

applications submitted by project sponsors that meet CCPI's goals.

Recognizing that the range of reasonable alternatives in the context of financial assistance and contracting is in large part determined by the number and nature of the proposals submitted, section 216 of DOE's NEPA regulations requires the Department to prepare an "environmental critique" that assesses the environmental impacts and issues relating to each of the proposals that the DOE selecting official considers for an award. See 10 CFR 1021.216. This official considers these impacts and issues, along with other aspects of the proposals (such as technical merit and financial ability) and the program's objectives, in making awards. DOE prepared a critique of the proposals that were deemed suitable for selection in this round of awards for the CCPI program.

Once DOE selects a project for an award, the range of reasonable alternatives becomes the project as proposed by the applicant, any alternatives still under consideration by the applicant or that are reasonable within the confines of the project as proposed (e.g., the particular location of the generating plant on the 1,106-acre site or the rights-of-way (ROWs) for linear facilities), and a no action alternative. Regarding the no action alternative, DOE assumes for purposes of the EIS that, if it were to decide to withhold financial assistance from the project, the project would not proceed. DOE currently plans to analyze the project as proposed by HECA (with and without any mitigating conditions that DOE or the CEC may identify as reasonable and appropriate); alternatives to HECA's proposal that it is still considering (e.g., the ROWs for linear facilities); and the no action alternative.

As noted above, DOE will analyze any "project-specific" alternatives that HECA is still considering such as the coal delivery alternatives, and other reasonable alternatives that may be suggested during the scoping period. HECA is no longer considering other project-specific alternatives identified in the original NOI (i.e., the location of the facility within the site boundaries, alternative routes for the process water supply pipeline, CO₂ pipeline and transmission line).

Under the no action alternative, DOE would not provide funding to HECA. In the absence of financial assistance from DOE, HECA could reasonably pursue two options. It could build the project without DOE funding; the impacts of this option would be essentially the same as those of DOE's proposed action.

Or, HECA could choose not to pursue its project, and there would be no impacts from the project. This option would not contribute to the goal of the CCPI program, which is to accelerate commercial deployment of advanced coal technologies that provide the United States with clean, reliable, and affordable energy. However, as required by NEPA, DOE analyzes this option as the no action alternative in order to have a meaningful comparison between the impacts of DOE providing financial assistance and withholding that assistance.

Alternatives considered by HECA in developing its proposed project will be discussed in the EIS. Differences between DOE's range of reasonable alternatives and those considered by the CEC will also be delineated. HECA analyzed several alternative sites and determined that the only reasonable site alternative was its proposed site based on, among other things, the presence or absence of sensitive resources; the availability of land; and the site's proximity to the brackish groundwater supply, to electric transmission and natural gas facilities, and to a CO₂ storage reservoir.³ The EIS will describe HECA's site selection process. However, DOE does not plan to analyze in detail the alternatives sites considered by HECA because HECA is no longer considering these sites, they were not part of HECA's proposal, and therefore they are no longer reasonable alternatives.

Floodplains and Wetlands

The footprint of the proposed IGCC and manufacturing facility and carbon capture facility would not affect any wetlands or floodplains. Wetland and floodplain impacts, if any, from the construction of pipelines would be avoided by the use of horizontal directional drilling. In the event that the EIS identifies that wetlands or floodplains on the surface would be affected by the project (including its linear facilities) or connected actions, DOE will prepare a floodplain and wetland assessment in accordance with its regulations at 10 CFR Part 1022 and include the assessment in the EIS.

Preliminary Identification of Environmental Issues

The original NOI contained a preliminary list and description of potential environmental issues (75 FR 17397–401); the list of issues would remain the same for the project as

modified after SCS Energy's acquisition of HECA. The list includes those impacts and resource areas typically addressed in an EIS for a project of this type: Atmospheric resources; water resources; infrastructure and land use; solid waste; visual resources; floodplains and wetlands; ecological resources; safety and health; construction-related impacts; community impacts; cultural and archaeological resources; threatened and endangered species;⁴ and cumulative effects. Currently, no threatened or endangered species have been identified at the proposed plant site; three listed plant species and nine listed wildlife species (rather than the eight as stated in the original NOI) have the potential to occur in the ROWs of the linear facilities.

Additions to or deletions from the list may occur as a result of this scoping process. The level of analysis of issues in the EIS will be in accordance with their level of importance. The most detailed analyses are likely to focus on potential impacts to air, water, and ecological resources.

Issued in Pittsburgh, PA, this 12th day of June 2012.

Anthony V. Cugini,

Director, National Energy Technology Laboratory.

[FR Doc. 2012–14867 Filed 6–18–12; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Project No. 14421–000]

Freedom Falls, LLC; Notice of Application Tendered for Filing With the Commission and Soliciting Additional Study Requests

Take notice that the following hydroelectric application has been filed with the Commission and is available for public inspection.

- a. *Type of Application:* Exemption from Licensing.
- b. *Project No.:* 14421–000.
- c. *Date filed:* June 1, 2012.
- d. *Applicant:* Freedom Falls, LLC.
- e. *Name of Project:* Freedom Falls Hydroelectric Project.
- f. *Location:* On Sandy Stream, in the Town of Freedom, Waldo County,

⁴ No threatened or endangered species have been identified at the proposed plant site; three listed plant species and nine listed wildlife species (rather than the eight as stated in the original NOI) have the potential to occur in the ROWs of the linear facilities.

