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**Energy, Resources, and
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Active Assignments

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Foreword

This report was prepared primarily to inform Congressional members and key staff of ongoing assignments in the General Accounting Office's Energy, Resources, and Science issue area. This report contains assignments that were ongoing as of January 2, 1997, and presents a brief background statement and a list of key questions to be answered on each assignment. The report will be issued quarterly.

This report was compiled from information available in GAO's internal management information systems. Because the information was downloaded from computerized data bases intended for internal use, some information may appear in abbreviated form.

If you have questions or would like additional information about assignments listed, please contact Victor Rezendes, Director, on (202) 512-3841; or Barry Hill, Associate Director, on (202) 512-9775; or Allen Li, Associate Director, on (202) 512-3600.

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ROLES AND MISSIONS

TITLE: EXAMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FEDERAL POLICIES AND PROGRAMS DESIGNED TO REDUCE ELECTRICITY CONSUMPTION (141004)

BACKGROUND : The energy crises of the 1970s, the high cost of building new capacity, and environmental concerns led Congress to pass laws to promote electricity conservation. However, falling energy prices coupled with deregulation of the electric utility industry have reduced the incentive to conserve electricity, calling into question the effectiveness of conservation programs.

KEY QUESTIONS : (Q.1) What are the objectives of energy conservation policy and programs as they relate to electricity conservation? (Q.2) How has attainment of the objectives been affected by changes in public policy and economic conditions?

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

TITLE: DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR/CORPS OF ENGINEERS BUDGET SCRUB (140546)

BACKGROUND : The Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Bureau of Reclamation within Interior and the Corps of Engineers within Defense have substantial carryover balances of unobligated budget authority and unliquidated obligations. A portion of these carryover balances could be used to offset their FY 1998 budget request.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1. How do Interior and the Corps track carry over balances? 2. How do the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, and Corps of Engineers justify their large carryover balances. 3. Have these agencies requested FY 98 funding that exceeds their needs for particular projects or activities?

TITLE: ALTERNATIVE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN OTHER GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES THAT MANAGE PROGRAMS OR USES SIMILAR TO THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE (141003)

BACKGROUND : The Forest Service's (FS) traditional way of managing is not serving it well. The public is unhappy with FS actions and the Congress is concerned about the FS's lack of revenues and inability to recover costs. The Congress is looking for ways for agencies to increase revenues, reduce costs, and become more accountable through using business-like practices and market reforms.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What have other non-federal U.S. and foreign governments done to run similar public agencies/programs for self- sufficiency, profit, or in a more business-like manner? (2) What lessons were learned, including academic research and studies, that may be applicable to the FS? (3) What legal or other barriers may preclude the FS from adopting these initiatives?

MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

TITLE: DO NOAA AND NIST HAVE EXCESS CARRYOVER BALANCES THAT COULD BE USED TO OFFSET FUTURE APPROPRIATIONS? (307749)

BACKGROUND : Our work will assist the Congress as it reviews the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) budget requests by identifying where these agencies have end of the year carryover balances (unobligated funds and uncosted obligations) that could be used to offset future appropriations.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1: What NOAA programs have large carryover balances? Q2: Can NOAA justify large balances--or could the funds be used to offset future appropriations? Q3: Does NIST have large carryover balances for its Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Extension programs and its major construction projects that could be used to offset future appropriations?

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ENERGY

TITLE: UPDATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR SAFETY CONVENTION (141000)

BACKGROUND : The International Nuclear Safety Convention is awaiting ratification by the U.S. Senate. The Convention calls for nations to ensure the safety of civilian nuclear power reactors. Over 20 nations have already ratified the Convention.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1. How will the signatories' compliance with the Convention's obligations be monitored? Q2. What costs will the U.S. incur in meeting its responsibilities under the Convention?

