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

July 1, 2003

DOE/EA 1440

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

For the

SITE-WIDE ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Of the

National Renewable Energy Laboratory's
South Table Mountain Complex

Unincorporated Jefferson County, Colorado

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 a Site-wide Environmental Assessment (EA), DOE/EA 1440, to assess potential environmental impacts resulting from proposed activities at DOE's National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) South Table Mountain Complex (STM). The EA presents a bounding analysis for a range of potential activities and any related environmental impacts through 2008.

NREL is one of ten DOE national laboratories and is dedicated to the research, development, and technology transfer of renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies. The DOE Solar Energy Research Institute, founded in 1977, achieved national laboratory status and became NREL in 1991. The Midwest Research Institute operates NREL for DOE. DOE last conducted a Site-wide EA for the NREL STM site in 1993 (DOE/EA 0620).

In accordance with DOE NEPA implementing regulations, DOE is required to evaluate a Site-wide Environmental Assessment (EA) after five years and annually thereafter to determine whether the documentation and findings continue to adequately address current agency plans, functions, programs, and resource utilization with respect to environmental impacts. Since 1993, DOE has reviewed EA 0620 for continued relevance to ongoing activities and NEPA compliance. In 2002, DOE determined that a new comprehensive Site-wide EA should be prepared for the STM complex to address on-site activities and improvements.

The Proposed Action is to operate the STM complex for alternative energy research with new and improved capabilities to support DOE's mission to research, develop and transfer to industry renewable energy technologies. The actual components and implementation schedule for the site improvements are dependent on federal budgeting decisions and fluctuating priorities. Therefore, the Proposed Action is described in general rather than specific terms, and only some portion of the Proposed Action components would be expected to be in place prior to or by 2008. At this time, DOE has not developed detailed plans for funding and implementing specific components of the Proposed Action, except for the proposed Science and Technology Facility (S&TF). The preliminary design and location of the S&TF are known and described in Section 2.1.2 of the Site-wide EA. The designs and locations of other proposed facilities are uncertain, so various options are possible. Consequently, specific details are subject to modification, and the analyses in the Final Site-wide EA allow for future flexibility. The EA employs a "bounding analysis" approach to evaluating potential environmental impacts resulting from an array of potential development options within a conceptually defined site "buildout" scenario. The purpose of this approach is to promote a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts from future site use and development.

In addition to the Proposed Action, the EA considered the No Action alternative. The No Action alternative would leave the STM in its current configuration, add no new facilities, and maintain current levels of research, operation, and management activities.

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

COPIES OF THE FINAL EA ARE AVAILABLE FROM:

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE DOE NEPA PROCESS CONTACT:

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DETERMINATION:

Based on the information presented in the Final EA, DOE determines that the proposed improvement programs do 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 1st day of July, 2003.

John H Kersten

John H. Kersten, Manager
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