

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF STATE HEALTH SERVICES**

EDUARDO J. SANCHEZ, M.D., M.P.H.
COMMISSIONER

1100 W. 49th Street • Austin, Texas 78756
1-888-963-7111 • <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us>

Mr. Donald Silawsky
Office of Petroleum Reserves (FE-47)
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20585-0301

Re: Site Selection for the Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (DOE/EIS-0385)

Dear Mr. Silawsky:

Thank you for your letter dated May 19, 2006, inviting our agency to review and comment on the Department of Energy's (DOE) Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), "Site Selection for the Expansion of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve" (DOE/EIS-0385). According to your letter, the draft EIS proposes to expand the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) by selecting new storage sites to accommodate 272 billion barrels of additional storage capacity needed to meet the 1 billion barrel mandate established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Five new sites for SPR facilities are currently being proposed under this EIS, including the Stratton Ridge facility located in Brazoria County, Texas. Existing SPR facilities where storage capacity may be increased include the Big Hill facility located in Jefferson County, Texas.

Our agency administers state and federal regulations, which enable local emergency responders to identify chemical hazards and develop emergency response plans for their communities. The Texas Community Right-to-Know Acts, Title 25 of the Health and Safety Code, Chapters 505-507, and Sections 311/312 of the federal Emergency Planning and Community Response Act, 40 CFR 370.25, require facilities to annually report the presence of significant quantities of hazardous chemicals to the State Emergency Response Commission, the local fire department, and the Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) for use in developing emergency response plans.

Agency staff will review the draft EIS and will respond with written comments as needed. We will also provide copies of the draft EIS to the Brazoria and Jefferson County LEPCs for their review and input.

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Peter Tadin of our Policy, Standards, and Quality Assurance Unit, Environmental Group, at email at

Sincerely,

Eduardo J. Sanchez, M.D., M.P.H.
Commissioner