

Notices

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This section of the FEDERAL REGISTER contains documents other than rules or proposed rules that are applicable to the public. Notices of hearings and investigations, committee meetings, agency decisions and rulings, delegations of authority, filing of petitions and applications and agency statements of organization and functions are examples of documents appearing in this section.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Commodity Credit Corporation

Draft Environmental Assessment; Giant Miscanthus in REPREEVE Renewables, LLC Project Areas Under the Biomass Crop Assistance Program

AGENCY: Commodity Credit Corporation, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of availability and request for comments.

SUMMARY: This notice announces the availability of a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed establishment and production of giant miscanthus (*Miscanthus X giganteus*) as a dedicated energy crop to be grown in the REPREEVE Renewables, LLC (project sponsor) proposed project areas in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina as part of the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP). This notice provides a means for the public to voice any concerns they may have about the proposed BCAP project areas.

DATES: We will consider comments that we receive by November 21, 2011. Comments submitted after this date will be considered to the extent possible.

ADDRESSES: We invite you to submit comments on this Draft EA. In your comment, include the volume, date, and page number of this issue of the **Federal Register**. You may submit comments by any of the following methods:

- **Federal eRulemaking Portal:** Go to <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the online instructions for submitting comments.

- **E-Mail:** SEGiantMiscanthusEAComments@intenvsol.com.

- **Fax:** (972) 562-7673 ATTN: SE Giant Miscanthus EA Comments.

- **Mail:** SE Giant Miscanthus EA Comments, Integrated Environmental Solutions, LLC, 2150 S Central Expy, Ste 110, McKinney, TX 75070.

- **Hand Delivery or Courier:** Deliver comments to the above address.

Comments may be inspected in the Office of the Director, CEPD, FSA, USDA, Room 4709 South Building, Washington, DC, between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. A copy of this notice is available through the FSA home page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/>.

You may request copies of the draft EA for Giant Miscanthus by writing to: SE Giant Miscanthus EA Draft Request, Integrated Environmental Solutions, LLC, 2150 S Central Expy, Ste 110, McKinney, TX 75070.

The draft EA can be viewed online at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=ecrc&topic=nep-cd>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Matthew Ponish, National Environmental Compliance Manager, USDA/FSA/CEPD/Stop 0513, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250-0513, phone: (202) 720-6853, e-mail: Matthew.Ponish@wdc.usda.gov. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication (Braille, large print, audio tape, etc.) should contact the USDA Target Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) implements the Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP). BCAP is authorized by Title IX of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (the 2008 Farm Bill, Pub. L. 110-246). BCAP is administered by the Deputy Administrator for Farm Programs of the Farm Service Agency (FSA) on behalf of the CCC with the support of other Federal and local agencies and is intended to assist agricultural and forest land owners and operators with the establishment and production of eligible crops including woody biomass in selected project areas for conversion to bioenergy, and the collection, harvest, storage, and transportation of eligible material to designated biomass conversion facilities for use as heat, power, biobased products, or advanced biofuels.

REPREEVE Renewables, LLC has submitted a proposal to FSA to establish BCAP project areas in Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina as part of BCAP. The proposal is to establish and produce giant miscanthus as a dedicated

energy crop. The draft EA analyzes the environmental impacts of growing giant miscanthus in those areas. FSA will review comments submitted on the draft EA in response to this notice and use the additional input in developing the final EA and decision document about whether to approve the project or not. This notice announces the availability of the draft EA and the opening of the comment period; it does not discuss the contents of the draft EA.

The EA announced in this notice is being prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA, Pub. L. 91-190, 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347); implementing regulations adopted by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) (40 CFR 1500-1508); and FSA implementing regulations for NEPA compliance (7 CFR 799). According to CEQ guidance, an EA is a "concise document for which a Federal agency is responsible that serves to (1) briefly provide sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an EIS or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI)." Since this document falls under the guidance of the BCAP Final PEIS, which was a broad national-level program document, CEQ guidance allows for "tiering." CEQ guidance defines tiering as, "the coverage of general matters in broader EIS with subsequent narrower statements or environmental analyses incorporating by reference the general discussions and concentrating solely on the issues specific to the statement subsequently prepared."

On October 27, 2010, CCC published the Record of Decision (ROD) for the BCAP final PEIS (75 FR 65995-66007) and BCAP final rule (76 FR 66202-66243) in the **Federal Register**. As part of the mitigation measures detailed in the ROD, each project proposal is subject to NEPA analysis prior to approval of the project area proposal. The initial environmental evaluation of a project area proposal is developed through the completion of Forms BCAP 19, BCAP-20, BCAP-21, and BCAP-22 and supporting information.

After this initial evaluation FSA can conclude either that:

(1) No additional environmental analyses are applicable due to no potential for the proposed BCAP activity to significantly impact the environment, or

(2) Additional environmental analyses in the form of an EA or EIS are necessary, depending upon the potential level of significance.

Due to inconclusive results in the initial environmental evaluation, FSA is required to do an EA to make a determination whether there could be significant environmental impacts.