TITLE: REVIEW OF FOREIGN VISITORS TO THE DOE'S WEAPONS LABORATORIES (141002)

BACKGROUND : House Report 104-563 directed GAO to examine the extent of foreign visitors to DOE's weapons laboratory. In response, on Sept. 26, 1996, GAO provided a Statement for the Record on the numbers of such visitors. At that time, the committee asked that we further examine these visits to determine how well they are controlled and if these visits raise security concerns.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) How is foreign access to secured and non-secured areas at the weapons laboratories controlled? (2) How are discussions of sensitive subjects controlled? (3) Have background check procedures been followed, and have risks been identified? (4) Does DOE have in place risk mitigating counter intelligence activities?

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ENERGY

TITLE: CLEANUP OF DOE'S BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY (141007)

BACKGROUND : DOE is cleaning up contamination at its laboratories and nuclear weapons production sites. The Brookhaven National Laboratory on Long Island, NY, has underground tanks, soil, and landfills requiring remediation. These areas have also contaminated an aquifer used for drinking water. In FY 1995, the cleanup budget for Brookhaven was \$26 million.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What are the status and nature of DOE's cleanup efforts at Brookhaven National Laboratory, particularly of activities related to groundwater contamination? (2) Are Brookhaven's cleanup activities proceeding on time and within budget, particularly groundwater-related activities?

TITLE: ISSUES RELATED TO THE U.S./NORTH KOREAN AGREED FRAMEWORK (141008)

BACKGROUND : On 10/21/94, the U.S. and North Korea signed an agreement to replace North Korea's nuclear reactors with less risky reactors. The agreement is conditioned on resolving "issues of concern," including returning remains of U.S. soldiers missing in action. The Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO)-international entity-is implementing this agreement.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1) What is the status of efforts to resolve "issues of concern" related to the agreement? 2) How much will the agreement cost to implement? 3) How will procurements under the agreement be handled? 4) How will North Korea's existing spent fuel be disposed of?

TITLE: DOE'S PRODUCTION OF LIMITED LIFE COMPONENTS (LLCS) (141009)

BACKGROUND : Over the past several years, DOE has ceased production of new nuclear weapons. As a result, the weapons currently in the stockpile must be relied upon as our nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future. To maintain these weapons, DOE must periodically change four limited life components: neutron generators, tritium reservoirs, gas generators, and power sources.

KEY QUESTIONS : To what extent does DOE have the production capacity to assure the required supply of limited life components (LLCs) for the short and long-term.

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND ENERGY

TITLE: DOE'S PRODUCTION OF LIMITED LIFE COMPONENTS (LLCS) FOR ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS (141010)

BACKGROUND : Over the past several years, DOE has ceased production of new nuclear weapons. As a result, the weapons currently in the stockpile must be relied upon as our nuclear deterrent for the foreseeable future. To maintain these weapons, DOE must periodically change four limited life components: neutron generators, tritium reservoirs, gas generators, and power sources.

KEY QUESTIONS : To what extent does DOE have the production capacity to assure the required supply of limited life components (LLC) for its nuclear weapons for the short and long-term.

TITLE: IDENTIFYING LOW RISK DOE CLEANUP ACTIVITIES THAT COULD REDUCE THE COST OF CLEANUP WITHOUT COMPROMISING SAFETY (302205)

BACKGROUND : The Department of Energy (DOE) projects spending up to \$265 billion cleaning up the nuclear weapons complex. DOE has produced studies suggesting that some ongoing cleanup projects may not be necessary because they address low health and environmental risk areas. Considerable cost savings could be achieved, while not compromising safety, by remediating only high risk areas.

KEY QUESTIONS : (Q.1) What low-risk cleanup activities exist that could be eliminated, reduced in scope, and/or postponed without compromising safety? (Q.2) For those activities identified, what cost savings could be realized in fiscal year 1998 by eliminating, reducing, and/or postponing these activities?

NATURAL RESOURCES

TITLE: RETURNS FROM PARK SERVICE CONCESSIONERS (140350)

BACKGROUND : Since 1976, GAO has recommended reforming National Park Service (NPS) concessions law to increase both competition and the return to the government from concessioners. In 1993, NPS revised its concessions regulations. Since then, NPS claims that there has been more competition in awarding concession contracts and an increase in the return to the government.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1:What has been the extent of competition for major NPS concession contracts awarded since 1993? Q2:What has been the return to the government from these concession contracts? Q3:What has been the trend in the use of special accounts associated with NPS concession contracts? Q4:Are funds from these special accounts spent on appropriate items?

