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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Research Service

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Development of Wind Energy at Plum Island Animal Disease Center

AGENCY: Agricultural Research Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement.

SUMMARY: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS) announces its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to § 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508), USDA NEPA procedures (7 CFR Part 1b), and ARS NEPA procedures (7 CFR Part 520). This Environmental Impact Statement will evaluate potential impacts of alternate means of reducing energy consumption, meeting heating and cooling energy needs, and supplying electrical power to USDA facilities at Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC), located in Suffolk County, Long Island, New York. ARS invites other Federal agencies, states, Indian tribes, local governments, and the general public to submit written comments or suggestions concerning the scope of the issues to be addressed, alternatives to be analyzed, and the environmental impacts to be addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The public is invited to participate in scoping activities including one or more scoping meetings through which comments and suggestions will be received. Oral and written comments will be considered equally in preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Those not desiring to submit comments or

suggestions at this time, but who would like to receive a copy of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for review when it is issued, should write to Mr. Carlos M. Santoyo at the address below. When the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is complete, its availability will be announced in the Federal Register and in the local news media. A public hearing will be held, and comments will be solicited on this document.

DATES: All comments received or postmarked by May 2, 1997, will be considered in scoping and preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. ARS will consider comments received or postmarked after that date to the extent practicable. ARS will conduct public scoping meetings in the potentially affected areas (including Southold or Orient, New York and Old Saybrook or New London, Connecticut) to assist in defining the appropriate scope of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and identifying significant environmental issues to be addressed. The dates, times, and specific locations of the scoping meetings/workshops will be announced in the local media at least 15 days before the meetings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information on this EIS and the public scoping process, contact Carlos M. Santoyo at the address and telephone numbers listed below.

ADDRESSES: Please direct written comments or suggestions on the scope of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, requests to speak at public scoping meetings and workshops, or questions concerning the project to: Carlos M. Santoyo, USDA, ARS, NAA, PIADC, P.O. Box 848, Greenport, New York 11944–0848, (516) 323–2500, Extension 210, Fax: (516) 323–2507, Internet address: windmills@ars.usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Plum Island Animal Disease Center (PIADC) is in the Township of Southold, Suffolk County, Long Island, New York. PIADC is located on Plum Island, which is 1.8 miles off the northeast end of Long Island, New York. Plum Island is owned by the Federal government and has an area of 840 acres (1.3 square miles). It is about 12 miles southwest of New London, Connecticut. The bodies of water surrounding Plum Island include Long Island Sound on the north and Block Island Sound on the south.

The principal mission of PIADC is to conduct research on the prevention, control, and eradication of foreign animal diseases and to develop and maintain diagnostic capability for foreign animal diseases in order to protect this country's animal industries and exports against catastrophic economic losses caused by foreign animal disease agents introduced into the United States. PIADC is shared by two USDA Agencies. ARS is responsible for research and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is responsible for diagnosis.

This isolated location is necessary because Pub. L. 496 requires research laboratories for the study of foot-and-mouth disease be located on an island surrounded by navigable water entirely under Federal control and not connected to the mainland by bridge or tunnel. Travel to Plum Island is by government-owned marine vessels from both Old Saybrook, Connecticut, and Orient Point, New York. Due to its remote location, PIADC is substantially self-sufficient, having its own potable water and wastewater treatment systems and harbor facilities; under normal conditions, PIADC relies on Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO) for its supply of electric power through underwater cables, although PIADC's standby generators (fueled by No. 2 or No. 4 fuel oil) are capable of supplying electrical energy demand as needed.

The 1992 Energy Policy Act (EPACT) (Pub. L. 102–486) and Executive Order (E.O.) 12902 of March 8, 1994, established the energy management goals and requirements for the Federal Government. It required each Agency to develop and implement its energy management plan dealing with the use of energy and water. EPACT mandated a 20 percent reduction in energy consumption levels by the Year 2000 and E.O. 12902 increased this goal to 30 percent by the Year 2005. In addition to energy management goals and requirements for Federal Agencies, EPACT established energy savings performance contracting mechanism [§ 155 of EPACT, amending § 801 to § 804 of the National Energy Conservation Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 8287)], a Federal and private-sector partnership whereby an energy service company (ESCO) pays the upfront cost of purchasing and installing new energy-efficient or renewable energy

equipment and the Government repays the ESCO over the life of the ESPC contract. ARS is considering the use of energy savings performance contracting to assist ARS in meeting its compliance with EPACT and E.O. 12902 and securing its own energy supply capabilities.

