



Department of Energy
Office of Science
Berkeley Site Office
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
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JAN 17 2013

Ms. Cynthia Bryant
Director
Office of Planning and Research
State of California
1400 Tenth St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

Ms. Nancy L. Ward
Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency Regional Office
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, CA 94607-4052

Subject: Floodplains/Wetlands Notification and Notice of Determination to Prepare an Environmental Assessment of the Proposed Project for the Relocation and Consolidation of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL) Off-Site Research Programs

Dear Ms. Bryant and Ms. Ward:

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations, 10 CFR 1021, DOE is preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the subject proposed project. DOE will also prepare and incorporate into the EA a floodplain and wetlands assessment in accordance with 10 CFR 1022.

DOE proposes to relocate and consolidate some of its off-site LBNL research to a new 110,000 to 150,000 gross-square-foot facility that DOE would construct at the Richmond Field Station (RFS), in Richmond, California. DOE may also choose to occupy additional facilities that may be constructed by others at approximately the same time as the DOE building construction. These construction efforts represent the first phase of development at RFS, which is anticipated to begin in 2014, and may consist of the construction of two or more research and development buildings. These buildings would support the aforementioned existing off-site LBNL research projects as well as other closely related research programs, and synergistic research institutions.

The RFS is a 195 acre site owned by the University of California (UC) and located along the eastern shore of the San Francisco Bay in Contra Costa County, at 1301 South 46th Street, Richmond, California. The RFS consists of 136-acres of upland areas developed with buildings that are used for academic teaching and research activities and spaces leased by private entities, a north-south oriented planting of eucalyptus trees in the central portion of the site, a tidal salt marsh (known as the Western Stege Marsh), and a transition zone between the upland areas and marsh. Coastal grasslands occur in a number of meadows on the RFS site. A stretch of the San Francisco Bay Trail is south of the site.

The NEPA review will analyze the potential environmental impacts that may result from the subject proposed project, as well as the cumulative impacts that may result from other reasonably foreseeable projects in the area.

UC is preparing an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for a Long Range Development Plan (LRDP) addressing the development of the RFS. The EIR will provide a comprehensive program-level analysis of the 2013 LRDP and its potential impacts on the environment, in accordance with Section 15168 of the CEQA Guidelines. As part of the EIR process, UC will hold a Public Scoping meeting in late January 2013.

The RFS includes low-lying areas to the south and east, which are located in the floodplain and the activities required to implement the subject proposed project have the potential to impact the floodplain and wetlands. The location of the proposed DOE facility would not be in the floodplain and DOE will perform the subject project in a manner so as to avoid or minimize potential harm to or within the affected floodplain and wetlands. However, other facilities that may be built at RFS and occupied by DOE could be in the designated floodplain or impact the wetlands. DOE will therefore prepare a floodplain and wetland assessment and include the assessment in the draft EA.

The NEPA Compliance Officer for this document is Mr. Gary S. Hartman (Oak Ridge Office of Science Integrated Support Center). He can be reached at 865-576-0273. I am the NEPA Document Manager. If you have any questions regarding the NEPA document or process for this project, please contact me at (510) 486-7909. DOE will also provide informational posters about the proposed DOE action and the NEPA process at the Public Scoping Meeting that UC will conduct in late January.

Sincerely,



Kim Abbott
NEPA Document Manager
Berkeley Site Office

cc:
Carol Borgstrom, GC-20, HQ/FORS
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