



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of
Infectious Diseases
Fort Detrick, Maryland

**For immediate release
February 8, 2006**

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Environmental Impact Statement Planned for USAMRIID Facilities at Fort Detrick

The Department of the Army issued today a Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) associated with the construction and operation of new U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases (USAMRIID) facilities and the decommissioning and demolition or re-use of the existing USAMRIID facilities at Fort Detrick, Maryland. A Public Scoping Meeting will be conducted at Governor Thomas Johnson High School, 1501 N. Market St., Frederick, at 7 p.m. on February 22. The purpose of the Public Scoping Meeting is to describe the National Environmental Policy Act process and solicit public comment on environmental issues and alternatives related to the Proposed Action.

The Proposed Action will replace the outdated and crowded existing USAMRIID facilities and provide adequate state-of-the-art biocontainment laboratory space, animal facilities, and administrative offices, as well as operational and administrative support facilities. USAMRIID's mission involves conducting research to develop medical solutions -- vaccines, drugs, therapies, and diagnostics -- to protect our armed forces and citizens from biological threats. The biocontainment laboratories and animal facilities will be designed, constructed, and operated in accordance with standards established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health, consisting of facilities, equipment, and procedural guidelines designed to minimize risk of exposure to potentially hazardous biological pathogens for laboratory workers and the outside environment.

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The proposed new USAMRIID facilities will be located on Fort Detrick, adjacent to the existing USAMRIID facilities and near the planned Integrated Research Facility of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, now under construction, and the planned National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center of the Department of Homeland Security.

USAMRIID, an organization of the U.S. Army Medical Research and Materiel Command, is the lead biodefense laboratory of the Department of Defense (DoD), with unique facilities and expertise to safely conduct critical research, development, testing, and evaluation for medical solutions to protect our armed forces from biological threats they may encounter on the battlefield. In addition, USAMRIID has been assigned a second mission, namely to leverage these capabilities to support government-wide biological defense efforts by acting as the DoD's lead laboratory for the testing and evaluation of medical biological defense products.

Environmental analyses of the Proposed Action and alternatives will evaluate land use, climate, geology, soils, water resources, wetlands, plant and animal ecology, air quality, historical and cultural resources, socioeconomic environment, noise, odors, transportation, energy resources, hazardous material management, human health and safety, environmental justice, and cumulative effects with respect to potentially significant impacts. The issues to be addressed will include safety of laboratory operations and demolition of the existing biocontainment laboratories; public health and safety; handling, collection, treatment, and disposal of research wastes; analysis of other risks; and pollution prevention.

For more information:

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View the USAMRIID EIS web site at <http://www.usamriid.army.mil/eis>.