Department of Energy
Golden Field Office
1617 Cole Boulevard
Golden, Colorado 80401-3305

October 15, 2007

DOE/EA 1597

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT for the PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF A CELLULOSIC ETHANOL PLANT, TREUTLEN COUNTY, GEORGIA

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy, Golden Field Office

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The U. S. Department of Energy (DOE) conducted an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzed the potential impacts associated with the construction and operation of a proposed cellulosic ethanol plant in Treutlen County, Georgia. DOE, through its Golden Field Office, in Golden, Colorado, would provide funding to Range Fuels, Inc., a Colorado based corporation, to support the construction and initial operation of the proposed plant. All discussion, analysis and findings related to the potential impacts of construction and operation of the proposed cellulosic ethanol plant (including the applicant-committed practices presented in the Proposed Action) are contained in the Final EA. The Final EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

The proposed cellulosic ethanol plant would utilize a two-step catalytic conversion process to produce ethanol and other usable byproducts. When at peak capacity, the plant would produce up to 100,000,000 gallons of fuel-grade ethanol per year. In converting biomass to cellulosic ethanol, the amount of feedstock used in the process would be as much as 2,500 dry tons/day, consisting of a mix of forest residue and timber from Treutlen County and the surrounding area. Once produced, the ethanol would be sold as fuel for transportation. Up to 20,000,000 gallons per year of Methanol and limited quantities of higher molecular weight alcohols ranging from propanol to pentanol would be produced as by-products of the process. These by-products would either be sold to reduce the absolute cost of the ethanol produced or recycled into the process. A portion of the methanol produced would be used as denaturant for the ethanol.

In accordance with applicable regulations and policies, DOE sent scoping letters to potentially interested local, State and Federal agencies, including the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the Georgia Department of Transportation. The scoping letters described the Proposed Action and requested assistance in identifying potential issues that could be evaluated in the EA. DOE also sent scoping letters to other potentially interested individuals and organizations to solicit public comment. In response to the scoping letters, DOE received no public

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comments or comments from individuals or organizations raising any specific objections or concerns about the Proposed Action. Two comments from Tribal organizations were received voicing general interest in and concern about projects that produce air emissions or that have the potential to impact cultural resources in the area. On September 12, 2007, DOE transmitted letters and published a public notice in a local newspaper announcing availability of the draft EA and inviting comments on the draft. DOE received no comments on the draft EA.

Since the completion of the draft EA, the following sections were modified to include additional information:

- Transportation
- Groundwater
- Air Quality
- Safety and Occupational Health
- Waste Management and Hazardous Materials

These changes are reflected in the Final EA, which is incorporated by reference.

DETERMINATION

DOE determines that providing funding to support the construction and initial operation of the proposed cellulosic ethanol plant in Treutlen County, Georgia, would not constitute a major Federal Action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, as defined by the National Environmental Policy Act. The applicant-committed measures identified in the Proposed Action of the EA to obtain and comply with all required permits and minimize potential impacts through the implementation of construction and operation Best Management Practices and other identified design features shall be incorporated and enforceable through DOE's funding award documents to Range Fuels. In addition, DOE's funding award documents shall require that Range Fuels comply with all permits and associated provisions. This includes discharge monitoring and reporting, and all other conditions-of-operation specified in Range Fuels' National Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permit, federally enforceable state Air Quality Permit for construction and operation, Georgia Environmental Protection Division water withdrawal permit and U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act Nationwide Permit.

The preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required and DOE is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Copies of the Final EA are available at the DOE Golden Field Office Public Reading Room website at http://www.eere.energy.gov/golden/Reading_Room.aspx or from:

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For further information of the DOE NEPA process contact:

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Manager