



Department of Energy

Golden Field Office
1617 Cole Boulevard
Golden, Colorado 80401-3393

January 8, 2004

TO: Distribution List Attached

SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment (EA) of a Thermal Conversion Process (TCP)
Commercial Demonstration Plant in Weld County, Colorado

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), will be preparing an environmental assessment (EA) of a Thermal Conversion Process Commercial (TCP) Demonstration Plant in Weld County, Colorado. DOE is proposing to fund a portion of the project through the Society for Environmental and Energy Research (SEER), a non-profit organization for research, development and training related to energy markets. DOE would contribute funds toward the plant's construction. A detailed description of the site and the Proposed Action are included in the attachment to this letter. DOE is the lead agency for this EA, and other federal, state, and local agencies are invited to participate in the environmental documentation process. DOE is requesting public input on the proposed NEPA process, proposed actions and alternatives, and the environmental issues to be addressed in the EA.

DOE plans to distribute the draft EA for public review and comment by March 2004. This letter and the draft EA, when it is available, will be posted on the DOE Golden Field Office electronic public reading room at <http://www.golden.doe.gov>.

Please direct your written and oral comments to:

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*Golden ... Energy for a Brighter Tomorrow
Through exceptional service, collaboration, and innovation.*



Please provide your input on or before February 10, 2004. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. Blazek', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Steven P. Blazek
NEPA Compliance Officer

Enclosure

cc/w address list: Brian Kennedy
NEPA Project Manager
SAIC

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA) OF A THERMAL CONVERSION PROCESS (TCP) COMMERCIAL DEMONSTRATION PLANT IN WELD COUNTY, COLORADO

PROPOSED ACTION

Renewable Environmental Solutions, LLC plans to construct and operate a prototype commercial-scale demonstration plant that would convert agricultural residuals and low-value organic streams into fuels, oils, gases, and carbons, with no hazardous emissions into the environment. The plant would be located in unincorporated Weld County, Colorado, in proximity to ConAgra agricultural processing plants and other agricultural operations. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) proposes to provide partial funding for the demonstration plant through an award to the Society for Environmental and Energy Research (SEER), a non-profit research, development, and training organization serving energy markets.

SITE BACKGROUND AND DESCRIPTION

The proposed site for the thermal conversion process (TCP) commercial demonstration plant is located north of County Road (CR) 24, east of CR 39 and west of CR 41, approximately 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Greeley, CO. Access to the project site is via a dirt road off of CR 24, which is unpaved. The legal description of the project site is the Southwest $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 32, Township 3 North, Range 65 West, Parcel Number 121332000004. The project site is owned by ConAgra, Inc. and involves approximately 314 acres of undeveloped land, of which about 40 acres would be needed for the proposed TCP plant and associated components.

PURPOSE AND NEED

In accordance with the Department of Energy (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations, DOE is required to evaluate the potential environmental impacts of DOE facilities, operations, and related funding decisions. Based on action by the U.S. Congress, DOE has funding available to support SEER's participation in the proposed TCP demonstration project. Congress has acknowledged the merit of this project by providing specific funding through DOE. The decision to use federal funds in support of SEER's commercial demonstration project requires DOE to address NEPA requirements and related environmental documentation and permitting requirements.

In compliance with the NEPA (42 U.S.C. 4321) and DOE's implementing regulations (10 CFR section 1021.330) and procedures, this EA examines the potential environmental impacts of DOE's decision to support the TCP project in Weld County, Colorado, including construction and operation of the plant and a No Action Alternative.

PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

At this time, the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative are the only alternatives addressed in the EA. The Proposed Action alternative involves construction of the TCP plant. The No Action Alternative would involve a DOE decision not to provide funding for the TCP project on the proposed site or anywhere else. For NEPA compliance purposes and to create a meaningful No Action scenario and baseline conditions, it has been assumed that the TCP plant

would not be constructed without DOE funding. However, it is possible that the applicant could proceed without DOE funding. If the applicant (SEER) proceeds without DOE or other federal funding, the requirement for the project to comply with NEPA would be removed. A privately funded project scenario would be identical, or at least similar to, the proposed action. This scenario is not addressed in this EA.