Signed on October 18, 2011.

Carolyn B. Cooksie,

Acting Executive Vice President, Commodity Credit Corporation.

[FR Doc. 2011-27339 Filed 10-20-11; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Submission for OMB Review; Comment Request

The Department of Commerce will submit to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for clearance the following proposal for collection of information under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act (44 U.S.C. chapter 35).

Agency: U.S. Census Bureau.

Title: Business R&D and Innovation Survey.

Form Number(s): BRDI-1, BRDI-1A.

OMB Control Number: 0607-0912.

Type of Request: Revision of a currently approved collection.

Burden Hours: 130,855.

Number of Respondents: 43,000.

Average Hours per Response: 3 hours.

Needs and Uses: The National Science Foundation Act of 1950 as amended authorizes and directs NSF “* * * to provide a central clearinghouse for the collection, interpretation, and analysis of data on scientific and engineering resources and to provide a source of information for policy formulation by other agencies of the Federal government.” The Business R&D and Innovation Survey (BRDIS) is the vehicle with which NSF carries out the business portion of this mandate. NSF together with the Census Bureau, the collecting and compiling agent, analyze the data and publish the resulting statistics.

Companies are the major performers of research and development (R&D) in the United States, accounting for over 70 percent of total U.S. R&D outlays each year. A consistent business R&D information base is essential to government officials formulating public policy, industry personnel involved in corporate planning, and members of the academic community conducting research. To develop policies designed to promote and enhance science and

technology, past trends and the present status of R&D must be known and analyzed. Without comprehensive business R&D statistics, it would be impossible to evaluate the health of science and technology in the United States or to make comparisons between the technological progress of our country and that of other nations.

NSF has published annual R&D statistics collected from the Survey of Industrial Research and Development (1953-2007) and BRDIS (2008-2010) for more than 50 years. The results of the survey are used to assess trends in R&D expenditures by industry sector, investigate productivity determinants, formulate science and tax policy, and compare individual company performance with industry averages. This survey is the Nation’s primary source for international comparative statistics on business R&D spending.

The 2011 BRDIS will continue to collect the following types of information:

- R&D expense based on accounting standards.
- Worldwide R&D of domestic companies.
- Business segment detail.
- R&D related capital expenditures.
- Detailed data about the R&D workforce.
- R&D strategy and data on the potential impact of R&D on the market.
- R&D directed to application areas of particular national interest.
- Data measuring innovation, intellectual property protection activities and technology transfer.

The following changes will be made to the 2011 BRDIS from the 2010 BRDIS.

- Section 7: R&D Time Frame and R&D Product Life will be deleted. This section was only collected in 2010 at the request of the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

- The 2011 BRDIS will only have one short form (BRDI-1A). The 2010 BRDIS included two versions of the short form to conduct a test on the innovation data collection.

Starting in 2009, BRDIS decreased the number of long forms mailed from approximately 5,000 to 3,000. This was done based on a study done during the processing of the 2008 BRDIS pilot. The data showed that the imputation rate on the key data variables would not be significantly impacted by reducing the number of long forms for the details that are only collected on the long forms. Also, R&D activity in the U.S. is highly concentrated to a relatively small number of large firms so the potential benefit in the reduction of burden was deemed to outweigh the need to collect

all of the detail from smaller R&D performing firms.

Policy officials from many Federal agencies rely on these statistics for essential information. For example, total U.S. R&D expenditures statistics have been used by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) to update the System of National Accounts and, in fact, the BEA recently has established a separate R&D satellite account in the System. Accurate R&D data are needed to continue the development and effect subsequent updates to this detailed satellite account. Also, a data linking project has been designed to augment the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) data collected by BEA. The initial attempt to link the SIRD data with BEA’s FDI benchmark files was successful, and plans now call for the annual linkage of the R&D data to the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and U.S. Direct Investment Abroad (USDIA) data. Further, the Census Bureau links data collected by the Survey with other statistical files. At the Census Bureau, historical company-level R&D data are linked to a file that contains information on the outputs and inputs of companies’ manufacturing plants. Researchers are able to analyze the relationships between R&D funding and other economic variables by using micro-level data.

Many individuals and organizations access the survey statistics via the Internet and hundreds have asked to have their names placed on the mailing list for a paper copy of the annual SRS InfoBrief that announces the availability of statistics from each cycle of the Survey. Information about the kinds of projects that rely on statistics from the Survey is available from internal records of NSF’s Division of Science Resources Statistics (SRS). In addition, survey statistics are regularly printed in trade publications and many researchers use the survey statistics from these secondary sources without directly contacting NSF or the Census Bureau.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit organizations.

Frequency: Annually.

Respondent’s Obligation: Mandatory.

Legal Authority: Title 13 U.S.C., Sections 182, 224, and 225.

OMB Desk Officer: Brian Harris-Kojetin, (202) 395-7314.

Copies of the above information collection proposal can be obtained by calling or writing Diana Hynek, Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer, (202) 482-0266, Department of Commerce, Room 6616, 14th and Constitution Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20230 (or via the Internet at dhynek@doc.gov).