

Air Force Base Exempted from Reporting Rules

WASHINGTON, DC, September 19, 2002 (ENS) - President George W. Bush has suspended certain waste reporting requirements at the Air Force's operating location near Groom Lake, Nevada due to security concerns.

Noting that the base is the subject of two ongoing environmental lawsuits that could force the release of sensitive information, Bush said, "I find that it is in the paramount interest of the United States to exempt the United States Air Force's operating location near Groom Lake, Nevada ... from any applicable requirement for the disclosure to unauthorized persons of classified information concerning that operating location."

The order, made in a memorandum to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Secretary of the Air Force, exempts the Air Force base "from any federal, state, interstate or local provision respecting control and abatement of solid waste or hazardous waste disposal that would require the disclosure of classified information concerning the operating location to any unauthorized person."

The exemption is effective for one year.

The Bush order notes that existing environmental laws are not intended to require the disclosure of classified information, specifically citing the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Under RCRA, the EPA regulates hazardous waste from its creation to its safe disposal, and waste generators must report on their wastes to the EPA.