ENVIRONMENTAL TOPICS TO BE ADDRESSED

The proposed EA will address primary, direct, indirect, secondary and cumulative impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives. Beneficial and adverse, on-site and off-site, construction, demolition, and operation and maintenance impacts will be discussed, as appropriate. The environmental topics to be discussed in the EA include:

- Land Use, Planning, Socioeconomics and Public Policy
- Traffic and Circulation
- Air Quality and Noise
- Visual Quality/Aesthetics
- Hazardous Wastes
- Water Resources
- Soils and Geology
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Waste Management
- Public Facilities, Services and Utilities
- Energy

SCHEDULE

The schedule for key milestones to complete the NEPA review process is:

Close of Scoping Period	February 10, 2004
Public Distribution of the Draft EA	March 2004

This letter and the draft EA, when it is available, will be posted on the DOE Golden Field Office electronic public reading room at <http://www.golden.doe.gov>.

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FIGURES

Figure 1 - Regional Setting
Figure 2 - Project Site

Figure 1 - Regional Setting

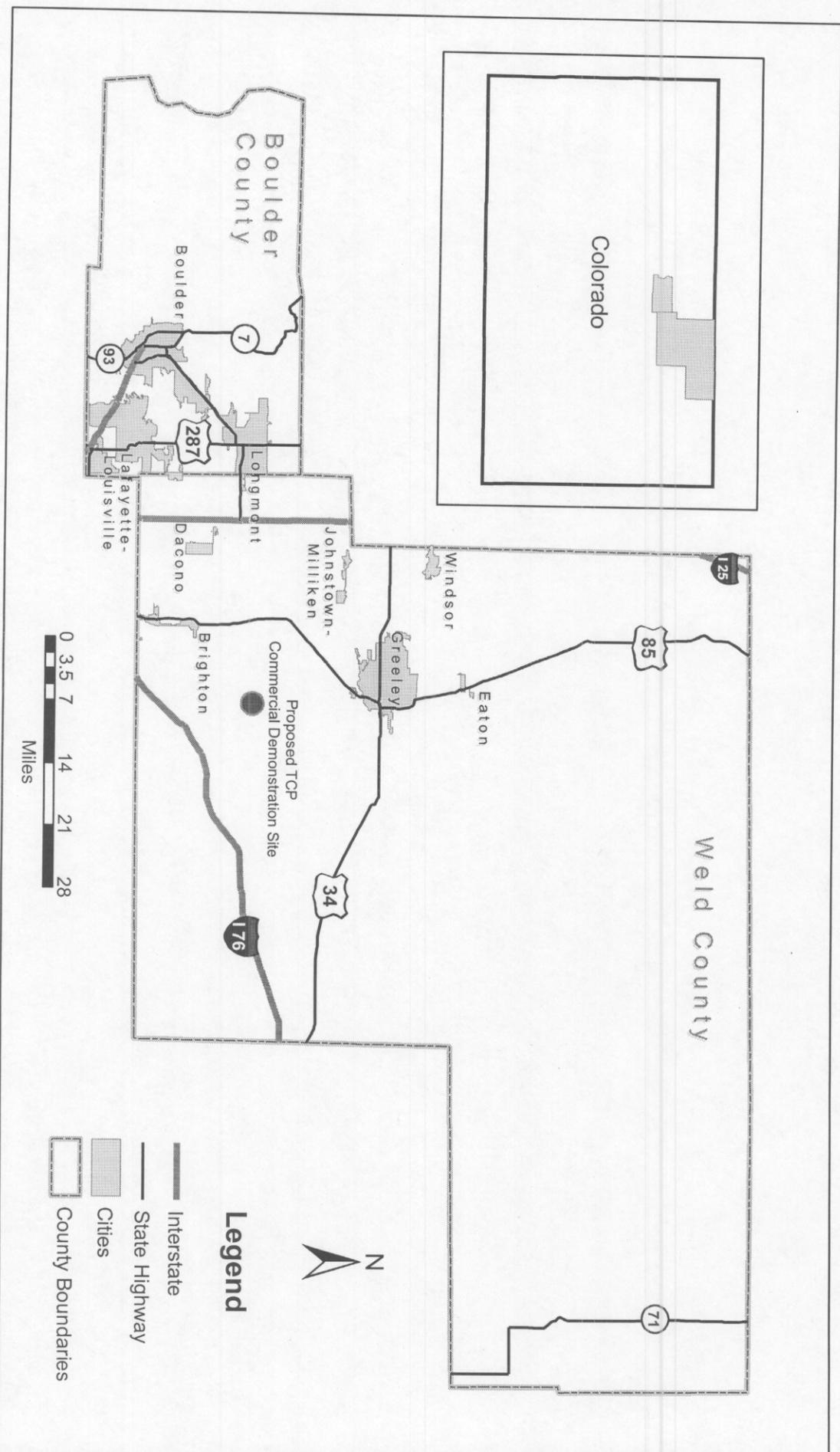
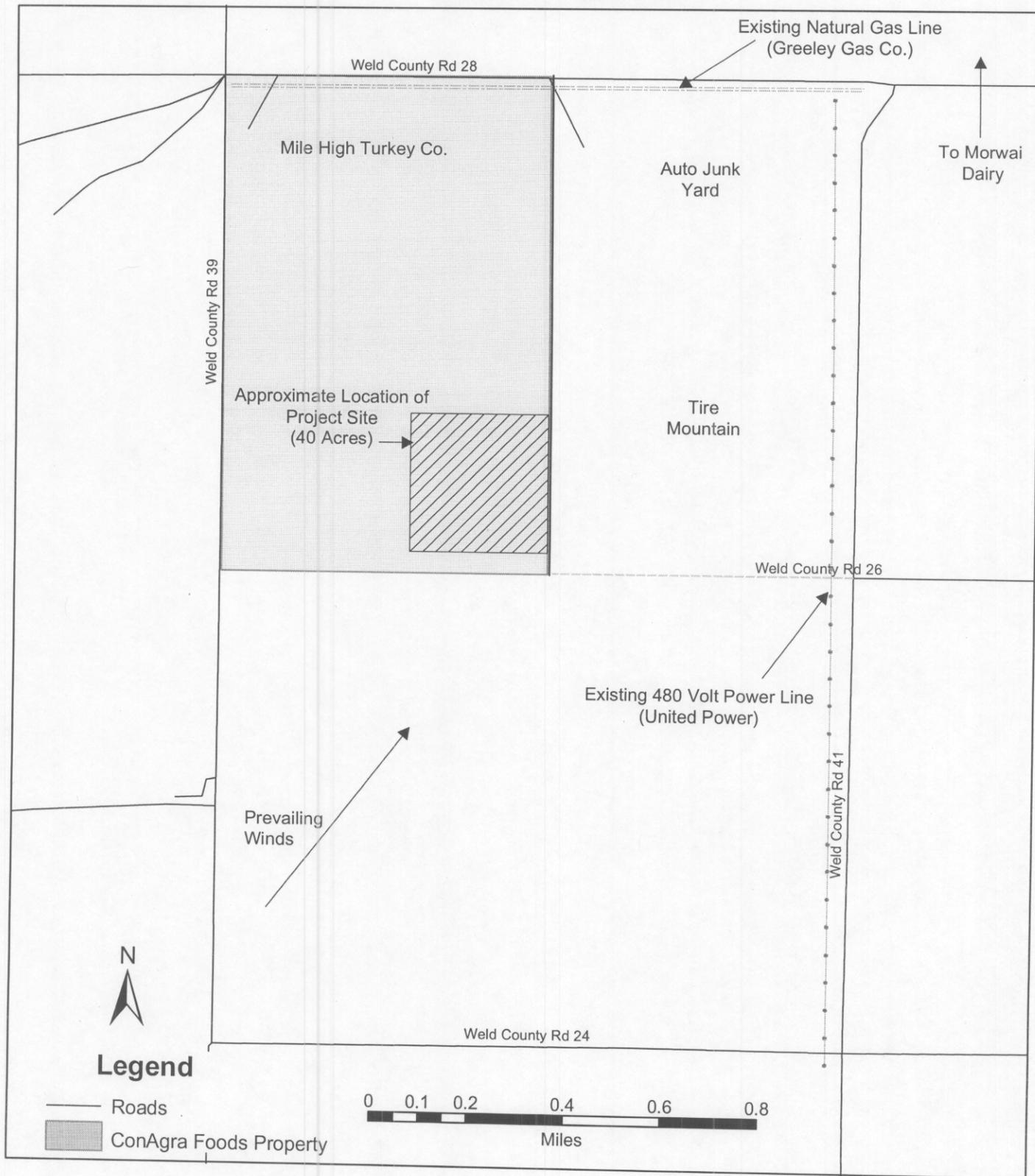


Figure 2 - Project Site



Weld County TCP EA Preliminary Scoping List

CO State Board of Land Comm.
1313 Sherman Street, Rm 620
Denver, CO 80203

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Denver, CO 80203

Colorado Department of Public
Health & Environment
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Englewood, CO 80110

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Duke Energy Field Services, Inc.
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Greeley/Weld Chamber of
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Greeley, CO 80631

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Mile High Turkey Hatchery, Inc.
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Denver, CO 80202

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