

Large Component from Sturgis Nuclear Barge Disposed at Texas Radioactive Waste Site

In June 2017, Waste Control Specialists (WCS), the operator of Texas' low-level radioactive waste disposal site located in Andrews County, completed the disposal of the reactor pressure vessel (RPV) from the U.S. Army's MH-1A reactor aboard the nuclear barge Sturgis. Decommissioning of the country's first floating nuclear power station is ongoing in Galveston under the supervision of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The RPV was removed from the barge and placed inside its specially-designed shielded shipping container with a combined weight of approximately 81 tons and transported over 600 miles via road to the WCS site.

Disposal of the RPV required extensive planning and engineering design, all of which was reviewed and approved by the TCEQ. The RPV was offloaded from the delivery vehicle, carried down the ramp into the disposal cell using specialized equipment, placed on a concrete slab base, and encased in approximately 57 cubic yards of concrete rated with a compressive strength of 2,000 pounds per square inch. All disposal operations were conducted under the observation of the two resident inspectors deployed by the TCEQ.