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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. 01-124-1]

Environmental Impact Statement; Genetically Engineered Pink Bollworm

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service intends to prepare an environmental impact statement relative to a proposed release into the environment of genetically engineered autocidal pink bollworms as part of an ongoing research effort in the pink bollworm sterile insect program. The environmental impact statement will examine the full range of potential effects the release could have on the environment. We invite the public to comment on what specific issues we should address in the environmental impact statement. Public hearings are planned.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive that are postmarked, delivered, or e-mailed by April 5, 2002. We will also consider comments made at public hearings in Riverdale, MD, and Phoenix, AZ. The exact dates, times, and locations for the hearings will be announced in a notice to be published in a future issue of the **Federal Register**.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by postal mail/commercial delivery or by e-mail. If you use postal mail/commercial delivery, please send four copies of your comment (an original and three copies) to: Docket No. 01-124-1, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3C71, 4700 River Road Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238. Please state that your comment refers to Docket No. 01-124-1. If you use e-mail, address your comment to

regulations@aphis.usda.gov. Your comment must be contained in the body of your message; do not send attached files. Please include your name and address in your message and "Docket No. 01-124-1" on the subject line.

You may read any comments that we receive on this docket in our reading room. The reading room is located in room 1141 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW., Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 690-2817 before coming.

APHIS documents published in the **Federal Register**, and related information, including the names of organizations and individuals who have commented on APHIS dockets, are available on the Internet at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/ppd/rad/webrepor.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Stephanie Stephens, Biological Scientist, Environmental Services, PPD, APHIS, 4700 River Road Unit 152, Riverdale, MD 20737-1234; (301) 734-8565.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

On January 29, 2001, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) received an application for a permit from APHIS's Plant Protection Center in Phoenix, AZ, to release genetically engineered pink bollworms (*Pectinophora gossypiella*) in confined on-site experimentation and field performance tests. The pink bollworms are genetically engineered to express an enhanced green fluorescent protein derived from the jellyfish *Aequora victoria*, which could aid in the monitoring of sterilized pink bollworms released in APHIS's ongoing pink bollworm sterile insect technique program. Data from these experiments and tests will be used to determine whether the fluorescent marker affects the behavior or performance of the pink bollworm.

On June 21, 2001, APHIS published in the **Federal Register** (66 FR 33226, Docket No. 01-024-1) a notice of availability of an environmental assessment for the study described above. The environmental assessment considered potential environmental

effects that could result from conducting the study. APHIS has considered and responded to all comments received on the environmental assessment, and based on the findings of the environmental assessment, has determined that implementation of the study would not significantly impact the quality of the human environment. On January 11, 2002, APHIS published a notice in the **Federal Register** (67 FR 1434-1435, Docket No. 01-024-2) announcing the availability of the final environmental assessment and finding of no significant impact relative to the issuance of a permit for the confined field study.

Prior to the next phase of research, the Phoenix Plant Protection Center may apply for a permit for the field release of genetically engineered pink bollworm containing the enhanced green fluorescent protein marker gene and a temperature-sensitive lethal gene. The objective of such a release would be to provide an opportunity for evaluating the use of genetically engineered pink bollworm in an autocidal biological control system for area-wide management of pink bollworm.

APHIS plans to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) that examines potential environmental effects associated with the field release of genetically engineered pink bollworm containing the enhanced green fluorescent protein marker gene and a temperature-sensitive lethal gene, and other alternatives.

The EIS would analyze and compare the full range of available alternatives, including existing techniques and technologies (no action), as well as the unconfined release into the environment of genetically engineered pink bollworm as explained above. We invite the public to comment on what issues we should address in the EIS. Issues presently under consideration include:

- Potential genetic transformation affecting the environment;
- Persistence of the genetically modified pink bollworm versus wild-type pink bollworm;
- Physical and biological containment measures for the proposed study;
- Potential gene transfer to other insect species;
- Potential gene transfer to non-insect species;

- Potential impacts on humans, including specific population groups such as minorities, low income populations, and children;
- Potential effects of use of genetically engineered pink bollworm on chemical load in the environment; and
- Risk to non-target plants and animals, including threatened and endangered species.

Interested persons and organizations may also present comments on the scope of the EIS at public hearings to be held in Riverdale, MD, and Phoenix, AZ. The exact dates and times for the hearings and the specific locations of the hearings will be announced in a notice published in a future issue of the **Federal Register**.

