

Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project Document

ARLIS Uniform Cover Page

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January 31, 2013

Ms. Kimberly Bose
Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

Re: Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 14241-000

Dear Secretary Bose:

By letter dated January 17, 2013, Staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission) issued a modified schedule for its April 1, 2013 study plan determination (SPD) for 13 of the individual studies contained in the Alaska Energy Authority's (AEA) Revised Study Plan (RSP) for the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 14241.¹ Among other milestones, Staff's modified schedule required AEA to file specified information related to these 13 individual studies by January 31, 2013, and to convene public meetings on February 14-15, 2013, to discuss these materials with federal and state resource agencies and other licensing participants. In accordance with Staff's modified schedule, the purposes of this filing are to: (1) submit all information specified by Staff for filing by January 31; and (2) provide details of the public meetings to be held in Anchorage, Alaska, on February 14-15, 2013.

Description of Attached Information

Commission Staff's January 17 modified schedule required AEA to file the following information by January 31, 2013:

results of 2012 open-water flow routing model and habitat mapping; draft implementation plans for the Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Upper Susitna River (study 9.5), the Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Lower and Middle Susitna River (study 9.6), and River Productivity

¹ See Letter from Jeff C. Wright, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, to Wayne Dyok, Alaska Energy Authority, Attachment A, Project No. 14241-000 (issued Jan. 17, 2013) [hereinafter, Schedule Modification Letter]. The 13 individual studies scheduled for Staff's April 1 SPD consist of the following: (1) Baseline Water Quality (RSP 5.5); (2) Water Quality Modeling Study (RSP 5.6); (3) Mercury Assessment and Potential for Bioaccumulation Study (RSP 5.7); (4) Geomorphology Study (RSP 6.5); (5) Fluvial Geomorphology Modeling Below Watana Dam Study (RSP 6.6); (6) Groundwater Study (RSP 7.5); (7) Ice Processes in the Susitna River Study (RSP 7.6); (8) Fish and Aquatics Instream Flow Study (RSP 8.5); (9) Riparian Instream Flow Study (RSP 8.6); (10) Study of Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Upper Susitna River (RSP 9.5); (11) Study of Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Middle and Lower Susitna River (RSP 9.6); (12) River Productivity Study (RSP 9.8); and (13) Characterization and Mapping of Aquatic Habitats (RSP 9.9).

(study 9.8) studies; all proposed focus areas; and a description of habitat units within the focus areas for all aquatic studies to be implemented in the middle Susitna River.²

In response to Staff’s request, and in furtherance of its efforts to finalize study reports associated with its 2012 early licensing studies, AEA has prepared several study reports and technical memoranda containing all the requested information. The information requested by Commission Staff appears in the attachments as follows:

Requested Information	Attachment
Results of 2012 Open-Water Flow Routing	Attachment A, <i>Open Water HEC-RAS Flow Routing Model</i> (January 2013)
Results of 2012 Habitat Mapping	Attachment B, <i>Middle Susitna River Segment Remote Line Habitat Mapping Technical Memo</i> (January 2013)
Draft Implementation Plan for Study of Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Upper Susitna River (RSP 9.5)	Attachment C, <i>Draft Susitna River Fish Distribution and Abundance Implementation Plan</i> (January 2013)
Draft Implementation Plan for Study of Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Middle and Lower Susitna River (RSP 9.6)	Attachment C, <i>Draft Susitna River Fish Distribution and Abundance Implementation Plan</i> (January 2013)
Draft Implementation Plan for River Productivity Study (RSP 9.8)	Attachment D, <i>Draft Susitna River Productivity Study Implementation Plan</i> (January 2013)
Proposed Focus Areas	Attachment E, <i>Selection of Focus Areas and Study Sites in the Middle and Lower Susitna River for Instream Flow and Joint Resource Studies – 2013 and 2014</i> (January 2013)
Description of Habitat Units within Focus Areas for All Aquatic Studies to Be Implemented in the Middle Susitna River	Attachment E, <i>Selection of Focus Areas and Study Sites in the Middle and Lower Susitna River for Instream Flow and Joint Resource Studies – 2013 and 2014</i> (January 2013)

Details of Public Meetings

Commission Staff’s modified schedule directed AEA to hold meetings on February 14-15, 2013, “to discuss the study results, proposed implementation plans, and selected focus areas in the middle and lower Susitna River.”³ These Technical Workgroup (TWG) meetings, which are open to federal and state resource agencies, other licensing participants, and interested members of the public, will begin each day at 8:30 a.m. (Alaska Standard Time), and will be held in the Public Conference Room of the Z.J.

² Schedule Modification Letter, Attachment A.

³ *Id.*

Loussac Public Library, located at 3600 Denali Street, Anchorage, Alaska. Additional information regarding these TWG meetings—including instructions for participating online and via teleconference for those unable to attend in person—appear at AEA’s licensing website, <http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/meetings/>. More detailed information regarding these TWG meetings, including a draft agenda, will be posted to the website in the coming days.

AEA looks forward to discussing these materials in the upcoming TWG meetings. These discussions will inform and assist AEA in its development of the final implementation plans for the Study of Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Upper Susitna River (RSP 9.5), Study of Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Middle and Lower Susitna River (RSP 9.6), and River Productivity Study (RSP 9.8). As provided in Commission Staff’s modified schedule, AEA will file these final implementation plans with the Commission by March 1, 2013.

AEA acknowledges and greatly appreciates the participation and commitment to this licensing process of Commission Staff, federal and state resource agencies, and other licensing participants. AEA is particularly appreciative of all participants’ efforts to date to work efficiently and collaboratively in developing a robust study plan that can be approved by Commission Staff in accordance with the modified schedule and implemented beginning with the 2013 field season.

If you have questions concerning this submission please contact me at wdyok@aidea.org or (907) 771-3955.

Sincerely,



Wayne Dyok
Project Manager
Alaska Energy Authority

Attachments

cc: Distribution List (w/o Attachments)