

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development

East Kentucky Power Cooperative, Inc.: Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact – Bluegrass Plains Solar Generating Facility Project

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance to East Kentucky Power Cooperative, Inc. (EKPC) for construction of the Bluegrass Plains Solar Generating Facility Project in Fayette County, Kentucky.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or to obtain copies of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and FONSI, contact: [RUSPublicComments@usda.gov](mailto:RUSPublicComments@usda.gov). The EA and FONSI are also available at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/bluegrass-plains-solar-generating-facility>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Proposed Action (Proposed Project) includes construction of the 40-megawatt alternating current photovoltaic (PV), Bluegrass Plains Solar Generating Facility on approximately 403 acres located in eastern Fayette County, Kentucky. The new facility would be sited between US Highway 60 and Interstate 64, and to the north and east of the existing EKPC Avon 138 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Substation, which is located at 5481 Winchester Road, Lexington, Kentucky, 40509. Alternatives considered by RUS and the Applicant include the No Action Alternative and the Proposed Action. The alternatives are discussed in the Bluegrass Plains Solar Project EA. The RUS has reviewed and approved the EA for the Project. The State Historic Preservation Officer coordinated with RUS, as the lead Federal agency, to comply with Section 106 of the NHPA. RUS coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to comply with the Endangered Species Act.

A local newspaper advertisement announcing the availability of the EA was published in *The Lexington Herald* for three consecutive days, November 6-8, 2024. A copy of the EA was available for public review at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/bluegrass-plains-solar-generating-facility>. The 14-day comment period ended on November 20, 2024. RUS did not receive any comments during the comment period.

Based on the EA and commitments made by EKPC, RUS has concluded that the Project will have no significant impacts to land use and important farmland, floodplains, wetlands, water resources, biological resources, threatened and endangered species, cultural resources and historic properties, aesthetics, air quality, socio-economic impact and environmental justice, noise, transportation, or human health and safety.

Therefore, RUS has determined that this FONSI fulfills its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (40 CFR 1500-1508), and USDA Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) for its action related to the project.

RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the Project have been adequately addressed. RUS's federal action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment,

and as such it will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its action related to the proposed project.

Dated: November ??, 2024