PIADC's existing electrical baseload is supplied through underwater cables from the grid by Long Island Lighting Company (LILCO). Electrical energy use on Plum Island varies seasonally, with a winter (February 1994) baseload of 1.1 megawatts (MW) and peak load of 1.4 MW and a summer (July 1993) baseload of 1.4 MW and peak load of 2.3 MW. In Fiscal Year 1996, total electrical cost was approximately \$1.2 million based on a total usage of 9850 MWhr. In addition to electricity, PIADC annually consumes 950,000 gallons of heating oil. The heating oil is used in the production of steam for heating and biological decontamination and to fuel the emergency electrical generators.

To meet the requirements of EPACT and E.O. 12902 and to better meet the energy needs of PIADC's facilities, ARS has already implemented some energy efficiency or energy conservation measures (e.g., replacement of incandescent lights with energy efficient lighting, installation of light sensors, replacement of chillers). Through the provisions of energy savings performance contracting, ARS is investigating additional energy conservation measures and alternate means of utilizing renewable energy and reducing its current dependence on fossil fuel-based energy resources.

Preliminary Identification of Alternatives

PIADC proposes to implement energy conservation measures to reduce its consumption of energy by 20 percent by the Year 2000 and by 30 percent by the Year 2005 (in compliance with EPACT and E.O. 12902) and to develop its own electrical and heating and cooling energy generation capabilities to substantially meet its operating demand. Through the provisions of energy savings performance contracting, PIADC will examine energy conservation and supply technologies capable of meeting these demand scenarios, with particular emphasis on technologies that reduce its dependence on fossil fuel-based resources. Based on a favorable preliminary analysis of the wind energy potential on Plum Island conducted by the New York Power Authority (NYPA) in 1995, ARS intends to assess the health and environmental impacts and other issues associated with the use of wind energy on Plum Island. Other

energy conservation and supply technologies, as well as the no action alternative, will be evaluated in the environmental impact statement. At this time, PIADC intends to evaluate:

- Wind energy,
- Solar water heating,
- Thermal storage systems (for heating and cooling),
- Tidal energy,
- Replacement of emergency generators,
- Additional lighting retrofits,
- Water conservation measures, and
- No action.

Since it is possible that ARS might decide to implement a number of these (or additional) measures, the environmental impact statement will assess the health and environmental impact of each alternative individually as well as in various combinations. The no action alternative will assume that none of the energy conservation and supply technologies will be implemented.

Preliminary Identification of Health and Environmental Issues

ARS has identified the following issues for analysis for alternative actions in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Additional issues may be identified as a result of the scoping process:

- Impact on air quality.
- Impact on marine water quality and coastal resources.
- Impact on land use.
- Impact associated with transportation.
- Impact on plants, animals, and habitat (e.g., nesting shorebirds and ospreys, freshwater and tidal wetland impact).
- Impact on aesthetic and visual resources (e.g., historic viewsheds)
- Impact on socioeconomic resources (e.g., impact on growth and character of local communities, impact on tourism).
- Noise impact (e.g., to area residents, workers, tourists, and wildlife).
- Impact on archaeological resources.
- Impact on public health.
- Environmental justice impact (i.e., disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and low-income populations).
- Impact on energy consumption and resource availability.
- Cumulative impacts.

Preliminary Identification of Decision Criteria

In addition to the goals of EPACT and E.O. 12902, ARS will identify and evaluate alternatives using the following supplemental criteria:

- Health and environmental impact of the alternative(s).
- Proven and commercially available energy conservation and generation technologies.
- Life-cycle cost (or economic viability) of the alternative(s).
- Compliance with Federal, State, and local permitting requirements.
- Compliance with PIADC's security and biological safety requirements; and
- Pollution prevention.

The Environmental Impact Statement will focus on the health and environmental impact of alternative decisions but will also report on these supplemental criteria.

ARS invites comments from other Federal Agencies, States, Indian tribes, local governments, and the general public related to the scope of the environmental impact statement including energy conservation and supply technologies and alternatives to be evaluated, health and environmental issues to be evaluated, and the decision criteria ARS intends to use in making its decision.

John A. Crew,

Area Administrative Officer, North Atlantic Area.

[FR Doc. 97-3835 Filed 2-13-97; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410-03-M

Forest Service

Calypso Timber Sale, Gifford Pinchot National Forest, Skamania County, Washington,

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Cancellation of an environmental impact statement.

SUMMARY: On September 13, 1990, a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the Calypso Timber Sale on the Wind River Ranger District of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest was published in the Federal Register (55 FR 37727). The NOI was revised on December 21, 1990 (55 FR 52286). A draft EIS was released for public comment July 1991. A Notice of Availability for the draft EIS was published in the Federal Register on July 26, 1991 (56 FR 34203). Forest Service has decided to cancel the environmental analysis process. There will be no final EIS for the Calypso Timber Sale. The NOI is hereby rescinded.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Direct questions regarding this cancellation to Julie Knutson, Integrated Resource Planning Assistant, Wind River Ranger District, 1262 Hemlock