June 21, 2022

James Lovejoy, Document Manager
U.S. Department of Energy
Idaho Operations Office
1955 Fremont Avenue, MS 1235
Idaho Falls, Idaho 83415

Dear James Lovejoy:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Department of Energy’s May 2022 Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Versatile Test Reactor (CEQ Number 20220070; EPA Region 10 Project Number 19-0047-DOE). EPA has conducted its review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and our review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. The CAA Section 309 role is unique to EPA and requires EPA to review and comment publicly on any proposed federal action subject to NEPA’s environmental impact statement requirement.

EPA finds the FEIS is responsive to our March 2021 comments on the Draft EIS. In particular, EPA appreciates the inclusion of more clarifying information on measures to be taken to protect resources when the VTR project is implemented, updated discussion on impacts of climate change, and other changes made to the EIS between draft and final based on comments received from the public. EPA also notes DOE’s commitment to implement low impact development techniques during project construction to protect resources, to monitor impacts and risks, and take corrective actions where adverse impacts will be detected. For the VTR Record of Decision, EPA recommends DOE clarify management approaches for VTR spent driver fuel beyond January 1, 2035, the operational life of the proposed VTR.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the FEIS for this project. If you have questions about this review, please contact Theo Mbabaliye of my staff at (206) 553-6322 and mbabaliye.theogene@epa.gov, or me, at (206) 553-1774 or at chu.rebecca@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Rebecca A. Chu, Chief
Policy and Environmental Review Branch