



Transportation System

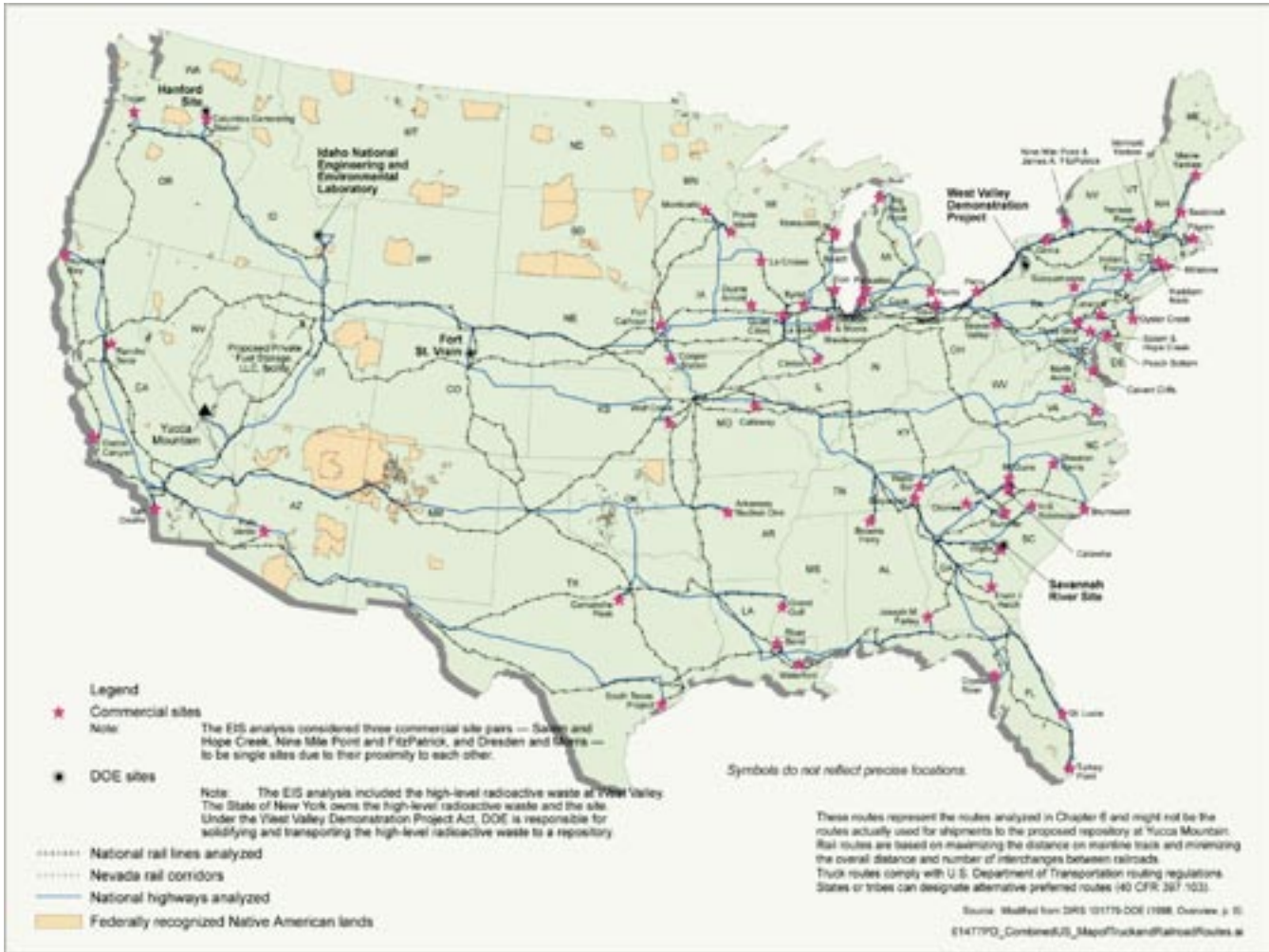
Q: How will transportation routes to the repository be chosen?

DOE is working with states through four state regional groups to identify suites of transportation routes in each region for highway, rail, and waterways. DOE will also interact with federally recognized tribal nations on routing issues. The process includes identifying highway routes and identifying rail and waterways using industry and federal standards. DOE will continue its practice, to the extent appropriate, of coordinating the details of shipment routes and specific modes with states, tribes, utilities, and carriers.

After considering a range of alternatives, DOE has decided that the transportation system will be mostly rail. Rail transportation was determined to have significant support from stakeholder organizations and to offer operational and security efficiencies. In addition, DOE has decided to use dedicated train service for shipments to the repository. Dedicated trains would transport only spent fuel or high-level radioactive waste and would provide better operational control as well as cost savings for DOE shipments to Yucca Mountain. Barge and highway routing will be used where rail is not available (barges may be used to ship spent nuclear fuel from some reactor sites to nearby railheads).

Some shipments will require transport over the national highway system. Under the DOT highway routing process, these shipments would travel on interstate highways, designated beltways, and urban bypasses to limit time in transit. For highway shipments, spent nuclear fuel and high-level radioactive waste is classified as “Highway Route Controlled Quantity” for purposes of the DOT highway routing process. Carriers of these materials must use “preferred routes” that would reduce transit time.

State and tribal agencies, following the DOT process, may designate alternative highway routes through their jurisdictions. The key consideration for states and tribes in determining alternative preferred routes is minimizing radiological risk to the public. This is done by considering factors including population density, time of day, and day of week. DOE is working with the states and tribes to consider criteria for rail transport.



Transportation routes analyzed in the Yucca Mountain Repository Environmental Impact Statement.