

# Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project Document

## ARLIS Uniform Cover Page

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March 29, 2013

**To: Sue Walker (NMFS)  
Catherine Berg (USFWS)**

**Subject: Distribution of Draft 2013 Project Operational Plan for Comment, Fish Genetic Baseline Study (RSP 9.14)**

Dear Ms. Walker and Ms. Berg:

On February 1, 2013, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission or FERC) issued its Study Plan Determination (SPD) for 44 of the 58 proposed individual studies in the Alaska Energy Authority's (AEA) Revised Study Plan (RSP) for the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project, FERC Project No. 14241 (Project).<sup>1</sup> With regard to the Fish Genetic Baseline Study (RSP 9.14), AEA proposed to develop and circulate to Technical Workgroup (TWG) members by April 30 of 2013 and 2014 detailed annual project operational plans. These operational plans are to establish additional details for field sampling efforts, including specific temporal and spatial sampling locations, to enhance the general locations for target sample collection presented in the RSP.

When approving the Fish Genetic Baseline Study, the Commission recommended that AEA consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) and, by March 31, prepare a draft project operational plan for review and comment by the agencies. Following a 15-day review and comment period, AEA will prepare and file the final plan with the Commission by April 30, which will include "documentation of agency consultation, a description of how agency comments are incorporated into the final plans, and an explanation for why any agency comments are not incorporated into the final plans."<sup>2</sup>

The purpose of this letter is to distribute for comment by USFWS and NMFS, as well as other TWG members, the draft 2013 operational plan for the Fish Genetics Baseline Study. Due to the large file size of this document, AEA has uploaded the draft plan to the Project website at the following link:

[http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/SuWaGeneticsSPD\\_Draft\\_OP\\_2013\\_0329-FINAL.pdf](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/SuWaGeneticsSPD_Draft_OP_2013_0329-FINAL.pdf)

To allow sufficient time for AEA to file the final plan with the Commission by April 30 as directed, AEA requests that all comments be submitted, in writing, by Monday, April 15, 2013. Please submit all comments to:

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<sup>1</sup> Study Plan Determination for the Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project, Project No. 14241-000 (issued Feb. 1, 2013) [hereinafter, "SPD"].

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*, Appendix B, at B-43 to B-44.

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AEA looks forward to receiving comments on the attached draft plan, and to working with NMFS, USFWS, and TWG in implementing the Fish Genetic Baseline Study, as well as all other licensing studies for the proposed Project. If you have questions concerning this submission, please do not hesitate to contact me at (907) 771-3957.

Sincerely,



Betsy McGregor  
Environmental Manager  
Alaska Energy Authority

cc:  
Betsy McCracken, USFWS  
Michael Buntjer, USFWS  
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