

a period of 12 months from the expiration of the existing grant agreement in September 2004, and affects only the potential lapse in funding for the above-mentioned project, the Secretary has determined that proposed rulemaking on this waiver is impracticable, unnecessary, and contrary to the public interest. Thus, proposed rulemaking also is not required under 5 U.S.C. 553(b)(B).

#### Regulatory Flexibility Act Certification

The Secretary certifies that this extension of the project period and waiver will not have a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

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(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number 84.133A, Disability Rehabilitation Research Project.)

**Program Authority:** 29 U.S.C. 762(g) and 764(a).

Dated: April 12, 2004.

**Troy R. Justesen,**

*Acting Deputy Assistant, Secretary for Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.*

[FR Doc. 04-8706 Filed 4-15-04; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 4000-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

[Docket No. EA-97-C]

### Application To Export Electric Energy; Portland General Electric Company

**AGENCY:** Office of Fossil Energy, DOE.

**ACTION:** Notice of application.

**SUMMARY:** Portland General Electric Company ("PGE") has applied for renewal of its authority to transmit electric energy from the United States to Canada pursuant to section 202(e) of the Federal Power Act.

**DATES:** Comments, protests or requests to intervene must be submitted on or before May 17, 2004.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments, protests or requests to intervene should be addressed as follows: Office of Coal & Power Import/Export (FE-27), Office of Fossil Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-0350 (fax 202-287-5736).

#### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Rosalind Carter (Program Office), 202-586-67983 or Michael Skinker (Program Attorney), 202-586-2793.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Exports of electricity from the United States to a foreign country are regulated and require authorization under section 202(e) of the Federal Power Act (FPA) (16 U.S.C. 824a(e)).

On April 29, 1994, the Office of Fossil Energy (FE) of the Department of Energy (DOE) authorized PGE to transmit electric energy from the United States to Canada using the international transmission facilities of the Bonneville Power Administration. Amendments to this authorization were granted on February 9, 1996 (Order EA-97-A), and again on March 5, 1998 (Order EA-97-B). Order EA-97-B expired on March 5, 2003.

On February 26, 2004, PGE filed an application with FE for renewal of its export authority and requested that the maximum rate of transmission of its exports be increased from 400 megawatts (MW) to 600 MW and that the authorization be granted for a 10-year period beginning on April 1, 2003.

PGE asserted that it was not able to apply for a renewal of its export authorization before the expiration of Order EA-97-B due to numerous factors, including disruptions to routine filing and reporting obligations resulting from the bankruptcy reorganization of PGE's parent company, Enron. PGE also indicated that it had continued to export electricity to Canada after the expiration date of Order EA-97-B.

**Procedural Matters:** Any person desiring to become a party to this proceeding or to be heard by filing comments or protests to this application should file a petition to intervene, comment or protest at the address provided above in accordance with §§ 385.211 or 385.214 of the FERC's Rules of Practice and Procedures (18 CFR 385.211, 385.214). Fifteen copies of each petition and protest should be filed with the DOE on or before the date listed above.

Comments on the PGE application to export electric energy to Canada should be clearly marked with Docket EA-97-

C. Additional copies are to be filed directly with Ms. Loretta Mabinton, Assistant General Counsel, Portland General Electric Company, 121 SW. Salmon Street, Portland, OR 97204.

DOE notes that the circumstances described in this application are virtually identical to those for which export authority had previously been granted in FE Orders EA-97. Consequently, DOE believes that it has adequately satisfied its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 through the documentation of a categorical exclusion in the FE Docket EA-97 proceeding.

Copies of this application will be made available, upon request, for public inspection and copying at the address provided above or by accessing the Fossil Energy home page at <http://www.fe.doe.gov>. Upon reaching the Fossil Energy home page, select "Electricity Regulation," and then "Pending Proceedings" from the options menus.

Issued in Washington, DC, on April 5, 2004.

**Anthony J. Como,**

*Deputy Director, Electric Power Regulation, Office of Coal & Power Import/Export, Office of Coal & Power Systems, Office of Fossil Energy.*

[FR Doc. 04-8652 Filed 4-15-04; 8:45 am]

**BILLING CODE 6450-01-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

### Recommendations for Sequencing Targets in Support of the Science Missions of the Office of Biological and Environmental Research (BER)