NATURAL RESOURCES

TITLE: POLICIES AND PRACTICES REGARDING HOUSING, VEHICLES, AND UNIFORMS IN FOUR LAND-MANAGEMENT AGENCIES (141001)

BACKGROUND : The Chairman is interested in information about the manner in which similar administrative functions--related to housing, vehicles, and uniforms--are performed by the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What are some of the key similarities and differences between the four land-management agencies (Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service) in their current policies and practices regarding employee housing, vehicles, and uniforms?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: REVIEW OF FEDERAL AND STATE ONSHORE ROYALTY COSTS AND FUNCTIONS (140002)

BACKGROUND : OBRA of 1993 requires the Secretary of the Interior to deduct from the states' share of onshore federal mineral royalties 50 percent of the enacted appropriation allocable to the management of these minerals. Some state officials object to the amounts deducted, and believe that they can collect royalties less expensively and more effectively.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1. What amounts were deducted from states' shares of onshore mineral royalties, and what federal functions are associated with those deductions? 2. What are the costs and functions of Wyoming's, California's and New Mexico's royalty management programs? 3. How do the federal costs and functions compare with these state programs?

TITLE: REVIEW OF TONGASS NATIONAL FOREST LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN PROCESS (140111)

BACKGROUND : The Forest Service manages the 17 million acre Tongass National Forest in Alaska for various uses and activities while complying with environmental and other requirements. Presently, the Service is revising its Tongass Land Management Plan, which when completed later in 1996, will specify future projects, uses, and activities.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) Examine the role played by forest supervisors and scientists in revising the Plan in the context of forest planning regulations. (2) Examine the role played by a contractor in analyzing the content of public comments on the revised Plan. (3) Determine the extent to which socioeconomic issues were addressed. (4) Estimate the overall cost of the process.

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: FEDERAL AGENCY MANAGEMENT OF LAND UNITS SUCH AS PARKS AND FORESTS (140112)

BACKGROUND : Interior's Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Bureau of Reclamation; Agriculture's Forest Service; and the Army's Corps of Engineers administer most of the 650 million acres of federal lands--mostly in the western states. They manage for development, preservation, conservation, and recreation.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1) For each of the agencies, what land management activities are carried out at individual land units and to what extent are the same activities performed at the various units? 2) Have activities changed over time? 3) What are the costs and revenues for the units for the last three years?

TITLE: COMPARISON OF FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS TO SIMILAR PROGRAMS IN THE STATES AND AT OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT (140113)

BACKGROUND : Thirteen western states own about 142 million acres of land and manage these lands for a variety of purposes, including state parks, forests, etc. Some believe that states manage lands more cost effectively than the federal government and could be used as models for improving the cost effectiveness of managing federal lands.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1: For what purposes are states and other levels of government managing their public land? Q2: What management activities are being performed at individual land units? At what cost? What revenues are being generated at these individual land units? Q3: How do the management, costs and revenues generated compare with similar federal land units?

TITLE: REVIEW OF FOREST SERVICE'S EMERGENCY SALVAGE SALE PROGRAM (140540)

BACKGROUND : Section 2001(b) of P.L. 104-19 contains provisions that were designed to expedite the Forest Service's salvage timber program. This section called for reducing the salvage timber backlog by achieving to the maximum extent feasible a salvage volume level above the programmed level through calendar year 1996.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What are the volumes of salvage timber offered and sold under the act compared to programmed volumes prior to the act for fiscal years 1995-96? (2) How have various provisions of the act affected the Forest Service's ability to offer timely sales? (3) Do selected salvage sales meet the definition of "salvage" specified in the act and Forest Service guidelines?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: FOREST SERVICE DECISION MAKING: LAND MANAGEMENT ISSUES (140541)

BACKGROUND : The Forest Service is responsible for managing more than one-third of federal land. The National Forest Management Act requires it to accommodate a variety of uses, such as logging and recreation. Additionally, numerous other laws such as the Endangered Species Act and the National Environmental Policy Act impose constraints and mandates on how it manages its lands.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What is the agency's current decision making process for determining how it manages its land? (2) What problems are there with this process? (3) How do recent agency proposals address these problems? (4) What proposals or considerations raised by others are important to consider?

