

technologies that could be widely deployed commercially to ensure that the United States has clean, reliable, and affordable energy. Private sector investments and deployment of energy systems in the United States places DOE in a 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 restrictive, because DOE must give substantial consideration to the applicant's needs, as reflected in its CCPI application, in establishing a project's reasonable alternatives.

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

In the absence of DOE funding, the new CFB Unit may be constructed, but likely would not include demonstration of operation with the range of fuel sources that has been proposed. In the absence of DOE funding, Colorado Springs Utilities could also consider building a natural gas combustion turbine plant at the Clear Spring Ranch Site. This alternative will be examined in the EIS. DOE will consider other reasonable alternatives that may be suggested during the public scoping period.

DOE plans to complete the EIS within 15 months following publication of this Notice of Intent, and to issue a Record of Decision no sooner than 30 days following completion of the Final EIS. Upon completing the demonstration effort for DOE, Colorado Springs Utilities could continue commercial operation of the new CFB Unit constructed under the Project.

#### **Preliminary Identification of Environmental Issues**

The following environmental issues have been tentatively identified for analysis in the EIS. This list is presented to facilitate public comment on the

planned scope of the EIS, and is not intended to be a pre-determined 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 effects resulting from emissions during construction and operation of the proposed CFB Unit;

(2) Water resources: Potential effects on surface water and groundwater resources, including effects of water usage, wastewater management, and storm water management;

(3) Aesthetic and scenic resources: Visual effects associated with plant structures and operations;

(4) Ecological resources: Potential on-site and off-site impacts to vegetation, terrestrial wildlife, threatened and endangered species, and ecologically sensitive habitats, including the Fountain Creek riparian corridor and the Clear Springs Ranch Wildlife Management area;

(5) Land use requirements and compatibility for disposal of power plant ash;

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

(7) Health and safety impacts, including construction-related safety and process-related safety associated with handling and management of chemical materials;

(8) Socioeconomic effects resulting from influx of construction laborers and plant operating staff;

(9) Soils and geology compatibility for plant construction and ash disposal;

(10) Utility and transportation infrastructure requirements for delivery of fuels and chemicals to the power plant;

(11) Resource utilization;

(12) Cumulative effects that result from the incremental impacts of the proposed plant when added to the other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future activities, including the adjacent Nixon Power Plant and the nearby recently-completed Front Range Power Plant;

(13) Connected actions associated with recovery of other fuels, including wood waste, and feed materials for the plant; and

(14) Regulatory compliance and 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 September 19, 2003.

Interested agencies, organizations, and the general public are encouraged to submit comments or suggestions concerning the content of the EIS, issues and potential 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 for analysis. Written, e-mailed, or faxed comments should be communicated by September 19, 2003 (*See ADDRESSES*).

DOE will conduct a public scoping meeting at the Fountain Middle School, 515 North Santa Fe Avenue, Fountain, CO, on September 3, 2003, at 7 pm. In addition, the public is invited to an informal session beginning at 5 pm, 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 September 3, 2003, at 7 pm. DOE requests that members of the public who wish to speak at this public scoping meeting contact Mr. Lloyd Lorenzi, either by phone, fax, computer, or in writing (*See ADDRESSES* in this Notice).

Members of the public 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 and written comments will be given equal consideration.

DOE will begin the meeting with an overview of the proposed Project. The meeting will not be conducted as an evidentiary hearing, and speakers will not be cross-examined. However, speakers may be asked questions to help ensure that DOE fully understands their comments or suggestions. A presiding officer will establish the order of speakers and provide any additional procedures necessary to conduct the meeting.