

systems in the United States places DOE in a much more limited role than if the Federal government were the owner and operator of the energy systems. In the latter situation, DOE would be responsible for a comprehensive review of reasonable alternatives for siting the system. However, in dealing with applicants under the CCPI solicitation, the scope of alternatives is necessarily more restricted because DOE must focus on alternative ways to accomplish its purpose that reflect both the application before it and the functions that DOE plays in the decisional process. In such cases DOE must give substantial consideration to the applicant's needs in establishing a project's reasonable alternatives.

The range of reasonable options to be considered in the EIS for the proposed Gilberton Project is determined in accordance with the overall NEPA strategy. Because of DOE's limited role of providing cost-shared funding for the proposed Gilberton Project, DOE currently plans to give primary emphasis to the proposed action and the no-action alternative. Under the no-action alternative, DOE would not provide partial funding for the design, construction, and operation of the project.

In the absence of DOE funding, the Gilberton Project probably would not be constructed. Alternatives considered by WMPI, in developing the proposal for the Gilberton Project, including alternative sites and technologies for the proposed project also will be presented in the EIS. DOE will consider other reasonable alternatives that may be suggested during the public scoping period.

Under the proposed action, project activities would include equipment design and fabrication, process engineering, plant permitting and construction, and testing and demonstration of the technology. DOE plans to complete the EIS within 15 months following publication of this Notice of Intent and to subsequently issue a Record of Decision. Upon completing the demonstration effort for DOE, WMPI could continue commercial operation of the plant constructed under the Gilberton Project.

Preliminary Identification of Environmental Issues

The following environmental issues have been tentatively identified for analysis in the EIS. This list, which was developed from analyses of the proposed technology, the scope of the proposed project, and similar projects, and which is presented to facilitate public comment on the planned scope

of the EIS, is neither intended to be all-inclusive nor a predetermined set of potential impacts. Additions to or deletions from this list may occur as a result of the public scoping process.

The environmental issues include:

(1) *Atmospheric resources*: Potential air quality impacts resulting from emissions during construction and operation of the proposed Gilberton Project, including odor impacts;

(2) *Water usage*: Potential effects on surface and groundwater resources, including impacts from withdrawals of groundwater and mine pool water from the Susquehanna River and Delaware River watersheds;

(3) *Water quality*: Potential impacts resulting from wastewater treatment and discharge, from water usage, and from reclaiming abandoned anthracite waste;

(4) *Infrastructure and land use, including potential environmental and socioeconomic effects resulting from*: Plant construction; delivery of feed materials; recovery of coal waste and mine pool water; steam and heat distribution; electric power generation and transmission; product hydrocarbon liquids transportation, distribution, and use; measures to prevent soil erosion and degradation; and site restoration;

(5) *Solid Waste*: Pollution prevention and waste management, including, ash, slag, waste water treatment facility sludge;

(6) *Noise*: Potential impacts resulting from construction and operation of the proposed plant and from transportation of feed materials and plant products;

(7) *Construction*: Potential impacts associated with traffic patterns, construction-related emissions, and involvement of floodplains and wetlands;

(8) Safety and health impacts, including construction-related safety, process safety, and management of chemicals and catalysts;

(9) *Ecological*: Potential on-site and off-site impacts to vegetation, terrestrial wildlife, aquatic wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and ecologically sensitive habitats;

(10) Community impacts, including potential impacts from local traffic patterns, socioeconomic impacts on public services and infrastructure, and environmental justice;

(11) Visual impacts associated with plant structures and plant operations;

(12) *Reclamation impacts*: Potential impacts resulting from recovery of coal waste from disposal and reclamation sites;

(13) Cumulative effects that result from the incremental impacts of the proposed project when added to the other past, present, and reasonably

foreseeable future projects, including the existing 80 MW Gilberton power plant;

(14) Connected actions, including processing of gasifier slag into aggregate for use in construction applications, use of heat and energy from the plant, and both processing and use of liquid hydrocarbon products;

(15) Compliance with regulatory requirements and environmental permitting; and

(16) Environmental monitoring.

Public Scoping Process

To ensure that all issues related to this proposal are addressed, DOE will conduct an open process to define the scope of the EIS. The public scoping period will end on May 19, 2003. Interested agencies, organizations, and the general public are encouraged to submit comments or suggestions concerning the content of the EIS, issues and impacts to be addressed in the EIS, and alternatives that should be considered. Scoping comments should identify specific issues or topics that the EIS should address in order to assist DOE in identifying significant issues. Written, e-mailed, or faxed comments should be communicated by May 19, 2003 (see **ADDRESSES**).

DOE will conduct a public scoping meeting at D.H.H. Lengel Middle School, 1541 West Laurel Boulevard, in Pottsville, PA, on May 5, 2003, at 7 p.m. In addition, the public is invited to an informal session at this location beginning at 4 p.m., to learn more about the proposed action. Displays and other information about the proposed agency action and the demonstration plant will be available, and DOE personnel will be present to discuss the proposed action and the NEPA process.

The formal scoping meeting will begin on May 5, 2003, at 7 p.m. DOE asks people who wish to speak at this public scoping meeting to contact Mr. Lloyd Lorenzi, either by phone, fax, computer, or in writing (see **ADDRESSES** in this notice).

People who do not arrange in advance to speak may register at the meeting (preferably at the beginning of the meeting) and will be provided opportunities to speak following previously scheduled speakers. Speakers who need more than five minutes should indicate the length of time desired in their request. Depending on the number of speakers, DOE may need to limit speakers to five-minutes initially but will provide additional opportunities as time permits. Speakers may also provide written materials to supplement their presentations. Oral