foregoing, DOE finds that stabilizing the TRR fuel by the Processing to Metal alternative in the IMNM EIS will result in neither significantly greater environmental impacts than analyzed in the IMNM EIS nor a substantial change in the proposed action relevant to environmental concerns. Stabilizing all the TRR fuel by processing it to a metal is consistent with the goals of the proposed action in the IMNM EIS. Furthermore, stabilizing all the TRR fuel by processing it to a metal is consistent with the stabilization action selected in the December 12, 1995, ROD, which clearly allowed for the stabilization of additional TRR spent fuel. Consequently, DOE has concluded that the stabilization of the remaining TRR fuel does not require the preparation of a supplemental EIS.

[FR Doc. 97–9340 Filed 4–10–97; 8:45 am]
**BILLING CODE 6450–01–P**

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Office of Defense Programs; Inertial Fusion Science in Support of Stockpile Stewardship Grant Program

**AGENCY:** Department of Energy (DOE).

**ACTION:** Notice of solicitation availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Energy Office of Defense Programs hereby announces its interest in receiving grant applications for performance of unclassified innovative research in high energy-density science relevant to inertial fusion within the stockpile stewardship program.

The objectives of this new Inertial Fusion Science in Support of Stockpile Stewardship Financial Assistance Program are to (1) increase U.S. efforts in high-energy-density science relevant to Inertial Confinement Fusion (ICF) through funding of small research projects at universities and other private sector institutions; (2) promote interactions between such investigators and scientists at the Department of Energy weapons laboratories, and; (3) assist in training scientists in areas of long-term research relevant to stockpile stewardship.

Subject to the availability of appropriated funds, the Office of Inertial Fusion and the NIF Project intends to provide up to $2 million in FY98 for multiple grant awards under this Inertial Fusion Science in Support of Stockpile Stewardship Financial Assistance Program. Applicants will compete for one-to three-year grant awards through open competition with peer review.

The solicitation document invites applications from all segments of the U.S. private sector (non-federal). Any U.S. university or other institution of higher education or other non-profit or for-profit organization, non-federal agency or entity will be eligible for a grant award under this new financial assistance program. Non-U.S. citizens at U.S. institutions are eligible. Investigators at foreign institutions may not apply as a principal investigator, but may receive funding as a co-investigator. DOE must be notified of any foreign nationals involved in the funded work, and there may be some restrictions on their participation at certain facilities and conferences.

**DATES:** A solicitation will be available on or about April 11, 1997. Preapplications referencing DE-FG03–97DP00167, should be submitted by May 1, 1997. Full applications under this notice should be received by 4:30 pm Eastern Standard Time, June 30, 1997. Initial grant awards under this new financial assistance program are planned for about November 15, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** The complete solicitation document will be available on or about April 11, 1997 on the Internet by accessing the ICF grant program home page (http://www3.dp.doe.gov/ifnif/grants.htm) or by accessing the DOE/OAK home page (http://www.oak.doe.gov/procure/proc__main.html). Prospective applicants may also submit a written request including a self-addressed stamped envelope and an MS-DOS formatted high density 3½'', virus free diskette to the contracting officer for a diskette copy of the solicitation (U.S. Dept. of Energy, Oakland Operations Office, 1301 Clay Street 700N, Oakland, CA 94612–5208, Attn: Bill O'Neal).

Completed applications referencing Solicitation Notice DE-PS03–97DP00167 must be submitted to: Office of Inertial Fusion, DP–18, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD, 20874–1290, Attn.: Grant Program.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Ann Satsangi, 301–903–8059, ann.satsangi@dp.doe.gov or Bill O'Neal 510–637–1880, bill.o'neal@oak.doe.gov

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

### Evaluation Process

Applications will undergo several stages of review: administrative review, stewardship/ICF review, and scientific/technical review. The administrative review assures that the application is complete, has been signed by an authorized official, and is consistent with national security and export laws. The stewardship relevance review will be performed by a panel consisting of representatives from the three weapons laboratories who will evaluate whether applications fall within the scope of the grant program. Independent scientific/technical peer reviewers will evaluate applications on their merit, will score them against an established set of criteria. The DOE selection official will be Christopher J. Keane, Associate Director, Office of Inertial Fusion and the NIF Project.

### Scientific / Technical Merit Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria are listed in relative order of importance.

(1) Scientific/technical merit and significance of the research.

(2) The feasibility of plans for carrying out the proposed research considering such factors as appropriateness of the proposed method or approach, facility compatibility, other commitments, competition, and timing.