TITLE: REVIEW OF THE FOREST SERVICE'S ROAD BUILDING EFFORTS (140543)

BACKGROUND : From 1990-95, the Forest Service built or rebuilt 24,000 miles of roads at a cost of \$1.4 billion, and obliterated 13,000 miles of roads. Most roads were built by timber purchasers who received a credit against their contract for the estimated road costs. No other agency gives road credits because purchasers include the cost of needed roads in their bids.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1) How does the Forest Service determine the need for and type of roads built in national forests, 2) How and why does the Forest Service differ in its treatment of roadbuilding costs from other sellers of timber, and 3) What changes could be made to reduce the cost of roads to the government?

TITLE: FOREST SERVICE'S MANAGEMENT AND USE OF THE SALVAGE SALE FUND (140544)

BACKGROUND : The National Forest Management Act of 1976 established a permanent appropriation for preparing and administering timber salvage sales. Receipts from these sales are deposited in the Salvage Sale Fund. Concern has been raised regarding the Forest Service's management and use of this fund and the impact on other funds or programs if sufficient receipts are not achieved.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) How is the Salvage Sale Fund used? (2) How is the Salvage Sale Fund replenished and is it adequate to cover costs? (3) How is the Salvage Sale Fund monitored and reviewed?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: CORPS OF ENGINEERS CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AND SELECTING RURAL WATER RESOURCES PROJECTS FOR FLOOD CONTROL FUNDING (140891)

BACKGROUND : Section 214 of the 1992 act presupposes that Corps of Engineers criteria for the evaluation and selection of flood control projects for federal funding are biased against rural and poor areas and mandated GAO recommendations to correct this.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q.1. What factors inhibit rural flood control projects from meeting Corps' criteria for federal funding? Q.2. What options could the Congress consider if it elected to address this disparity issue?

TITLE: REVIEW OF THE WAPATO INDIAN IRRIGATION PROJECT (141005)

BACKGROUND : The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) recovers some operation and maintenance expenses from project land owners on 18 of their 70 Indian irrigation projects. The Wapato Irrigation Project, one of the largest managed by BIA, provides water for 142,000 acres of arable Indian and non-Indian land on, or near, the Yakima Indian Reservation in the State of Washington.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) Why is some of the project acreage idle, and what can be done to get the idle land into productive use? (2) What impact has the idle land had on the operation and maintenance deficit at the project? (3) What obstacles will BIA face in trying to collect past due operation and maintenance assessments for the project?

TITLE: INFORMATION ON THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION'S NUCLEAR PLANT SAFETY PROGRAM (170270)

BACKGROUND : NRC's mission is to "ensure adequate protection of the public health and safety" in the nuclear area. Sixty percent of NRC's \$470 million budget goes to nuclear plant safety issues. Recent problems at power plants, nuclear waste concerns, aging plants, and budgetary pressures suggest this is a good time to examine how NRC's program is designed to ensure plant safety.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1. How does NRC define nuclear plant safety? 2. How useful are NRC's performance indicators to measure the safety condition of power plants, and how appropriate is NRC's use of them? 3. How useful is the knowledge NRC obtains through its inspection program: (a) how accurate and complete is the information; (b) how well is it integrated?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: REVIEW OF U. S. PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM (170273)

BACKGROUND : The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is responsible for promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and, through its safeguards program, verifies the peaceful uses of nuclear materials. A key component of IAEA's activities is its technical cooperation program through which IAEA provides member states with nuclear material, equipment, and training.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1. What is the purpose and scope of U.S. participation in IAEA's technical cooperation program? Q2. What technical cooperation has the U.S. and IAEA provided to member states, including Cuba, and what is the cost? Q3. What is the United States' and the IAEA's management and oversight of the program?

