

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Rural Development**

Oglethorpe Power Corporation: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA **ACTION:** Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

ACTION: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment for Public Review

PROJECT NAME: Effingham Energy Facility Combustion Turbine Upgrades Project

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has issued an Environmental Assessment (EA) to meet its responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and RUS' Environmental and Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) in relation to possible impacts for a proposed project by Oglethorpe Power Corporation (Oglethorpe Power). The project consists of making software and hardware upgrades at its existing Effingham Energy Facility, a gas-fired combined-cycle power generating facility located at 3440 McCall Road in Effingham County near Rincon, Georgia. Oglethorpe Power may request that RUS provide financial assistance for the project.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Suzanne Kopich, Environmental Protection Specialist, USDA, Rural Utilities Service via e-mail: suzanne.kopich@usda.gov or by phone at 202-961-8514. A copy of the EA may be viewed at the agency's website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessments> or physically at the Oglethorpe Headquarters at 2100 E Exchange Place, Tucker, GA 30084.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Oglethorpe Power proposes to install software and hardware upgrades at its existing Effingham Energy Facility (Facility), a 500 megawatt (MW) gas-fired combined-cycle power generating facility located at 3440 McCall Road in Effingham County near Rincon, Georgia. The Facility's Combustion Turbine Upgrades Project (Project) would increase the current generation capacity of the Facility to approximately 523 MW. This projected capacity increase is based on 59-degree Fahrenheit conditions and will vary slightly under differing ambient temperatures. The Project will help reduce the overall cost per megawatts (MW) of power generated and allow the Facility's gas turbines to continue to operate at reduced power during times of low demand with less frequent shutdowns and subsequent restarts once demand increases.

The Project will also increase maximum heat input and project actual annual emissions from the combined cycle combustion turbines and may increase the potential short-term emissions rate. Oglethorpe Power has submitted to the Georgia Environmental Protection Division a Title V Operating Permit Modification and state construction permit for the Project.

An environmental assessment that describes the project in detail and discusses its anticipated environmental impacts was prepared by Oglethorpe Power and Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. Consistent with 7 CFR §1970.5(b)(3)(iv)(C), RUS has completed an independent evaluation of the environmental information and analysis performed and accepted the documentation as the Agency's EA for the proposed project. No significant impacts are expected as a result of the software and hardware upgrades.

Written questions and comments should be sent to RUS to the email address noted above. RUS will accept questions and comments on the EA for 14 days from the date of publication of this notice. Due to COVID19, no hard copy comments will be accepted. If it is not possible to provide comments via email, please call 202-720-1970 and leave your comments on voicemail referencing the Effingham Energy Facility Combustion Turbine Upgrades Project where they will be retrieved by RUS staff.

Any final action by RUS related to the proposed project will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant Federal environmental laws and regulations and completion of environmental review procedures as prescribed by 7 CFR Part 1970, Environmental Policies and Procedures.

