

2016 CLWR SEIS to determine if additional environmental review under NEPA was needed, consistent with CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1502.9(d). The analysis demonstrated that the current proposal does not represent a substantive change to operations, activities, and associated impacts assessed in existing NEPA documentation. Both the TVA analysis and the CLWR SEIS analysis indicate that there would not be any significant increase in radiation exposure associated with TPBAR irradiation for facility workers or the public. For all analyzed alternatives (including both Alternatives 4 and 6), estimated radiation exposures would remain well below regulatory limits. The calculated estimated exposures for normal reactor operations with even the maximum number of TPBARs are comparable to those for normal reactor operation without TPBARs.

Amended Decision

NNSA is amending its previous decision (81 FR 40685), which was to choose the 2016 CLWR SEIS's Alternative 6 that assumes TVA would irradiate up to a total of 5,000 TPBARs every 18 months using both the Watts Bar and Sequoyah sites. Because TVA would irradiate a maximum of 2,500 TPBARs in any one reactor, this could involve the use of one or both reactors at each of the sites. Instead, NNSA's new decision is to choose the 2016 CLWR SEIS's Alternative 4 that assumes TVA would irradiate up to a total of 5,000 TPBARs every 18 months at the Watts Bar site using Watts Bar 1 and 2 reactors. Since TVA would irradiate a maximum of 2,500 TPBARs in any one reactor, this would involve use of both Watts Bar reactors. Under this decision, TVA will not irradiate TPBARs for tritium production at the Sequoyah site.

Basis for Decision

The environmental impacts of this proposed action have been addressed in previous environmental impact statements, *i.e.*, the 1999 Final EIS for the Production of Tritium in a Commercial Light Water Reactor (DOE/EIS-0288) and the 2016 CLWR SEIS. However, TVA staff reviewed new information or circumstances relevant to environmental concerns that could potentially have a bearing on the current proposal or its impacts. This new information was analyzed in a February 6, 2023 TVA memorandum, *i.e.*, "Determination of NEPA Adequacy, Production of Tritium in a Commercial Light Water Nuclear Reactor (Watts Bar Nuclear Plant), Tennessee Valley Authority." In this memo, TVA

addresses their recent review of the 2016 CLWR SEIS to determine if additional environmental review under NEPA was needed, consistent with CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1502.9(d). During an interagency teleconference held in May 2021, NNSA requested information from TVA to help NNSA in its determination of the adequacy of the 2016 SEIS as far as TVA's updated proposal. Additional information given to NNSA addresses anticipated effects on the amount of spent fuel to be generated at Watts Bar, the fuel cycle there, and the amount of tritiated wastewater estimated to be generated from TPBAR irradiation. In terms of the amount of spent fuel to be generated at Watts Bar, TVA's current proposal would result in 36 additional fuel assemblies every 18 months. The SEIS assumed up to 41 additional fuel assemblies, so it provides a conservative bounding analysis of the approximately 2500 TPBAR equilibrium core designs. There would be additional spent fuel generated with the new proposal. However, TVA has assured NNSA that it has infrastructure in place to manage the increased volume of spent nuclear fuel assemblies. Regarding the new proposal's effects on the fuel cycle, the cycle length is only mentioned in the SEIS twice, and only in the context of being a "potential uncertainty" in determining if it was necessary to assume in the SEIS a higher, more conservative tritium permeation rate. TVA does not consider the operating cycle length to be uncertain, and it also does not anticipate that irradiation of up to 2500 TPBARs at each reactor would affect the typical fuel cycle. Therefore, the issue has no bearing on the review for adequacy of the SEIS for any future TVA action to irradiate up to 5000 TPBARs at Watts Bar. Lastly, the estimated amount of tritiated wastewater (due to permeation from the TPBARs into the cooling water) was not identified in the SEIS, as it is difficult to separate this out from other releases from such things as turbine building sumps, floor drain collector sumps, groundwater sumps, etc. However, to keep maximum tritium concentrations low, TVA will use a "feed and bleed" technique, which will require additional cooling water per fuel cycle in order to ensure that TVA discharges are within regulatory limits. TVA estimates that using this technique will increase water usage by approximately 25% but is not expected to affect environmental impacts. The current proposal does not represent a substantive change to operations, activities, and associated impacts assessed in existing NEPA

documentation. Therefore, the decision to choose the previously analyzed 2016 CLWR SEIS Alternative 4, along with the updated analysis provided by TVA (summarized previously) and confirmed by NNSA, is reasonable, and accordingly, no further NEPA analysis of this TVA proposal is required.

Signing Authority

This document of the Department of Energy was signed on June 29, 2023, by Jill Hruby, Under Secretary for Nuclear Security and Administrator, NNSA, pursuant to delegated authority from the Secretary of Energy. That document with the original signature and date is maintained by DOE. For administrative purposes only, and in compliance with requirements of the Office of the Federal Register, the undersigned DOE Federal Register Liaison Officer has been authorized to sign and submit the document in electronic format for publication, as an official document of the Department of Energy. This administrative process in no way alters the legal effect of this document upon publication in the **Federal Register**.

Signed in Washington, DC, on September 11, 2023.

