

Summary of Public Scoping Comments

for the
Environmental Impact Statement for the
Proposed Abengoa Biorefinery Project
near Hugoton, Kansas



U.S. Department of Energy
Golden Field Office
Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

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Introduction

This document summarizes the comments received as a result of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE or Department) issuing its “Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Wetlands Involvement for the Abengoa Biorefinery Project Near Hugoton, KS” (73 FR 50001, August 25, 2008). DOE received written comments contained in letters and e-mails and oral comments made during the public scoping meeting; oral comments were documented by a court reporter in a public transcript. The Department’s Notice of Intent was to inform the public about the Proposed Action and alternatives, announce plans to conduct a public scoping meeting, invite public participation in the scoping process, and solicit public comments for consideration in establishing the scope of the *Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Abengoa Biorefinery Project near Hugoton, Kansas* (DOE/EIS-0407) (Abengoa Biorefinery Project EIS).

The public scoping period for the Abengoa Biorefinery Project EIS began on August 25, 2008, and ended on October 9, 2008. The Department considered all comments received. No comments were received after October 9, 2008. During the scoping period for the Abengoa Biorefinery Project EIS, the Department held a public scoping meeting on September 10, 2008 at Memorial Hall in Hugoton, Kansas.

Process Used to Categorize and Summarize Scoping Comments

The Department received both oral and written scoping comments. Oral comments were documented by a court reporter at the public meeting on September 10, 2008, and written comments were received in three letters and two e-mails. Each of the six comment documents was given a unique document number, and each was then reviewed to identify comments; comments were numbered sequentially (for example, 1, 2, 3) in the margins of each document. DOE identified 14 scoping comments and grouped them into three categories reflecting the nature of the individual comments.

- Support for the project
- Request for specific information or analyses
- Statements of no negative environmental impacts

The individual comments within each category are summarized below. The information in this document was reviewed by the DOE to help define the scope of the Abengoa Biorefinery Project EIS. The Abengoa Biorefinery Project EIS will describe the results of the scoping process and how the scope evolved in response to these public comments.

Summary of Scoping Comments

Comments were received from the following:

- Federal agencies
 - U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - U.S. Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers
- State agencies

- Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources
- Kansas State Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Officer

- Kansas County representatives
 - Stevens County Chamber of Commerce Director
 - Stevens County Commissioners
 - Stevens County Commissioners Chairman
 - Stevens County Economic Development Board
 - Stevens County Economic Development Director

- Other Organization Representatives
 - Kansas Corn Growers Association

- Members of the Public

The scoping comments were categorized as follows:

- Support for the project

Nine Stevens County government, local organization representatives, and members of the public voiced support for the proposed project citing the positive financial aspects to the community and its residents.

- Request for specific information or analyses
 - The Army Corps of Engineers requested a location map and an assessment of potential impacts to waters of the United States.

 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) requested analyses of biomass production and harvesting impacts to natural resources relative to soils, surface and groundwater quality and quantity, air quality, and upland wildlife habitat. NRCS also requested an assessment of cropping practices, cropping rotations, and crop yields regarding potential availability and removal of biomass. They further requested assessments of biomass removal impacts to existing federal programs and acts including the Conservation Reserve Program, Conservation Security Program, Environmental Quality Incentives Program, and the *1985 Food Security Act's* Highly Erodible Land Provision.

 - The Kansas State Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Officer requested a survey of a shallow playa basin area of the site and surrounding area by a professional archaeologist prior to beginning construction and requested two (2) unbound copies of the survey report.

 - Members of the public (one comment from two individuals) requested information relative to impacts on the pleasant surroundings of the area, citing odor, dust, and parked train cars on the railroad as examples of such potential impacts.

- Statements of no negative environmental impacts.

The Kansas Department of Agriculture, Division of Water Resources indicated that the proposed project would not have a negative environmental impact in terms of water use and that the potential benefits are great.