

# DOE

# NEWS

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## Retech Sign Agreement for Test Melt of Contaminated Metal

Westinghouse Idaho Nuclear Co. has signed a cooperative research and development agreement with Retech Inc. of Ukiah, Calif. to perform test melts of scrap stainless steel. The cooperative agreement is part of one national contaminated metal recycling program that WINCO is managing for the Department of Energy.

Under the agreement, Retech will do a demonstration melt of stainless steel that contains "surrogates" -- non-radioactive materials that act like radionuclides. Retech's plasma arc furnace in Ukiah will employ a stream of hot plasma to melt the metal. WINCO will measure the amount of the surrogates removed from the scrap, providing important data to help determine the best way to melt contaminated metal for recasting into useable products. The melting and sample analysis will be completed by September, 1994.

WINCO will supply the scrap metal and surrogate material, and perform the analytical work. WINCO is also negotiating with other companies to perform test melts in furnaces with designs that differ from the Retech furnace. WINCO will evaluate which furnace design produces the maximum amount of decontamination.

Over the past several decades, scrap metal contaminated with radioactive materials has accumulated at Department of Energy facilities all over the country. Working with universities, private industry and other DOE labs, WINCO is trying to identify melting technologies that will allow reuse of contaminated metals within the DOE complex. Eventually, WINCO hopes to spin off the technology to private industry, which might build and operate a facility utilizing metal from both government and private nuclear facilities.

WINCO is looking at a number of options for reusing contaminated scrap metal, but much of it could be used in storage and transportation casks for spent nuclear fuel or other radioactive materials.

WINCO is the DOE's contractor at the Idaho Chemical Processing Plant, where it receives and safely stores spent nuclear fuel, processes high-level radioactive waste and develops technologies for preparation of spent fuel and waste for final disposal.

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Media contact: Brad Bugger, (208) 526-0833  
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