Treena V. Garrett,

Federal Register Liaison Officer, U.S. Department of Energy.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. CP23-82-000]

Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC; Notice of Availability of the Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Lucas and Pavonia Wells Abandonment Project

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) for the Lucas and Pavonia Wells Abandonment Project, proposed by Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC (Columbia) in the above-referenced docket. Columbia requests authorization to abandon 37 injection/withdrawal wells and associated pipelines and appurtenances at its existing certificated Lucas and Pavonia Storage Fields in Ashland and Richland Counties, Ohio.

The EA assesses the potential environmental effects of the construction and operation of the Lucas and Pavonia Wells Abandonment Project in accordance with the

requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The FERC staff concludes that approval of the proposed project, with appropriate mitigating measures, would not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

The proposed Lucas and Pavonia Wells Abandonment Project includes the following facilities and activities:

- abandonment of 37 injection/withdrawal wells at the Lucas and Pavonia Storage Fields by permanently plugging and abandoning the wells in place;
- abandonment of approximately 41,423 feet of associated 3- to 6-inch-diameter pipeline, of which 39,402 feet would be capped and abandoned in place and 2,021 feet would be abandoned by removal; and
- abandonment by removal of all associated aboveground appurtenances, including, but not limited to, tie-in valves, pipeline markers, cathodic protection test stations, rectifiers, casing vents, and above-ground pipeline blowdown vents.

The Commission mailed a copy of the *Notice of Availability* of the EA to Federal, State, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; Native American Tribes; potentially affected landowners and other interested individuals and groups; and newspapers and libraries in the project area. The EA is only available in electronic format. It may be viewed and downloaded from the FERC's website (www.ferc.gov), on the natural gas environmental documents page (<https://www.ferc.gov/industries-data/natural-gas/environment/environmental-documents>). In addition, the EA may be accessed by using the eLibrary link on the FERC's website. Click on the eLibrary link (<https://elibrary.ferc.gov/eLibrary/search>), select "General Search" and enter the docket number in the "Docket Number" field, excluding the last three digits (*i.e.* CP23–82). Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov or toll free at (866) 208–3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502–8659.

The EA is not a decision document. It presents Commission staff's independent analysis of the environmental issues for the Commission to consider when addressing the merits of all issues in this proceeding. Any person wishing to comment on the EA may do so. Your comments should focus on the EA's disclosure and discussion of potential

environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. To ensure that the Commission has the opportunity to consider your comments prior to making its decision on this project, it is important that we receive your comments in Washington, DC on or before 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time on October 10, 2023.

For your convenience, there are three methods you can use to file your comments to the Commission. The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments and has staff available to assist you at (866) 208–3676 or FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov. Please carefully follow these instructions so that your comments are properly recorded.

(1) You can file your comments electronically using the *eComment* feature on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to *FERC Online*. This is an easy method for submitting brief, text-only comments on a project;

(2) You can also file your comments electronically using the *eFiling* feature on the Commission's website (www.ferc.gov) under the link to *FERC Online*. With eFiling, you can provide comments in a variety of formats by attaching them as a file with your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on "eRegister." You must select the type of filing you are making. If you are filing a comment on a particular project, please select "Comment on a Filing"; or

(3) You can file a paper copy of your comments by mailing them to the Commission. Be sure to reference the project docket number (CP23–82–000) on your letter. Submissions sent via the U.S. Postal Service must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street NE, Room 1A, Washington, DC 20426. Submissions sent via any other carrier must be addressed to: Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 12225 Wilkins Avenue, Rockville, Maryland 20852.

Filing environmental comments will not give you intervenor status, but you do not need intervenor status to have your comments considered. Only intervenors have the right to seek rehearing or judicial review of the Commission's decision. At this point in this proceeding, the timeframe for filing timely intervention requests has expired. Any person seeking to become a party to the proceeding must file a motion to intervene out-of-time

pursuant to Rule 214(b)(3) and (d) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedures (18 CFR 385.214(b)(3) and (d)) and show good cause why the time limitation should be waived. Motions to intervene are more fully described at <https://www.ferc.gov/how-intervene>.

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission's Office of External Affairs, at (866) 208–FERC, or on the FERC website (www.ferc.gov) using the *eLibrary* link. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of all formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

The Commission's Office of Public Participation (OPP) supports meaningful public engagement and participation in Commission proceedings. OPP can help members of the public, including landowners, environmental justice communities, Tribal members and others, access publicly available information and navigate Commission processes. For public inquiries and assistance with making filings such as interventions, comments, or requests for rehearing, the public is encouraged to contact OPP at (202)502–6595 or OPP@ferc.gov.

In addition, the Commission offers a free service called eSubscription which allows you to keep track of all formal issuances and submittals in specific dockets. This can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings by automatically providing you with notification of these filings, document summaries, and direct links to the documents. Go to <https://www.ferc.gov/ferc-online/overview> to register for eSubscription.

Dated: September 8, 2023.

Kimberly D. Bose,
Secretary.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Notice Announcing New Freedom of Information Act and Critical Energy Infrastructure Information Email Addresses

On October 8, 2023, the Commission will discontinue utilization and access of the Commission's email address, for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and Critical Energy Infrastructure Information (CEII) requests, foia-ceii@ferc.gov. As of