

Guide to Participating in NEPA Public Hearings

Through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, you have an opportunity to review the Department of Energy's (DOE), Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy's (ARPA-E) Engineered High Energy Crop (EHEC) Programs Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) and to provide timely information and comments to DOE on the Draft PEIS. DOE is holding a 60-day public comment period for this Draft PEIS. This handout outlines how you can participate and provide comments during the Draft PEIS comment period.

Public Comment Period: January 16 – March 17, 2015

Public Hearings

DOE is holding an in-person public hearing on February 17, 2015 from 5 to 7 p.m. ET at Holiday Inn Washington Capitol, 550 C Street Southwest, Washington, DC. Similar to the previously held scoping meetings, the public hearing will provide an opportunity for the public to provide verbal comments on the Draft PEIS. This public hearing is a drop-in event where you can come at any time and stay as long as like. The public hearing will provide an opportunity for the public to provide comments verbally in a large group setting or privately to a stenographer.

In addition, DOE is hosting several web-based public hearings on February 24th and February 26th from 2 to 4 p.m. ET.

Information about these hearings, webinar registration, and comment instructions are provided on the project website at: <http://engineeredhighenergycropsPEIS.com>.

How to Provide Comments

DOE requests your comments on the Draft PEIS and encourages the submission of scientific data, studies or research to support comments. The comment period to provide your comments on the Draft PEIS ends on March 17, 2015.

Your comments will be reviewed by DOE for consideration in development of the Final PEIS. All comments—written or verbal—will be considered equally.

You can provide comments in the following ways:

1. **In-person/Web-based Public Hearings:** Written and verbal comments accepted at each public hearing
2. **E-mail:** comments@engineeredhighenergycropsPEIS.com
3. **Online:** <http://engineeredhighenergycropsPEIS.com/comments>
4. **Mail:** Dr. Jonathan Burbaum, Program Director, ARPA-E, U.S. Department of Energy, ATTN: EHEC PEIS, 1000 Independence Avenue SW, Mailstop-950-8043, Washington, DC 20585

Reminder: Submit Draft PEIS comments by March 17, 2015

Engineered High Energy Crop (EHEC) Programs Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS)

Project Overview

The Department of Energy (DOE), Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) has prepared a Draft PEIS to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of one or more programs to catalyze the development and demonstration of EHECs. EHEC crops are specifically designed for increased energy production. Examples of EHECs that may be assessed in the PEIS include those being investigated under ARPA-E's Plants Engineered to Replace Oil (PETRO) program such as genetically engineered varieties of camelina, loblolly pine, tobacco, giant cane, sugarcane, miscanthus, sorghum, and switchgrass. These plants are being engineered to increase photosynthesis or to create molecules already found in petroleum-based fuels.

A main component of the EHEC programs would provide financial assistance to funding recipients for conducting confined field trials to test the effectiveness of EHECs. The field trials would range in size from development-scale (up to 5 acres), pilot-scale (up to 250 acres) or demonstration-scale (up to 15,000 acres). All necessary permits, such as from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, would be required before initiating confined field trials.

This Draft PEIS assesses the potential environmental impacts of confined field trials in the southeastern United States to include Alabama, Florida (excluding the Everglades/Southern Florida coastal plain ecoregion), Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. This geographic area was selected for its favorable climate and agricultural conditions for the cultivation of EHECs.

NEPA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires that all Federal agencies consider the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions. NEPA promotes better agency decision-making by ensuring that high quality environmental information is available to agency officials and the public before the agency decides whether and how to undertake a Proposed Action. To meet the NEPA requirements, a series of milestones must be met to develop and finalize a PEIS.

Currently, the EHEC Programs Draft PEIS is at the **Public Comment on Draft PEIS** phase. During this phase, the public, interest groups, and agencies at all levels of government are encouraged to provide feedback on the Draft PEIS. The Final PEIS will incorporate comments received on the Draft PEIS, as applicable. After publication of the Final PEIS, DOE will make the decision regarding the selection of an alternative within a Record of Decision.