TITLE: IMPLEMENTATION OF DOE DISPOSAL PROGRAM BUDGET CUTS (302186)

BACKGROUND : As a result of a nearly 30 percent budget cut to the waste disposal program in fiscal year 1996, DOE eliminated almost 1,000 contractor positions. Also, DOE abandoned plans to determine, as required by law, if Yucca Mountain is "suitable" for a repository; and instead will assess, by 1998, the site's "viability."

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1: What adjustments has DOE made to its nuclear waste disposal program as a result of the FY 1996 budget cuts? Q2: What are the potential impediments to achieving the objectives and schedule for the repository project, such as the promulgation of revised EPA standards, NRC regulations, and DOE site suitability guidelines?

TITLE: ALLEGATIONS OF MANAGEMENT AND SAFETY PROBLEMS AT DOE'S FERNALD SITE (302192)

BACKGROUND : Since February 1996, the Cincinnati Enquirer has published a series of articles alleging that serious management and safety problems exist at DOE's Fernald site. These allegations raise questions about the adequacy of DOE's oversight of FERMCO, the contractor responsible for managing cleanup activities at Fernald.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q(1) What information exists on and what is the status of various investigations of the major allegations made by the Enquirer? Q(2) How do DOE's management and oversight processes at Fernald, which are highlighted by the major allegations, assure that FERMCO is (a) effectively managing the site's cleanup activities and (b) fulfilling DOE's safety and health requirements?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: REVIEW OF DOE'S MANAGEMENT OF WEAPONS GRADE PLUTONIUM (302198)

BACKGROUND : DOE lacks a coherent policy on categorizing its plutonium as an asset or excess/waste, and therefore cannot accurately estimate the cost of managing and disposing of its excess inventories. As a result, DOE may be creating an "unfunded liability" for the future. Ultimately DOE must dispose of its excess plutonium, yet, to date has not developed a plutonium disposition strategy.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What are DOE's policies for categorizing weapons-usable plutonium as an asset or excess/waste? (2) What are past trends and variations in DOE's plutonium categorization? (3) What costs are associated with maintaining plutonium as an asset or excess/waste?

TITLE: HOW APPROPRIATE ARE THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S ACTIONS TO SELL THE NAVAL PETROLEUM RESERVE NUMBERED ONE (COMMONLY REFERRED TO AS ELK HILLS) ? (302201)

BACKGROUND : P.L. 104-106 authorizes DOE to sell the government's interest in the Naval Petroleum Reserve # 1 (Elk Hills) by 2/98. Elk Hills is owned by the government and Chevron. GAO is to monitor DOE's actions relating to the sale and report to the Congress any appropriate findings. We plan to issue a post-mortem report to document the process and lessons learned from the sale.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q.1. What, if any, difficulties exist as the Secretary of Energy takes action to sell Elk Hills, which could effect the timing and yield of the sale or otherwise compromise the best interests of the United States.

TITLE: REVIEW OF DOE'S OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT'S PRIVATIZATION INITIATIVES (302202)

BACKGROUND : DOE is relying on privatization to cut costs and speed waste cleanup when compared with standard M&O contracting. Projects to be privatized include cleanup activities at Hanford, Idaho, and Savannah River. As part of its privatization of waste treatment at Hanford, DOE will need to oversee the private contractors' health and safety practices.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1. What is DOE's support for its cost savings estimates from privatization and what other benefits and problems have been indentified regarding privatization? Q2. What is the status of DOE efforts to oversee the TWRS contract and regulate health & safety? Q3. How well has DOE coordinated its external health & safety regulation at TWRS with its plans for TWRS privatization?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: ANALYSIS OF BUDGET AT NEVADA OPERATIONS OFFICE (302203)

TITLE: STATUS OF EFFORTS AT DOE SITES TO INTEGRATE NATURAL RESOURCE RESTORATION INTO CLEANUP ACTIVITIES (302206)

BACKGROUND : DOE is cleaning up contamination from nuclear weapons production, a massive effort estimated to cost over \$200 billion. Due to cost and technology limitations, DOE expects contaminants to remain in place at some sites. This may result in states or tribes filing claims for natural resource damages against DOE, as provided by Superfund legislation.

