

**NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE
ENVIRONMENT AND NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC OF REQUEST
FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS**

July 11, 2013

Wilson County
2201 Miller Road, South / Box 1728
Wilson, North Carolina 27894-1728
(252) 399-2803

TO ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES, GROUPS AND PERSONS:

On or about **August 1, 2013**, Wilson County, North Carolina will request the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Commerce Finance Center to release federal funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (PL 93-383) for the Woodfuels Rail Project.

International WoodFuels, LLC is planning to build an advanced technology wood pellet manufacturing plant, WoodFuels North Carolina ("WFNC"). WFNC will be co-located at the existing Canal Wood chip mill in Sims, Wilson County. This partnership will enable Canal Wood to continue its fiber procurement operations in a declining market, and even offers some expansion opportunities. The plant will also be supporting ancillary regional jobs in the logging, trucking, and forestry industries. The proposed facility will be a uniquely modern addition to the pellet manufacturing industry in North America, as WFNC will be producing a torrefied wood product. In order to accomplish this, Woodfuels NC will need rail service to its new facility. The County hopes to construct approximately 5,000 feet of parallel rail siding to the facility at a cost of \$1,050,681. It is anticipated that funding for this project will come from the Community Development Block Grant program, the Industrial Development Fund program, the Economic Infrastructure program, the Industrial Rail Access Program, Wilson County and Woodfuels NC. As a result of the project, a total of 32 new jobs will be created an average annual pay of \$45,064. At least 60% of the new jobs will be filled by persons residing in households of low and moderate income.

Purpose of Notice

This Notice is intended to meet two separate procedural requirements of 24 CFR Part 58: (1) to provide notice to the public that the County has determined that the request for release of funds for the above named project will not have a significant impact on the environment, and (2) to provide to the public that the County is requesting the release of funds for the project.

Finding of No Significant Impact

It has been determined that such request for release of funds will not constitute an action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and accordingly the County has decided not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL 91-190). The reason for such decision not to prepare such Statement is as follows: The project activities are in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and will

not result in any adverse impact to the natural or human environment. An Environment Review Record respecting the above project has been made by the County which documents the environmental review of the project and more fully sets forth the reasons why such Statement is not required. The Environmental Review Record is on file at the above address and is available for public examination and copying upon request between the hours of 9 AM and 5 PM, weekdays, except holidays. No further environmental review of such project is proposed to be conducted prior to the request for release of funds.

Public Comments on Finding

All interested agencies, groups and persons disagreeing with this decision are invited to submit written comments for consideration by the County to Ellis Williford, County Manager, Box 1728, Wilson, North Carolina 27894-1728. Such written comments should be received by the County on or before **July 31, 2013**. All such comments so received will be considered and the County will not request the release of federal funds or take any administrative action on the project prior to that date.

Release of Funds

Wilson County will undertake the project described above with Block Grant funds from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Commerce Finance Center, under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The County is certifying to the Commerce Finance Center that Wilson County and Ellis Williford, in his official capacity as County Manager, consents to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to environmental reviews, decision-making and action; and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The legal effect of the certification is that upon its approval, the County may use the Block Grant funds and the Commerce Finance Center will have satisfied its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Objection to State for Release of Funds

The Commerce Finance Center will accept an objection to its approval only if it is on one of the following bases: (a) that the certification was not in fact executed by the certifying official or other officer of the County approved by the Commerce Finance Center; (b) that the County's environmental review record indicates omission of a required decision, finding or step applicable to the project in the environmental review process. Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedure (24 CFR Part 58) and may be addressed to the Commerce Finance Center at 301 North Wilmington Street, 4318 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4318. Objections to the release of funds on the bases other than those above will not be considered by the Commerce Finance Center. No objection received by the Commerce Finance Center after **August 19, 2013** will be considered.

Ellis Williford
Wilson County Manager