

N62604.AR.000004
NCBC GULFPORT
5090.3a

NEWSPAPER ARTICLE "AF WANTS TO BURN HERBICIDE" NCBC GULFPORT MS
1/25/1972
THE TIMES PICAYUNE

The Times-Picayune

New Orleans, Louisiana

AF Wants To Burn Herbicide

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Air Force proposes to burn in Texas or Illinois 2.3 million gallons of a plant killer that was banned in Vietnam after tests showed it may have caused animal birth defects.

The disposal methods were proposed in an environmental-impact statement filed earlier this month with federal and state agencies in Texas, Illinois and Mississippi.

The herbicide, code-named Orange, would be burned in commercial incinerators in Deer Park, Tex., or at Sauguet, Ill., across the Mississippi River from St. Louis.

THE PROPOSAL, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press following inquiries, is subject to comment by the agencies to which it was submitted. They have 30 days to respond. If significant controversy is aroused, the Air Force may hold a public hearing before turning in the final impact statement to the Environmental Protection Agency.

"This action is not considered to have an adverse effect on the environment," the Air Force said. "The probable environmental consequences of the proposed action will be minor or insignificant."

Orange was the defoliant most commonly used in Vietnam to strip away jungle cover concealing enemy troops and supplies.

The Defense Department banned its use in 1970, shortly after the Agriculture Department banned the herbicide 2,4,5-T—the principal ingredient of Orange—around homes, water areas and food crops. This followed laboratory tests indicating it retarded growth and caused birth defects in rodents.

THE AIR FORCE was left with 2.3 million gallons of Orange worth \$16.9 million, most of which is stored in 55-gallon steel drums in Vietnam.

Although two sites are under consideration for disposal, the Air Force has not made the final selection and no contracts have been let.

Under the Air Force's draft statement, the herbicide would be incinerated at a rate of 2,000 to 5,000 gallons a day, producing a total of 44.6 million pounds of carbon dioxide, a nontoxic gas, and 12.4 million pounds of hydrogen chloride, which would be converted into sodium chloride, or common salt.

"The 'adverse' environmental effects which cannot be avoided are the generation and discharge of combustion byproducts and liquid effluent residue into the atmosphere and public waterways," the Air Force said. It added that this would "not adversely affect human health, esthetically or culturally valuable surroundings, standards of living or other aspects of life."

January 25, 1972