

COVER SHEET

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR THE ROCKY REACH HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT
Docket No. P-2145-060

Cover Letter (and other information before the Table of Contents)

FEIS

FERC/FEIS-0184F

**FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
FOR HYDROPOWER RELICENSING**

**ROCKY REACH HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT
FERC Project No. 2145-060
Washington**

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
Office of Energy Projects
Division of Hydropower Licensing
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

August 2006

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FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, DC 20426

OFFICE OF ENERGY PROJECTS

To the Agency or Individual Addressed:

Reference: Final Environmental Impact Statement

Attached is the final environmental impact statement (final EIS) for the Rocky Reach Hydroelectric Project (No. 2145-060), located on the Columbia River in Chelan County, Washington.

Before the Commission makes a licensing decision, it will take into account all concerns relevant to the public interest. The final EIS will be part of the record from which the Commission will make its decision.

The Commission may issue its decision less than 30 days after publication of this final EIS. Any Commission order on the proposed action and alternatives considered in this final EIS will be subject to the Commission's rehearing process under 18 CFR 385.713. Request for rehearing must be filed within 30 days of the date of issuance of the Commission's order.

Attachment: Final Environmental Impact Statement

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COVER SHEET

- a. Title: Relicensing the Rocky Reach Hydroelectric Project in Washington, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) Project No. 2145-060
- b. Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement
- c. Lead Agency: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- d. Abstract: Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County (Chelan PUD) filed an application for a new license for the existing 865.76-megawatt Rocky Reach Hydroelectric Project (project) located on the Columbia River in Chelan County, Washington, approximately 7 miles upstream of the city of Wenatchee. The project occupies about 152 acres of federal lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. The U.S. Forest Service land is in Washington Department of Transportation and railroad rights-of-way.

The project is operated under the terms of the 1997 Mid-Columbia Hourly Coordination Agreement (Hourly Coordination Agreement), to which Chelan PUD is a signatory along with several other northwest utilities and federal agencies operating hydroelectric projects on the Columbia River. The Hourly Coordination Agreement facilitates maintaining the mid-Columbia reservoirs at or near their full levels. All power requests and non-power requirements are coordinated, and flows are released to maximize generation, keeping the reservoirs as full as possible while minimizing spill losses.

Six species of anadromous fish occur within the project area, including Upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook salmon, Upper Columbia River summer/fall-run Chinook salmon, Upper Columbia River steelhead, coho salmon, sockeye salmon, and Pacific lamprey. The first five of those species (referred to as the Plan Species) are covered by the 2004 Anadromous Fish Agreement and Habitat Conservation Plan for the Rocky Reach (HCP) project, a 50-year agreement with a goal of achieving no net impact on the Plan Species by using a combination of fish passage measures, hatchery programs, and a habitat improvement fund to improve fish passage survival rates and achieve a virtual 100 percent survival of fish passing the project.

Key issues associated with relicensing this project are: addressing total dissolved gas concentrations; implementing the HCP for the benefit of the Plan Species; improving conditions for other fish

species, including bull trout, white sturgeon, Pacific lamprey, and resident fish; protecting and enhancing wildlife habitat; protecting populations of the federally listed threatened Ute ladies'-tresses; enhancing local recreational opportunities; and protecting cultural resources.

The staff's recommendation is to relicense the project essentially as proposed, with additional measures recommended by the staff to protect and enhance environmental resources.

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| e. Contact: | Environmental Staff Kim Nguyen Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Office of Energy Projects 888 First Street, N.E. Washington, DC 20426 (202) 502-6105 | Staff Counsel John Clements Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Office of the General Counsel 888 First Street, N.E. Washington, DC 20426 (202) 502-8070 |
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f. Transmittal: This final environmental impact statement prepared by the Commission's staff on the hydroelectric license application filed by Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County for the existing Rocky Reach Hydroelectric Project (No. 2145-060) is being made available to the public on or about August 4, 2006, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969¹

¹ National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, amended (Pub. L. 91-190. 42 U.S.C. 4321-4347, January 1, 1970, as amended by Pub. L. 94-52, July 3, 1975, Pub. L. 94-83, August 9, 1975, and Pub. L. 97-258, §4(b), September 13, 1982).

FOREWORD

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission), pursuant to the Federal Power Act (FPA)² and the U.S. Department of Energy Organization Act³ is authorized to issue licenses for up to 50 years for the construction and operation of non-federal hydroelectric developments subject to its jurisdiction, on the necessary conditions:

That the project adopted... shall be such as in the judgment of the Commission will be best adapted to a comprehensive plan for improving or developing a waterway or waterways for the use or benefit of interstate or foreign commerce, for the improvement and utilization of water-power development, for the adequate protection and enhancement of fish and wildlife (including related spawning grounds and habitat), and for other beneficial public uses, including irrigation, flood control, water supply, and recreational and other purposes referred to in Section 4(e)...⁴

The Commission may require such other conditions not inconsistent with the FPA as may be found necessary to provide for the various public interests to be served by the project.⁵

² 16 U.S.C. §791(a)-825r, as amended by the Electric Consumers Protection Act of 1986, Public Law 99-495 (1986) and the Energy Policy Act of 1992, Public Law 102-486 (1992).

³ Public Law 95-91, 91 Stat. 556 (1977).

⁴ 16 U.S.C. §803(a).

⁵ 16 U.S.C. §803(g).

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