FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
FOR
GENERAL MOTORS, LLC
ELECTRIC DRIVE VEHICLE BATTERY AND COMPONENT
MANUFACTURING INITIATIVE APPLICATION
WHITE MARSH, MARYLAND AND WIXOM, MICHIGAN

RESPONSIBLE AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

SUMMARY: DOE completed the *Final Environmental Assessment for Electric Drive Vehicle Battery and Component Manufacturing Initiative Application, White Marsh, Maryland and Wixom, Michigan* (DOE/EA-1723). Based on the analyses in the Environmental Assessment (EA), DOE determined that its proposed action - awarding a federal grant to General Motors, LLC (GM) to establish a second-generation Global Rear-Wheel Electric drive unit components facilities - would result in no significant adverse impacts. DOE further determined that beneficial local socioeconomic impacts could occur as a result of increased employment opportunities and spending in the project areas.

BACKGROUND: As part of the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009* (Recovery Act; Public Law 111-5, 123 Stat. 115), DOE's National Energy Technology Laboratory, on behalf of the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's Vehicle Technologies Program, is providing up to $2 billion in federal funding for competitively awarded agreements to facilitate the construction (including increase in production capacity at existing plants) of U.S. manufacturing plants to produce advanced batteries and electric drive components.

The federal action of providing funding for these projects, known as the Electric Drive Vehicle Battery and Component Manufacturing Initiative, requires compliance with the *National Environmental Policy Act of 1969* (NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500 to 1508) and DOE's NEPA implementing procedures (10 CFR Part 1021). DOE prepared an EA to evaluate the potential environmental consequences of providing a grant for this proposed project under the initiative.

PURPOSE AND NEED: The overall purpose and need for DOE action pursuant to the Vehicle Technologies Program and the funding opportunity under the Recovery Act are to accelerate the development and production of various electric drive vehicle systems by building or increasing domestic manufacturing capacity for advanced automotive batteries, their components, recycling facilities, and electric drive vehicle components in addition to stimulating the U.S. economy. This and the other selected projects are needed to reduce the U.S. petroleum consumption by investing in alternative vehicle technologies. The proposed project would also assist with the nation's economic recovery by creating manufacturing jobs in the United States in accordance with the objectives of the Recovery Act.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION: DOE's proposed action is to provide a grant to partially fund GM's proposed project -- production and validation of second-generation Global Rear-Wheel Electric (GRE) drive unit components at two locations. The project includes installing new equipment in the retrofitted existing space at the Wixom, Michigan, facility and in a new 37,000 square foot building at the White Marsh, Maryland, site. Manufacturing and validation of the components would occur at the both sites with the majority of the validation at the Wixom site. DOE would provide $105,387,000 in financial assistance in a cost-sharing arrangement in order to facilitate the construction and operation of the GRE facilities. The total cost of the project is estimated at $245,900,733

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED: In addition to the proposed action, DOE considered the No-Action Alternative as required under NEPA. Under the No-Action Alternative, DOE would not provide funds for the GM's proposed project. For the purposes of the EA, DOE assumed that the project would not proceed without DOE funding. This assumption establishes a baseline against which the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project are compared.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES: DOE evaluated the potential environmental consequences of the proposed project and the No-Action Alternative, including the activities necessary to implement the proposed project that would be funded by GM rather than the Recovery Act.

DOE considered thirteen environmental resource areas in the EA. However, not all areas were evaluated at the same level of detail. DOE focused more detailed analysis on areas that would require new or revised permits, have the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts, or have the potential for controversy. The areas DOE evaluated in more detail included air quality; water resources; noise; waste management; and human health and safety. For these areas, DOE determined there would be minimal potential adverse environmental impacts. Air and water emissions may require modifications to exiting permits or new permits, but the changes would be minor and not trigger major delays or controversy.

DOE also evaluated socioeconomics to determine the potential positive benefits of the proposed project on surrounding communities. The proposed project is anticipated to result in small increases in local employment opportunities and local spending, potentially providing a minor beneficial impact to the local communities.

The other environmental areas DOE evaluated for potential impacts were geology and soils; wetlands and floodplains; terrestrial vegetation; wildlife; threatened and endangered species; infrastructure/utilities; and sustainability. DOE determined that there would be no potential for adverse impacts for these resource areas, or that the impacts would be minimal, temporary, or both. The EA provides more detail on the reasons DOE did not conduct more detailed evaluations.

Under the No-Action Alternative, the project would either be delayed, as GM sought other funding sources, or abandoned altogether. The potential environmental consequences, if the project was delayed, could be different if the project was modified. If abandoned, the potential environmental consequences would not occur. Furthermore, the potential beneficial impacts would change or not occur.

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY: DOE issued the Draft EA on April 4, 2010, and advertised its release in the *Baltimore Sun* and *The Oakland Press* on April 4, 5, and 6. In addition, the Department sent copies for public review to the White Marsh Branch Library and Wixom Public Library. The Department established a 15-day public comment period that began April 4, 2010, and ended April 19, 2010. DOE announced it would accept comments by mail, e-mail, and facsimile.

The Draft EA was distributed to various federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction or special expertise. DOE conducted formal consultations by mail with the responsible U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service field office, State Historic Preservation Office, and Tribal contacts in Maryland. No agency consultations were needed for the Michigan site, since no construction would occur. In each case, DOE received correspondence supporting its determination of no potential impacts to threatened or endangered species, and no potential impacts to properties listed on or eligible for inclusion to the *National Register of Historic Places*.

Copies of the Final EA and this FONSI are available at DOE's National Energy Technology Laboratory web site at http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/nepa/ea.html or by sending a request to:

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DETERMINATION: On the basis of the evaluations in the Final EA, DOE determined that its proposed action - providing a $105,387,000 federal grant - and GM's proposed project - establishing GRE manufacturing capability by expanding and retrofitting existing facilities in White Marsh, Maryland, and Wixom, Michigan - would have no significant impact on the human environment. All potential environmental impacts identified and analyzed in the EA would be negligible. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required, and DOE is issuing this FONSI

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Anthony V. Cugini
Director
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