Department of Energy
Golden Field Office
1617 Cole Boulevard
Golden, Colorado 80401-3393

July 10, 2003

DOE/EA 1475

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

for the

CHARITON VALLEY BIOMASS PROJECT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

AGENCY: Department of Energy, Golden Field Office

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Department of Energy (DOE) has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) of a biomass co-fire test project at the Ottumwa Generating Station (OGS) near Chillicothe, Iowa. DOE has conducted the EA to evaluate the potential impacts of construction and co-fire testing that would be funded in part by DOE. DOE has conducted this EA to provide the department and other public agency decision-makers with the environmental documentation required to support informed discretionary action on a Proposed Action that would comprise a part of the ongoing Chariton Valley Biomass Project.

The EA assesses the potential environmental impacts that could result if DOE were to provide partial funding for (1) design and construction of a switchgrass storage, handling, and conveying system into the boiler at the OGS; (2) operational testing of switchgrass as a biomass co-fire feedstock at OGS; and (3) ancillary activities related to growing, harvesting, storing, and transporting switchgrass in areas of the Rathbun Lake watershed. The EA also considers the potential for impacts if the Proposed Action were to lead to full-scale commercial switchgrass operations. Under the Proposed Action, DOE would provide a portion of the necessary project funding to the non-profit Chariton Valley Research Conservation and Development Inc. (CVRCD), which in turn would secure the balance of funding and subsequently coordinate with Alliant Energy (an Iowa Utility) and its subcontractors to implement the proposed action at OGS.

In addition to the Proposed Action, the EA considered the No Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, DOE would not partially fund the co-fire testing facilities and activities described under the Proposed Action Alternative, and the project proponents would need to secure other funds for project implementation.

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All discussions and findings related to the Proposed Action and No Action Alternatives are presented in the attached Final Environmental Assessment and appendices. The Final EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

COPIES OF THE FINAL EA ARE AVAILABLE FROM:

Steve Blazek
DOE/GO NEPA Compliance Officer
U.S. Department of Energy
1617 Cole Boulevard
Golden, CO 80401
(303) 275-4723 or (800) 644-6735, extension 4723

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE DOE NEPA PROCESS CONTACT:

Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20585
(202) 586-4600 or (800) 472-2756

DETERMINATION:

Based on the information presented in the Final EA (DOE/EA 1475), DOE determines that the proposed action does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act. Therefore, the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement is not required, and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Issued in Golden, Colorado 11th day of July, 2003.

John H. Kersten, Manager
Golden Field Office