**AGENCY:** Office of Science; Office of Biological and Environmental Research; U.S. Department of Energy (DOE).

**ACTION:** Notice of recommendations for sequencing targets.

**SUMMARY:** This **Federal Register** notice seeks the input and nominations of interested parties for candidate microbes, microbial consortia, and 250Mb-or-less-sized organisms for draft genomic sequencing in support of Office of Biological and Environmental Research (BER) programs, among them, the Climate Change Research Program, the Natural and Accelerated Bioremediation Research (NABIR) Program, the Environmental Management Science Program (EMSP), the Microbial Genome Program (MGP), the Ocean Science Program, and the Genomics: GTL Program. Nominated candidates should be relevant to DOE mission needs, e.g., organisms involved

in environmental processes, including waste remediation, carbon management, and energy production. This announcement is not an offer of direct financial support for research on these organisms. Those nominations selected will result in the DNA sequence of selected organisms being determined at a draft level (6–8 X coverage) at the DOE Production Genomics Facility (PGF) at the Joint Genome Institute (JGI), (<http://www.jgi.doe.gov>). A subset of the selected organisms may be identified for sequence finishing. This announcement is designed to assist DOE in determining and prioritizing a list of microbes, microbial consortia, or modest-genome sized (not more than 250Mb) organisms (including eukaryotes) that address DOE mission needs. Following merit review, and subject to the availability of funding and programmatic relevance, draft sequencing will be carried out at the PGF.

**DATES:** To assure consideration, nominations in response to this notice should be received by 4:30 p.m. (e.d.t.), July 1, 2004, to be accepted for merit review. It is anticipated that review will be completed early in the fall of 2004 with draft sequencing at the DOE PGF to commence in early 2005, conditional upon the provision of high quality DNA.

**ADDRESSES:** Nominations responding to this notice should be sent to Dr. Daniel W. Drell, Office of Biological and Environmental Research, SC-72, Office of Science, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20585-1290; e-mail is acceptable and encouraged for submitting nominations using the following addresses: [kim.laing@science.doe.gov](mailto:kim.laing@science.doe.gov) and [daniel.drell@science.doe.gov](mailto:daniel.drell@science.doe.gov).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Dr. Daniel W. Drell, SC-72, Office of Biological and Environmental Research, Office of Science, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20585-1290, phone: (301) 903-4742, e-mail: [daniel.drell@science.doe.gov](mailto:daniel.drell@science.doe.gov). The full text of this notice is available via the Internet using the following Web site address: <http://www.sc.doe.gov/ober/microbial.html>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The DOE Office of Biological and Environmental Research supports fundamental research in a variety of missions ([http://www.sc.doe.gov/ober/ober\\_top.html](http://www.sc.doe.gov/ober/ober_top.html)). Relevant BER programs may include the Climate Change Research Program, the Natural and Accelerated Bioremediation Research (NABIR) Program, the Environmental Management Science

Program (EMSP), the Microbial Genome Program (MGP), the Ocean Science Program, and the Genomics:GTL Program. The Climate Change Research Program supports investigations of microbially-mediated fixation of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>. The NABIR Program supports research on microbial biotransformations and/or immobilization of metal and radionuclide wastes. The EMSP supports research into microbially-mediated biotransformations of DOE-relevant organic wastes such as chlorinated solvents. The MGP supports key DOE missions by providing and analyzing microbial DNA sequence information to further the understanding and application of microbiology relating to energy production, chemical and materials production, environmental carbon management, and environmental cleanup. The Ocean Science Program supports research in two areas, (1) the role of oceans in sequestration of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, and (2) the use of biotechnological tools to determine linkages between carbon and nitrogen cycling in coastal environments. The Genomics:GTL Program builds on the successes of the DOE Human Genome Program (HGP) by seeking to understand biological function in DOE mission relevant microbes with emphases on identifying the multi-component protein complexes in cells, characterizing gene regulatory networks, probing the functional capabilities of the environmental microbial repertoire of genes, and beginning to model these processes computationally. Both terrestrial and ocean environments in which microbial flora sequester carbon, particularly carbon dioxide, are of interest. Within the ocean environment, microbial flora that sequester or process carbon dioxide in both the eutrophic and “twilight” zones are of interest.

Over the last ten years, sequencing of a range of microorganisms that live in a wide diversity of environments has provided a considerable information base for scientific research related not only to DOE missions, but also to other federal agency missions and U.S. industry. (<http://www.tigr.org/tdb/mdb/mdbcomplete.html> <http://www.ornl.gov/microbialgenomes/organisms.html> and [http://www.jgi.doe.gov/JGI\\_microbial/html/](http://www.jgi.doe.gov/JGI_microbial/html/)). Nonetheless, most of our current knowledge of microbiology still is derived from individual species that either cause disease or grow easily and readily as monocultures under laboratory conditions and are thus easy to study. The preponderance of species in the environment remains largely

unknown to science. Many are thought to grow as part of interdependent consortia in which one species supplies a nutrient necessary for the growth of another. Little is known of the organization, membership, or functioning of these consortia, especially those involved in environmental processes of DOE interest. Fungi and small multicellular eukaryotes play important roles in the environment as well.