(3) Impact on stewardship mission.

(4) Adequacy of proposed resources and interest of the applicant institution.

(5) Research performance, capability and future promise of the investigator(s).

(6) Reasonableness and appropriateness of proposed budget.

### Representative Research Areas

Under this solicitation, DOE will consider applications for unclassified research in inertial fusion science that is relevant to stockpile stewardship. Both theoretical and experimental proposals are encouraged. Examples of areas of research (and some subfields) eligible for support under this financial assistance program are:

*Hydrodynamics*—fluid instabilities, behavior of complex systems;

*Radiative properties and atomic physics*—dense plasma behavior, plasma spectroscopy, radiative transfer, opacity;

*Plasma physics*—interpenetrating plasmas, plasma streaming in magnetic fields, laser-plasma instabilities, beam-plasma interactions, high-energy-density plasmas;

*Material properties*—equation of state, extreme high temperature and high pressure regimes, material/radiation interactions;

*Development of Diagnostics*—particle (neutron and charged particle), spectroscopic (e.g. x-ray);

*Computational Physics*—radiation-hydrodynamics codes, material-radiation interactions new modeling techniques.

### Facility Use

For applicants who propose the use of facilities at one of the ICF laboratories, arrangements will need to be made with the specific laboratory. Potential applicants should contact the appropriate laboratory directly to discuss any facility-related concerns and to determine the laboratory's procedures and schedule for submittal of a facility use proposal. The laboratory's review of facility use proposals for acceptability will take place prior to the DOE selection.

### Preapplication

Potential applicants are encouraged to submit a preapplication consisting of one to five pages of narrative describing the research objectives and methods of accomplishment. The purpose of the preapplication is (1) to provide some feedback to applicants on the relevance of their ideas to the program, and (2) to give DOE an idea of the number of full applications to expect. A preapplication should include cover-page information and a brief (1 to 5 page) project description. The cover page should include: a statement that the document is a preapplication; principal investigator's (PI) name, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address; name and address of PI's organization; and title of the project. The project description should include the following, as appropriate: a description of the proposed research; a statement of its importance; an explanation of methodology and equipment needs, including ICF facility use; anticipated results; a project schedule with estimated completion date; cost-share and total project cost information. Confidential or proprietary information is discouraged, but any such information must be clearly marked. Attachments or enclosures submitted with the preapplication will not be reviewed.

Preapplications will be reviewed relative to the goals of the grant program and the DOE will respond with a letter informing the applicant whether or not the proposed work is within the bounds of the program. Preapplications are not required, but are encouraged. Preapplications referencing DE–FG03–97DP00167, should be submitted by May 1, 1997 to: Office of Inertial, DP–18, U.S. Department of Energy, 19901 Germantown Road, Germantown, MD 20874–1290, Attn.: Grant Program, or submitted electronically to: ann.satsangi@dp.doe.gov.

(The Catalogue of Federal Assistance number for this program is 81.112.)

Issued in Oakland, California, on April 2, 1997.

**Anthony A. Pino,**

*Director, Program Acquisition and Assistance Division.*

[FR Doc. 97–9339 Filed 4–10–97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450–01–P

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

## Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

**[Docket No. CP97–323–000]**

## Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation; Notice of Request Under Blanket Authorization

April 7, 1997.

Take notice that on April 1, 1997, Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation (Columbia), 1700 MacCorkle Avenue, S.E., Charleston, West Virginia 25314–1599, filed in the above docket, a request pursuant to Sections 157.205, 157.212 and 157.216 of the Commission's Regulations under the Natural Gas Act (N.A.) (18 CFR 157.205, 157.212 and 157.216) and Columbia's authorization in Docket No. CP83–76–000, for authorization to relocate two existing points of delivery to New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG) to a single location, to abandon by sale to NYSEG 18.2 miles of 6-inch and 8-inch pipeline and appurtenances located in Cattaraugus, Delaware and Tioga Counties, New York, and to abandon by retirement 0.6 mile of 6-inch and 8-inch pipeline located in Cattaraugus County, New York, all as more fully set forth in the request which is on file with the Commission and open to public inspection.

Any person or the Commission's staff may, within 45 days after issuance of the instant notice by the Commission, file pursuant to Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.214) a motion to intervene or notice of intervention and pursuant to Section 157.205 of the Regulations under the Natural Gas Act (18 CFR 157.205) a protest to the request. If no protest is filed within the time allowed therefor, the proposed activity is deemed to be authorized effective on the day after the time allowed for filing a protest. If a protest