



Guide to Participating in NEPA Scoping Meetings

Through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, you have an opportunity to learn about the Department of Energy (DOE), Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy's (ARPA-E) Proposed Action and to provide timely information and comments to DOE. DOE is holding a 30-day public comment and scoping period for the Engineered High Energy Crop (EHEC) Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) to hear from you. This handout outlines how you can participate and provide comments during the scoping period. During scoping, you can learn about the EIS process and Proposed Action, and provide comments. The scoping process includes in-person and web-based meetings to solicit comments from the public.

Scoping Period: June 21, 2013 – July 22, 2013

Scoping Meetings

DOE is holding three scoping meetings in the following locations: Lexington, Kentucky; Jackson, Mississippi; and Raleigh, North Carolina. Each scoping meeting will include a poster session from 5:00 to 6:45 PM where you can view exhibits related to the project and to talk with subject matter experts, followed by an open forum from 7:00 to 9:00 PM for you to provide verbal comments. These scoping meetings are drop-in events where you can come at any time and stay as long as like. Each 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 a web-based meeting on Wednesday, July 17, 2013 from 3:00 to 5:00 PM EDT. Information about the web-based meeting, how to register, and comment instructions are provided on the project website: <http://engineered-highenergycropsPEIS.com>.

How to Provide Comments

DOE requests your comments on the scope of the PEIS. We are interested in your input on the alternatives that should be evaluated and the potential environmental impacts that should be analyzed. DOE is also interested in receiving comments on methods for assessing the common and unique impacts of confined field trials in different ecoregions and the scale of the proposed confined field trials. DOE encourages the submission of scientific data, studies or research to support comments. The scoping period to provide your comments on this PEIS ends on July 22, 2013.

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

You can provide comments in the following ways:

1. In-person: Written and verbal comments accepted at in-person scoping meetings
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 COMMENTS BY JULY 22, 2013



Project Overview

Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) is preparing a PEIS to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of one or more programs to catalyze the development and demonstration of EHECs. EHEC plants 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 range in size and could include 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 PEIS will assess 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 Federal 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 PEIS is at the scoping phase. During the scoping phase, a wide range of partners including the public, interest groups, and agencies at all levels of government are encouraged to provide input about the project. The PEIS will incorporate and build upon the prior planning efforts, environmental studies, and public input. All of the collected information will form the basis for a range of alternatives to implement the project and eventually the selection of a preferred alternative.

The preferred alternative will be identified in the Draft PEIS when it is made available to the public for review and comment. A 45-day public comment period with public hearings similar to the scoping meetings will be held. The Final PEIS will incorporate comments received on the Draft PEIS. After publication of the Final PEIS, DOE will make the decision regarding the selection of an alternative within a Record of Decision.