This notice and any further notices or environmental analyses related to this subject are intended to fulfill the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*). If we prepare a draft EIS for public review, we will publish a notice announcing its availability in an upcoming issue of the **Federal Register**. The notice would request comments on the draft EIS.

This notice is issued in accordance with: (1) NEPA, (2) regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality for implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500–1508), (3) USDA regulations implementing NEPA (7 CFR part 1b), and (4) APHIS' NEPA Implementing Procedures (7 CFR part 372).

Done in Washington, DC, this 29th day of January 2002.

W. Ron DeHaven,

Acting Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 02–2604 Filed 2–1–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–34–U

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

Forest Counties Payments Committee

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Forest Counties Payments Committee is required to provide Congress with the information specified in section 320 of the Fiscal Year 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. In order to develop its recommendations to Congress, the Committee requests comments from the general public.

DATES: Comments on this notice must be received by April 30, 2002 to be assured of consideration. Comments received after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

ADDRESSES: Written comments should be submitted to Randle G. Phillips, Executive Director, Forest Counties Payments Committee, PO Box 34718, Washington, DC 20043–4713, (202) 208–6574 or electronically to the Committee's web site at <http://countypayments.gov/comments.html>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Randle G. Phillips, Executive Director, Forest Counties Payments Committee, (202) 208–6574; or via e-mail at rphillips01@fs.fed.us.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Section 320 of the 2001 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (Pub L. 106–291) created the Forest Counties Payments Committee to make recommendations to Congress on a long-term solution for making Federal payments to eligible States and counties in which Federal lands are situated. The Committee will consider the impact on eligible States and counties of revenues from the historic multiple use of Federal lands; evaluate the economic, environmental, and social benefits which accrue to counties containing Federal lands; evaluate the expenditures by counties on activities occurring on Federal lands which are Federal responsibilities; and monitor payments and implementation of Pub L. 106–393, “Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000.”

The Committee asks that respondents provide information in response to the following questions:

1. Do counties receive their fair share of federal revenue-sharing payments made to eligible States?
2. What difficulties exist in complying with, and managing all of the federal revenue-sharing payments programs? Are some more difficult than others?
3. What economic, social, and environmental costs do counties incur as a result of the presence of public lands within their boundaries?
4. What economic, social, and environmental benefits do counties realize as a result of public lands within their boundaries?
5. What are the economic and social effects from changes in revenues generated from public lands over the past 15 years, as a result of changes in management on public lands in your State or county?
6. What actions has your State or county taken to mitigate any impacts associated with declining economic

conditions, or revenue-sharing payments?

7. What effects, both positive and negative, have taken place with education and highway programs that are attributable to the management of public lands within your State or county?

8. What relationship, if any, should exist between federal revenue-sharing programs, and management activities on public lands?

9. What alternatives exist to provide equitable revenue-sharing to States and counties and to promote “sustainable forestry?”

10. What has been your experience regarding implementation of Pub L. 106–393, The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act?

11. What changes in law, policies and procedures, and the management of public land have contributed to changes in revenue derived from the multiple-use management of these lands?

12. What changes in law, policies and procedures, and the management of public land are needed in order to restore the revenues derived from the multiple-use management of these lands?

Dated: January 29, 2002.

Elizabeth Estill,

Deputy Chief, Programs and Legislation.

[FR Doc. 02–2586 Filed 2–1–02; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3410–11–P

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rogue/Umpqua Resource Advisory Committee (RAC); Meeting

AGENCY: Forest Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of meeting.

SUMMARY: The Rogue/Umpqua Resource Advisory Committee (RAC) will meet on Monday, February 11, 2002. The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10 a.m. and conclude at approximately 4 p.m. The meeting will be held at the La Quinta Inn, 243 NE Morgan Lane in Grants Pass. The tentative agenda includes (1) Review of Title II projects proposed by the Forest Service and (2) Public Forum. The Public Forum is scheduled to begin at 3 p.m. Time allotted for individual presentations will be limited to 3–4 minutes. Written comments are encouraged, particularly if the material cannot be presented within the time limits for the Public Forum. Written comments may be submitted prior to the February 11th meeting by sending them to Designated Federal Official Jim Caplan at the address given below.