

March 26, 2019

Dear Reader:

Enclosed is the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE or The Department) Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the National Energy Technology Laboratory's (NETL's) Proposed Energy Conversion Technology Center (ECTC) in Morgantown, West Virginia (DOE/EA-2066D). This draft EA was prepared in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 to 1508) and DOE NEPA implementing procedures (10 CFR Part 1021). DOE prepared this draft EA to evaluate the potential environmental consequences of allocating funding to construct and make operational the ECTC located in Morgantown, Monongalia County, West Virginia.

DOE's proposed action would allocate funding for the construction of the ECTC, which would allow NETL to make critical in-roads in fossil energy combustion that will enhance power plant efficiencies. NETL has available property and infrastructure to support the construction of such a facility. This proposed project includes the construction of an approximately 16,800-ft², one-story building with four adjoining reinforced concrete test cells, an adjoining laser lab, fabrication and instrumentation areas, and administrative areas. Supporting infrastructure work being performed adjacent to the proposed ECTC facility will involve parking lot expansion and utility upgrades, including a new natural gas line, new electric and communication service, and a new sanitary sewer line. Preliminary interior and exterior B-42 renovation work was covered by Categorical Exclusions issued on July 14, 2017, and July 9, 2018 under NETL's categorical exclusion authority.

In this draft EA, DOE analyzes impacts to 18 resource areas and identifies no significant adverse environmental impacts from the proposed action. In particular, the construction and operation of the ECTC facility would have no or negligible impacts on land use, geology and topography, floodplains, community services, parks and recreation, wetlands, cultural resources, utilities, traffic, and public and occupational health and safety. Construction activities associated with the proposed ECTC would have negligible impacts on regulated waste, and minor adverse impacts on soils, vegetation and wildlife, water resources, air quality and greenhouse gases (GHGs), noise and vibration, and aesthetics and visual resources. These adverse effects would be largely short-term and last only through the duration of construction activities envisioned to take one construction season. Minor beneficial impacts to socio-economics would also occur through the creation of approximately 24 temporary construction jobs. Operation of the ECTC would result in negligible impacts on soils, vegetation and wildlife, water resources, air quality and GHGs, socio-economics, and aesthetics and visual resources. There would be minor adverse noise impacts and negligible to minor impacts on regulated waste related to operation of the ECTC.

A cultural resources field assessment was also completed prior to the B-42 renovation work and the proposed ECTC construction. No significant artifacts or impacts to local architecture were discovered during this field assessment (*SEE: Appendix C*). NETL's proposed project would be in compliance with all federal and West Virginia building codes, and all proposed work would avoid a designated wetland area adjacent to the construction zone. DOE concludes that the proposed action of allocating funding for construction of the ECTC facility located in Morgantown, West Virginia, would have no adverse impacts on the human environment.

Invitation to Comment

A Notice of Availability will be published in *The Dominion Post* on March 28, 29, and 30, 2019 to announce the beginning of the 30-day public comment period that begins on March 28, 2019 and ends on April 28, 2019. Please submit comments to:

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Envelopes and the subject line of emails and faxes should be labeled “Proposed ECTC Draft EA Comments.” Comments received after the close of the comment period will be considered to the extent practicable.

Individual names and addresses, including email addresses, received as part of the comment documents are normally considered part of the public record. Persons wishing to withhold his or her name, address, or other identifying information from the public record must state this request prominently at the beginning of the comment document; DOE will honor this request to the extent allowable by law. All submissions from organizations, businesses, and individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be included in the public record and open to public inspection in their entirety.

Thank you for your interest in this draft EA. For further information on the draft EA or to request additional copies, please contact me as noted above. The draft EA can also be accessed from DOE’s NETL website at: <https://www.netl.doe.gov/node/6939>.

Respectfully,



Fred Pozzuto
Associate Director
Environmental Compliance Division

Enclosure:
Draft Environmental Assessment for NETL’s Proposed ECTC