Genomic analyses of sequenced microbes have suggested that processes such as lateral gene transfers at various times in the evolutionary history of some microbial lineages may have blurred the understanding of their phylogenetic relationships. For this notice, groups of microbes that may have exchanged (or may be exchanging) genetic information via lateral gene exchange or plasmid mediated exchanges can be proposed if the processes of genetic exchange result in functions relevant to DOE missions noted above.

Genomic analyses are badly needed of microbial consortia and species refractory to laboratory culture that play important roles in environments challenged with metals, radionuclides, chlorinated solvents, or are involved in carbon sequestration. The candidate(s) being proposed must mediate or catalyze metabolic events of energy or environmental importance. Priority will be given to studies on those microbes or microbial consortia that can bioremediate metals and radionuclides, degrade significant biopolymers such as celluloses and lignins, produce potentially useful energy-related materials (H<sub>2</sub>, CH<sub>4</sub>, ethanol, *etc.*), or fix or sequester CO<sub>2</sub>.

For this notice, candidate organisms (either individual organisms, consortia of organisms, or eukaryotes with small genomes) comprised of archaea, bacteria, fungi, algae, and other eukaryotes with genome sizes not greater than 250 Mbp can be proposed for draft sequencing. For a current list of microbes that have been and are being sequenced see <http://www.ornl.gov/microbialgenomes/organisms.html> and <http://www.ornl.gov/microbialgenomes/seq2003.html>.

**Aims:** This request for nominations of candidate sequencing targets has two broad foci:

(1) *Single organisms.* These may be bacteria, archaea, fungi, microalgae or multicellular organisms with genomes not larger than 250Mb. The criteria that will be used to evaluate proposed candidates for draft sequencing will include:

(a) The candidate has significant relevance to the DOE missions noted above;

(b) To assess suitability for whole genome shotgun sequencing, preliminary data on genome size, repeat content, genome structure, GC content, polymorphism, and other characteristics are provided, especially for larger genomes;

(c) The source of genomic DNA (*i.e.*, strain or isolate, and researcher) is identified, and a clonal sample (or samples with low and characterized polymorphism) are available;

(d) A brief description of post sequencing follow-up work (*e.g.*, a data use plan and how will data be annotated to enable rapid and open use) is included;

(e) The availability of a DNA/gene transfer system supporting genetic analyses is known;

(f) Biological novelty or uniqueness (*i.e.*, unusual genetically determined characteristics pertinent to DOE missions) is described;

(g) Place in the currently understood, 16s RNA based, "Tree of Life" is identified, *e.g.*, is the proposed candidate in a sparsely populated or more heavily populated section of the tree?

(h) A brief description of the user community is given;

(i) The potential impact on the scientific community is large;

(j) Explicit commitment to a data-release schedule, consistent with the guidelines given below is provided.

(2) *Currently unculturable or hard-to-culture organisms and environmental consortia.* The review criteria that will be used to evaluate proposed candidates for draft sequencing will include most of the criteria listed above for single organisms (with less emphasis on genome size/structure, presence/absence of a genetic system, or position in the "Tree of Life" since it is recognized that few data on these attributes will be available), but in addition, the following considerations will be included:

(a) Some measure of the "complexity" of the target consortium being proposed, *e.g.*, approximate number of species, size(s) of genomes, and proportions of different members (it is understood that in most cases, only estimates of these parameters may be available) is discussed. When the environmental consortia are complex, approaches should be described to normalize the DNA libraries in order to reduce the amount of sequencing required and assure adequate sampling of the complexity of the consortia. Additionally, the proposer(s) should be

prepared to work together with JGI scientists to optimize the yield from the sequencing effort required;

(b) Past attempts to cultivate consortium members are described, *e.g.*, have any members of this consortium been successfully cultured;

(c) Some spatial/temporal/hydrochemical/geochemical or other characterization of the environment is given, *e.g.*, the physicochemical parameters of the site from which the selected community is derived; a description of the site contaminants; the accessibility of the site for future sampling; the adequacy of site documentation;

(d) If proposed, technical approaches and technology development specific for defining and isolating members of a given consortium are described;

(e) Some indication of the biological function of the relationships, within consortium members where available, along with a discussion of the scientific and programmatic importance of understanding these relationships is given;

(f) Information where available is given about the phylogenetic position(s) of the members of the consortium and what is known about closely related organisms.