³ HECA initially selected another site; it subsequently decided to move the project when it discovered the existence of sensitive biological resources at the initial site.

Maine. The project would not occupy lands of the United States.

g. *Filed Pursuant to:* Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act of 1978, 16 U.S.C. 2705, 2708.

h. *Applicant Contact:* Anthony P. Grassi, Freedom Falls LLC, 363 Belfast Road, Camden, ME 04843, (207) 236-4663.

i. *FERC Contact:* Samantha Davidson, (202) 502-6839 or samantha.davidson@ferc.gov.

j. *Cooperating agencies:* Federal, state, local, and tribal agencies with jurisdiction and/or special expertise with respect to environmental issues that wish to cooperate in the preparation of the environmental document should follow the instructions for filing such requests described in item l below. Cooperating agencies should note the Commission's policy that agencies that cooperate in the preparation of the environmental document cannot also intervene. *See*, 94 FERC ¶ 61,076 (2001).

k. Pursuant to section 4.32(b)(7) of 18 CFR of the Commission's regulations, if any resource agency, Indian Tribe, or person believes that an additional scientific study should be conducted in order to form an adequate factual basis for a complete analysis of the application on its merit, the resource agency, Indian Tribe, or person must file a request for a study with the Commission not later than 60 days from the date of filing of the application, and serve a copy of the request on the applicant.

l. Deadline for filing additional study requests and requests for cooperating agency status: July 31, 2012.

All documents may be filed electronically via the Internet. *See* 18 CFR 385.2001(a)(1)(iii) and the instructions on the Commission's Web site <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/ferconline.asp>. Commenters can submit brief comments up to 6,000 characters, without prior registration, using the eComment system at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/ecomment.asp>. You must include your name and contact information at the end of your comments. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FERCOnlineSupport@ferc.gov; call toll-free at (866) 208-3676; or, for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. Although the Commission strongly encourages electronic filing, documents may also be paper-filed. To paper-file, mail an original and seven copies to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE., Washington, DC 20426.

m. The application is not ready for environmental analysis at this time.

n. *The proposed Freedom Falls Hydroelectric Project would consist of:*

(1) An existing 90-foot-long, 12-foot-high concrete-capped stone masonry dam with a 25-foot-long, 10-foot-high spillway with two vertical lift sluice gates and a crest elevation of 452.5 feet mean sea level (msl); (2) an existing 1.6-acre impoundment with a normal maximum water surface elevation of 453.0 feet msl; (3) a new intake structure equipped with an 8-foot-high, 5-foot-wide trashrack that would be modified to have 1-inch clear bar spacing, and a 3-foot-high, 4.75-foot-wide slide gate; (4) a new downstream American eel passage facility and working platform; (5) a new 60-foot-long, 30-inch-diameter steel penstock leading to; (6) an existing 20-foot-wide, by 30-foot-long generating room containing a new 38.3 kilowatt turbine-generator unit; (7) a new 20-foot-long, 5-foot-wide tailrace; (8) a new 30-foot-long, 110-volt transmission line; and (9) appurtenant facilities. The proposed project is estimated to generate an average of 66,000 kilowatt-hours annually.

o. A copy of the application is available for review at the Commission in the Public Reference Room or may be viewed on the Commission's Web site at <http://www.ferc.gov> using the "eLibrary" link. Enter the docket number excluding the last three digits in the docket number field to access the document. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

You may also register online at <http://www.ferc.gov/docs-filing/esubscription.asp> to be notified via email of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

p. With this notice, we are initiating consultation with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, as required by 106, National Historic Preservation Act, and the regulations of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 36, CFR, at 800.4.

q. Procedural schedule: The application will be processed according to the following preliminary Hydro Licensing Schedule. Revisions to the schedule will be made as appropriate (e.g., if scoping is waived, the schedule would be shortened).

Issue Deficiency Letter	August 2012.
Issue Notice of Acceptance	October 2012.
Issue Scoping Document ..	November 2012.
Issue Notice of ready for environmental analysis.	January 2013.
Issue Notice of the availability of the EA.	May 2013.

Dated: June 13, 2012.

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP12-351-000]

Cheniere Creole Trail Pipeline Company, L.P.; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Creole Trail Expansion Project and Request for Comments on Environmental Issues

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the Creole Trail Expansion Project involving construction and operation of facilities by Cheniere Creole Trail Pipeline Company, L.P. (Cheniere) in Beauregard and Cameron Parishes, Louisiana. The Commission will use this EA in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will help the Commission staff determine what issues they need to evaluate in the EA. Please note that the scoping period will close on July 13, 2012.

This notice is being sent to the Commission's current environmental mailing list for this project. State and local government representatives should notify their constituents of this proposed project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

Summary of the Proposed Project

Cheniere proposes to construct and operate a new compressor station and associated facilities in Beauregard Parish, Louisiana, and miscellaneous facilities at the existing Sabine Pass Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) Terminal in Cameron Parish, Louisiana. According to Cheniere, its project would enable bi-directional gas flow on the Creole Trail Pipeline system and allow for the delivery of feed gas to the Sabine Pass Liquefaction Project. The Creole Trail Expansion Project would create 1,530,000 dekatherms per day of new firm reverse flow capacity.

The Creole Trail Expansion Project would consist of the following facilities: