

1.72 acres of land would be restored and allowed to revert to its former use.

The EA Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from the action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. We call this "scoping." The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this Notice of Intent, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues it will address in the EA. All comments received are considered during the preparation of the EA. State and local government representatives are encouraged to notify their constituents of this proposed action and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

The EA will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project under these general headings:

- geology and soils
- water resources, fisheries, and wetlands
- vegetation and wildlife
- endangered and threatened species
- land use
- cultural resources
- hazardous waste
- public safety

We will also evaluate possible alternatives to the proposed project or portions of the project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas.

Our independent analysis of the issues will be in the EA. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, the EA may be published and mailed to Federal, state, and local agencies, public interest groups, interested individuals, affected landowners, newspapers, libraries, and the Commission's official service list for this proceeding. A comment period will be allotted for review if the EA is published. We will consider all comments on the EA before we make our recommendations to the Commission.

Currently Identified Environmental Issues

Based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities and the environmental information provided by

National Fuel, we have identified the following issues which deserve attention:

- Construction adjacent to homes on the east side of California Road; and
- Alternate route deviations.

Additional issues may be considered based on your comments and our analysis.

Public Participation

You can make a difference by sending a letter addressing your specific comments or concerns about the project. You should focus on the potential environmental effects of the proposal, alternatives to the proposal including relocating the pipeline to the opposite (west side) of California Road, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impact. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. Please carefully follow these instructions to ensure that your comments are received in time and properly recorded:

- Send two copies of your letter to: David P. Boergers, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First St., N.E., Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426;
- Label one copy of the comments for the attention of the Environmental Review and Compliance Branch, PR-11.2;
- Reference Docket No. CP98-142-000; and
- Mail your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC on or before April 9, 1998.

You may request detailed maps or additional information about the proposed project by contacting Paul McKee, in the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at (202) 208-1088.

Becoming an Intervenor

In addition to involvement in the EA scoping process, you may want to become an official party to the proceeding or become an "intervenor." Among other things, intervenors have the right to receive copies of case-related Commission documents and filings by other intervenors. Likewise, each intervenor must provide copies of its filings to all other parties. If you want to become an intervenor you must file a motion to intervene according to Rule 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.214) (see appendix 2).

The date for filing timely motions to intervene in this proceeding has passed. Therefore, parties now seeking to file late interventions must show good cause, as required by section 385.214(b)(3), why this time limitation should be waived. Environmental issues

have been viewed as good cause for late intervention.

You do not need intervenor status to have your environmental comments considered.

David P. Boergers,

Acting Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 5679-016]

Toutant Hydropower, Inc., Notice of Availability of Environmental Assessment

March 10, 1998.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (Commission's) regulations, 18 CFR Part 380 (Order 486, 52 F.R. 47897), the Commission's Office of Hydropower Licensing has reviewed the application for amendment to license to increase the generating capacity by installing a 234 kilowatt generator in a non-operating powerhouse. The Toutant project is located at river mile 34 on the Quinebaug River in the Town of Putnam, Connecticut. The EA finds that approving the application would not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

Copies of the EA are available for review in the Commission's Reference and Information Center, Room 2A. Comments are due within 30 days from the date of this notice. Any comments, conclusions, or recommendations that draw upon studies, reports, or other working papers of substance should be supported by appropriate documentation.

Comments should be addressed to David P. Boergers, Acting Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20426. Please affix Project No. 5679-016 to all comments. For further information, please contact the project manager, John Novak, at (202) 219-2828.

David P. Boergers,

Acting Secretary.

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