(g) Available informatics tools and annotation plan (*e.g.*, for annotating genes from a consortium analysis or grouping identified genes into a putative "consortium phenotype" within the chosen environment) are described;

(h) Explicit commitment to a data-release schedule, consistent with the guidelines given below is provided. Scientific community standards regarding access to sequencing data are evolving. BER conforms to the general guidance contained within the Draft Rapid Data Release Policy (<http://www.genome.gov/page.cfm?pageID=10506537>) for "community resource projects." The usual and customary practice for the JGI is to put all sequencing data up on its Web site (<http://www.jgi.doe.gov/>) at frequent and periodic intervals.

However, for the purposes of this notice, BER does not regard individual genome sequencing efforts involving less than 250Mb, or microbial community sequencing efforts, as requested herein, as "community resource projects" within the definition of the Draft Rapid Data Release policy. BER's position, which is provisional and subject to evolution, is that no more than 6 months from the completion of a "first assembly" of the sequence for a single-genome project, the data will be released on the JGI web site or to a publicly accessible database with no use

restrictions. For microbial community projects, the JGI will conduct normal QA/QC assessments on the sequence output (at approximately 2 x coverage), then discuss with the proposer(s) and with BER staff the extent to which sequencing will be continued to achieve a satisfactory genomic "view" of the selected microbial community. From the time of initiation of this discussion, not more than 6 months will be permitted to elapse before unconditional release of these data. Proposers should clearly understand that the priority in the sequencing queue that a selected project is given may be linked to the willingness of the proposer(s) to shorten this "embargo" period. BER is fully aware that some ambiguity remains in the precise initiation of this embargo period but stresses its intention and commitment to the rapid release, without any use restrictions, of this data into publicly accessible databases.

Upon selection of a nominated microbial sequencing target, BER expects that Principal Investigators will collaborate with the JGI by providing high quality, high MW genomic DNA for library construction as well as assisting in annotating the draft sequence data until a sufficiently complete annotation is achieved, understanding that this will be sensitive to hypothetical gene predictions and the usual uncertainties of annotation. (A separate communication with the detailed requirements for DNA will be sent to proposers whose nominations are accepted for sequencing.) Following data acquisition and annotation, DOE expects that those whose nominations have been sequenced will make good faith efforts to publish in the open scientific literature the results of their subsequent work, including both the genome sequences of the organisms sequenced under this notice as well as the annotation. (BER also expects the Principal Investigator of a selected effort to either deposit a culture of the microbe or consortium into a publicly accessible collection or repository, or make it available directly so others can have access.) These parties are encouraged to create process- and cost-effective partnerships that will maximize data production and analysis, data dissemination, and progress towards understanding basic biological mechanisms that can further the aims of this effort. Additionally, it must be explicitly understood that DOE will provide an assembled and computationally annotated draft (roughly 6 x; carried out in a paired-end sequencing approach) sequence of the microbe(s) selected, but that research

using that sequence data should be funded from separate sources and/or separate solicitations. Finally, there is no commitment to finish a given drafted sequence, although this option may be considered at a later time for a selected subset of proposed candidates.

**Submission Information:** Interested parties should submit a brief white paper to either of the foci given above, consisting of not more than 5 pages of narrative exclusive of attachments (which should be kept to a minimum) responding to each of the specific criteria set forth. Electronic submission (to [kim.laing@science.doe.gov](mailto:kim.laing@science.doe.gov) and [Daniel.drell@science.doe.gov](mailto:Daniel.drell@science.doe.gov)) is strongly encouraged. It is expected that the Principal Investigator will serve as the main point of contact for additional information on the nominated microbe. Nominations must contain a very short abstract or project summary and a cover page with the name of the applicant, mailing address, phone, fax, and e-mail. The nomination should include 2-page curriculum vitae of the key investigators; letters of intent (or e-mails) from collaborators (suggesting the size of the interested community) are permitted.

Nominations will be reviewed relative to the scope and research needs of the BER programs cited above. A brief response to each nomination will be provided electronically following merit and programmatic reviews.

Other useful Web sites include:

DOE JGI Microbial Sequencing Priorities for FY2004: <http://www.ornl.gov/microbialgenomes/seq2003.html>; [http://www.jgi.doe.gov/JGI\\_microbial/html/coming\\_soon.html](http://www.jgi.doe.gov/JGI_microbial/html/coming_soon.html);

Microbial Genome Program Home Page—<http://www.sc.doe.gov/ober/microbial.html>;

DOE Joint Genome Institute Microbial Web Page—[http://www.jgi.doe.gov/JGI\\_microbial/html/](http://www.jgi.doe.gov/JGI_microbial/html/);

GenBank Home Page—<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>;

Human Genome Home Page—<http://www.ornl.gov/hgmis/>;

DOE Genomes to Life—<http://DOEGenomesToLife.org>;

DOE Natural and Accelerated Bioremediation Research (NABIR) Program—<http://www.lbl.gov/nabir/>;

Ocean Science Program—<http://www.sc.doe.gov/ober/CCRD/oceans.html>.

