



Department of Energy

Golden Field Office
15013 Denver West Parkway
Golden, Colorado 80401

November 9, 2021

TO: INTERESTED PARTY

SUBJECT: NOTICE OF SCOPING – FLATIRONS CAMPUS WATER SYSTEM PROJECT;
DOE/EA-2171

Dear Interested Party:

The purpose of this letter is to inform you of a proposed project that the Department of Energy (DOE) Golden Field Office (GFO) is pursuing for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) Flatirons Campus (FC). Pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and DOE's implementing procedures for compliance with NEPA (10 CFR Parts 1021), DOE is preparing a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) to:

- Identify any adverse environmental effects that cannot be avoided should this proposed action be implemented.
- Evaluate viable alternatives to the proposed action, including a no action alternative.
- Describe the relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity.
- Characterize any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources that would be involved should this proposed action be implemented.

Project Description and Location

The NREL FC (formerly known as the National Wind Technology Center) is DOE's primary site for research, development, and testing of wind energy and distributed generation technologies. Research conducted at the FC focuses on collaboration with industry to further wind technology and to accelerate its commercialization in the marketplace. The FC is located on US Highway 93, about 25 miles north of Golden, Colorado and about five miles south of Boulder, Colorado. The FC is approximately 37 miles west of Denver International Airport.

In recent years, the research mission of the FC has greatly expanded to include water power and grid integration work and is anticipated to continue to expand in the future. The future growth of the FC, which involves increasing the number of staff on site and the construction of new and/or upgraded research facilities on the campus, is directly dependent on providing more robust water utility services. The purpose of the proposed project being analyzed under this EA is to provide code compliant water systems to the FC, including domestic water, fire suppression water, and wastewater systems. The proposed project would involve the reuse of an existing water line and construction of new water line segments from the Smart Reservoir, located in the southwest corner of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) adjacent to the FC, to a new water treatment facility on the FC. The Refuge, which was established in 2007, is managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the Colorado Front Range National Wildlife Refuge Complex. The existing water line that would be reused was once used to service the Rocky Flats Plant. The wastewater system that would be installed

would support the Control Center Facility which would be constructed to provide computing and data visualization capabilities at the FC.

Probable Environmental Effects/Issues Scoped for the Environmental Assessment

The EA will describe all potential impacts on the environment caused by the proposed project and will identify possible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate those impacts. The EA will describe the potentially affected environment and the impacts that may result to:

- Air Quality
- Land Use (including Geology and Soils)
- Biological Resources
- Water Resources (including Floodplains and Wetlands)
- Cultural Resources
- Noise
- Traffic and Transportation
- Infrastructure and Utilities
- Socioeconomics
- Waste Management

Development of a Reasonable Range of Alternatives

DOE is required to consider a reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed action during the environmental review. The definition of alternatives is governed by the “rule of reason.” An EA must consider a reasonable range of options that could accomplish the agency’s purpose and need and reduce environmental effects. Reasonable alternatives are those that may be feasibly carried out based on environmental, technical, and economic factors.

The No Action Alternative will be addressed. The need for project redesign, or a project alternative, will be determined during the environmental review.

Public Comments

This letter will be available to all interested state, local, and federal agencies to supply input on issues to be discussed in the EA. Agencies should identify the issues, within their statutory responsibilities, that should be considered in the EA. The public is also invited to submit comments on the scope of the EA. Comments on the scope of the EA are due on or before **November 26, 2021**. All public comments received will help DOE GFO determine the issues and analyses that should be included in the EA. Late comments will be considered to the extent practicable. DOE GFO will respond to all comments in the Final EA. DOE GFO expects to publish a Draft EA in early 2022, and the Final EA is expected to be completed by June 2022.

Please send your comments regarding the scope and content of the EA, along with the name and address of the appropriate contact person to:

Nicole Serio
Department of Energy Golden Field Office
15013 Denver West Parkway
Golden, CO 80401
FCwatersystem@hq.doe.gov

This letter and the draft EA, when available, will be posted to the project webpage at the following web address in the Golden Field Office electronic reading room: www.energy.gov/node/4814534.

Thank you for your interest in this proposed project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nicole Serio". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nicole Serio
NEPA Document Manager
Golden Field Office