KEY QUESTIONS : (Q1) What is the status of efforts at DOE sites to integrate natural resource restoration considerations into cleanup activities? (Q2) What are the key factors at DOE sites that may contribute to the nature and extent of natural resource damages?

TITLE: PRIMER ON PRIVATIZATION OF DOE'S POWER MARKETING ADMINISTRATIONS (307341)

BACKGROUND : DOE's power marketing administrations market power generated at federal multipurpose water projects operated and maintained by the Bureau of Reclamation and Corps of Engineers. The water at these projects is also used for such purposes as navigation, flood control, irrigation, and recreation. Legislation has been introduced to privatize the PMAs.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1) What are the general parameters of the privatization "process" (e.g., sale objectives, valuation of assets, manner of sale)? (2) How does the current system operate and how important are the PMAs in the markets in which they operate? (3) What are the key factors that would need to be addressed in a privatization of PMAs?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: REVIEW OF U.S. INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH BY ANALYSIS OF CURRENTLY USED MEASURES (307738)

BACKGROUND : A perennial problem is determining if U.S. government and industry are investing in R&D at adequate levels. Input measures such as dollars spent are often used but are flawed. Output measures such as patents also have flaws.

KEY QUESTIONS : (1)What are historical patterns of R&D spending and limitations of the data? (2)What are historical patterns of R&D outputs and limitations of the data?(3)Are claims that industrial R&D investment is short-sighted well-supported? (4)How do some companies plan R&D spending? (5)Do the answers to these questions suggest ways to improve R&D measures?

TITLE: REVIEW OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROPERTY FEES AT THE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE (PTO) AND THE COPYRIGHT OFFICE (CO) (307746)

BACKGROUND : The Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), has a budget of about \$600 million, all generated by user fees, while the Copyright Office (CO) has a budget of about \$28 million, \$12 million of which is recovered through fees. The Congress is considering numerous proposals affecting how PTO and CO are organized and funded.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1. How do PTO and CO set fees? Q2. Do fees recover the costs of the services? Q3. What are the potential effects of increasing fees? Q4. Do fees encourage or discourage complete and accurate applications? Q5. Do different applicants pay different fees for the same services?

TITLE: CHANGES IN DOE'S FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES USED TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSIONS (308686)

BACKGROUND : Congress continues to consider eliminating, moving, or privatizing DOE missions. Also, DOE is implementing a Strategic Alignment and Downsizing Initiative to save \$1.7 billion over 5 years. GAO report, GAO/RCED-96-69R, analyzed DOE's FY 1994 financial and workforce resources and provides a baseline for measuring changes to Energy's programs.

KEY QUESTIONS : 1.) How have DOE's financial resources and workforce changed from the fiscal year 1994 and 1995 levels to the fiscal year 1996 levels? 2.) To what extent are changes in DOE's financial resources and workforce consistent with its downsizing and restructuring goals?

OTHER ISSUE AREA WORK - ERS

TITLE: EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S WORKFORCE RESTRUCTURING EFFORTS (308688)

BACKGROUND : In response to the end of the cold war, legislation required DOE to develop plans for restructuring its defense nuclear workforce. DOE has to develop plans that minimize the impact of involuntary separation through various programs and incentives. To date over 20,000 employees have been separated under this program at a cost of \$165 million through FY 1994.

KEY QUESTIONS : Q1. Are contractor personnel termination benefits since 9/27/91 different for those hired before and after that date at DOE's Hanford, Savannah River, Oak Ridge, and Rocky Flats facilities? Q2. What has been the impact of restructuring on the skill mix at each location? Q3. What steps has DOE taken to oversee implementation of the plans?