Issued in Washington, DC, April 12, 2004.

**Marvin E. Frazier,**

*Director, Life Sciences Division.*

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## ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

[ER-FRL-6650-4]

### Environmental Impact Statements and Regulations; Availability of EPA Comments

Availability of EPA comments prepared pursuant to the Environmental Review Process (ERP), under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act as amended. Requests for copies of EPA comments can be directed to the Office of Federal Activities at (202) 564-7167. An explanation of the ratings assigned to draft environmental impact statements (EISs) was published in FR dated April 02, 2004 (69 FR 17403).

#### Draft EISs

*ERP No. D-AFS-K65266-AZ* Rating LO, Arizona Snowbowl Facilities Improvements, Proposal to Provide a Consistent/Reliable Operating Season, Coconino National Forest, Coconino County, AZ.

Summary: While EPA had no objections to the plan as proposed, EPA did request clarification on Tribe consultation and mitigation of erosion and air quality impacts associated with construction.

*ERP No. D-BIA-J60021-UT* Rating EC2, Tekoi Balefill Project on the Skull Valley Band of Goshute Indians Reservation, Approval of Long-Term Lease of Indian Land for a Commercial Solid Waste Disposal Facility, Salt Lake City, Tooele County, UT.

Summary: EPA expressed concerns regarding environmental oversight of the landfill during design, construction, operation, and closure. Although the landfill will be regulated under RCRA, there are no provision for Tribes to develop approved RCRA municipal solid waste programs to permit and oversee the landfill. Additional information is also needed regarding faults at the proposed site and groundwater availability.

*ERP No. D-FHW-E40799-TN* Rating EC2, Appalachian Development Highway System Corridor K (Relocated Highway U. S. 64), Improvements from West of the Ocoee River to TN-68 near Ducktown, Funding, U.S. Army Corps Section 10 and 404 Permits, Polk County, TN.

Summary: EPA expressed concerns regarding the potential of the project to further degrade water quality and aquatic habitat in the Ocoee River watershed.

*ERP No. D-FHW-H40182-00* Rating LO, US-159 Missouri River Crossing

Project, Rehabilitate or Replace the Missouri River Bridge at Rulo, Funding and U.S. Army COE Section 404 Permit, Richardson County, NE and Holt County, MO.

Summary: EPA has no objection to the proposed project. However, EPA does request clarification on the type of bridge configuration that the build alternative would employ as well as the potential impact to wildlife movement and habitat use within the riparian section of the floodplain. EPA also requests that the Memorandum of Agreement between the NDOR and SHPO be included in the FEIS.

*ERP No. DB-NOA-G64002-00* Rating LO, Reef Fish Management Plan Amendment 22, To Set Red Snapper Sustainable Fisheries Act Targets and Thresholds, Set a Rebuilding Plan, and Establish Bycatch Reporting Methodologies for the Reef Fish Fishery, Gulf of Mexico.

Summary: While EPA has no objections to the proposed action, EPA recommended that the red snapper bycatch issue associated with the shrimp fishery be addressed in future amendments to the shrimp FMP.

#### Final EISs

*ERP No. F-AFS-J65371-WY* Medicine Bow National Forest Revised Draft Land and Resource Management Plan, Implementation, Albany, Carbon and Laramie Counties, WY.

Summary: EPA continues to express concerns regarding potential adverse impacts to aquatic and soil resources.

*ERP No. F-FHW-J40156-ND* US 2 Highway Transportation Improvements from near U.S. 85 (milepost 31.93) to west of U.S. 52 (milepost 131.24), Funding, NPDES and U.S. Army COE Section 404 Permits Issuance, Williams, Mountrail and Ward Counties, ND.

Summary: EPA continues to express environmental concerns with the proposed project due to wetland and aquatic resource impacts and the limited details regarding mitigation for these impacts.

*ERP No. F-NRC-E06022-SC* Generic—License Renewal of Nuclear Plants, Virgil C. Summer Nuclear Station, Supplement 15, Fairfield County, SC.

Summary: EPA continues to have concerns and recommended that the project assure that there is radiological monitoring of all plant effluents, and that there is appropriate storage and disposition of radioactive waste.