



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **FERC Approves 44 Susitna-Watana Hydro Study Plans**

**Anchorage, AK** – A significant milestone was achieved for the Susitna-Watana Hydro project last week, with the approval of 44 study plans by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

The Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) submitted its Revised Study Plan on Dec. 14, 2012 and FERC's determination comes after a 45-day review period that included opportunities for public and stakeholder comments.

AEA's Revised Study Plan includes a total of 58 studies covering 186,000 acres. FERC plans to make a determination on the remaining 14 studies on Apr. 1, 2013. In the meantime, project teams are working to provide additional information requested by FERC for the study plans still under review. AEA will host a series of technical workgroup meetings with other resource agencies and interested stakeholders beginning Feb. 14, 2013.

"This initial determination is a big step as Alaska pursues a license for Susitna-Watana Hydro," said Sara Fisher-Goad, AEA executive director. "It comes after more than a year of complex planning and intensive collaboration with dozens of project partners, stakeholders and public input."

AEA is in the licensing phase and plans to begin implementing approved studies this year, in order to complete a FERC license application by the end of 2015. As part of its Study Plan Determination, FERC agreed that AEA's approach on the fish studies and two-year study schedule is consistent with generally accepted scientific practices for evaluating the effects of hydropower projects.



An approved study plan is an essential part of the FERC licensing process. The project team will also use data collected from 18 studies conducted in 2012, in addition to more than 3,000 documents from studies completed during the 1980s.

As planned, Susitna-Watana Hydro will supply half of the electricity needed to power homes and businesses from Fairbanks to Homer. The project is a significant part of the state's renewable energy goal, which calls for 50 percent of Alaska's electricity to come from renewable sources by 2025. AEA hopes to bring Susitna-Watana Hydro online by 2024.

Details about individual study plans, technical workgroup meeting schedules and general project information is available online at [www.susitna-watanahydro.org](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org).

The [Alaska Energy Authority](http://www.akenergyauthority.org) is a public corporation of the state whose mission is to reduce the cost of energy in Alaska. Susitna-Watana Hydro will provide reliable, renewable energy for Alaska. More information can be found at <http://www.akenergyauthority.org>.

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