

U.S DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Rural Development

East Kentucky Power Cooperative: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA

**ACTION:** Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact - Liberty Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine (RICE) Plant 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 for the construction of the Liberty RICE project in Casey and Marion Counties, 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/liberty-reciprocating-internal-combustion-engine-rice-project>

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Liberty RICE Project includes the construction and operation of an approximately 214-megawatt (MW) net RICE power plant to meet projected load demand and support the integration of increased amounts of intermittent renewable energy generation on the EKPC system. The plant will be powered by natural gas with fuel oil as a backup option. Twelve individual 18-MW RICE would be constructed at a site approximately 3.2 miles north of Liberty in Casey County, Kentucky (Figure 1). The 108-acre Project Site is currently agricultural land that EKPC would develop for the Project. Approximately 43 acres would be permanently disturbed within the proposed fenced facility, 10 acres would be permanently disturbed within new permanent rights of way, 33.8 acres would be temporarily disturbed during construction, and 21.2 acres would remain undisturbed. A security fence would be constructed around the permanent facilities.

Operation of the Liberty RICE facility would require installation of a new natural gas pipeline lateral and a new water pipeline to service the facility. The pipeline lateral would extend approximately 530 feet southeast from the Project Site boundary to a tap point on an existing pipeline. The water pipeline would tap into an existing water main located approximately 0.1 mile east of the Project Site. Figure 2 shows the total undisturbed area, construction disturbance area, and permanent disturbance area.

The Project also includes upgrades to approximately 6.6 miles of existing electric transmission line, the rebuild of approximately 7.6 miles of existing transmission line, and construction of 0.3 miles of new interconnection transmission line. Approximately 3.9 miles of transmission line upgrades and rebuilds would occur approximately 1 mile northwest of Lebanon in Marion County, Kentucky. The remaining transmission line rebuilds and upgrades would occur in Casey County, Kentucky, extending northwest and southeast from the proposed power plant.

A local newspaper advertisement announcing the availability of the EA for public review and comment was published in *The Casey County News* on March 12 and 19, 2025. A copy of the EA was available for public review at USDA Rural Development's website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/liberty-reciprocating-internal-combustion-engine-rice-project>

The 14-day comment period ended on March 26, 2025, during which time, no comments were received.

Based on the EA and mitigation commitments made by East Kentucky Power Cooperative, RUS has concluded that the project will have no significant impact to water quality, wetlands, floodplains, land use, aesthetics, air, noise, transportation, or human health and safety.

The proposed project will have no adverse effect on resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Agency has also concluded that the proposed project is not likely to affect federally listed threatened and endangered species or designated critical habitat thereof.

No other potential significant impacts resulting from the proposed project have been identified. Therefore, RUS has determined that this FONSI fulfills its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321–4347) 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 proposed project have been adequately addressed. RUS's potential 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: April 2025

Figure 1: Liberty RICE Project Location

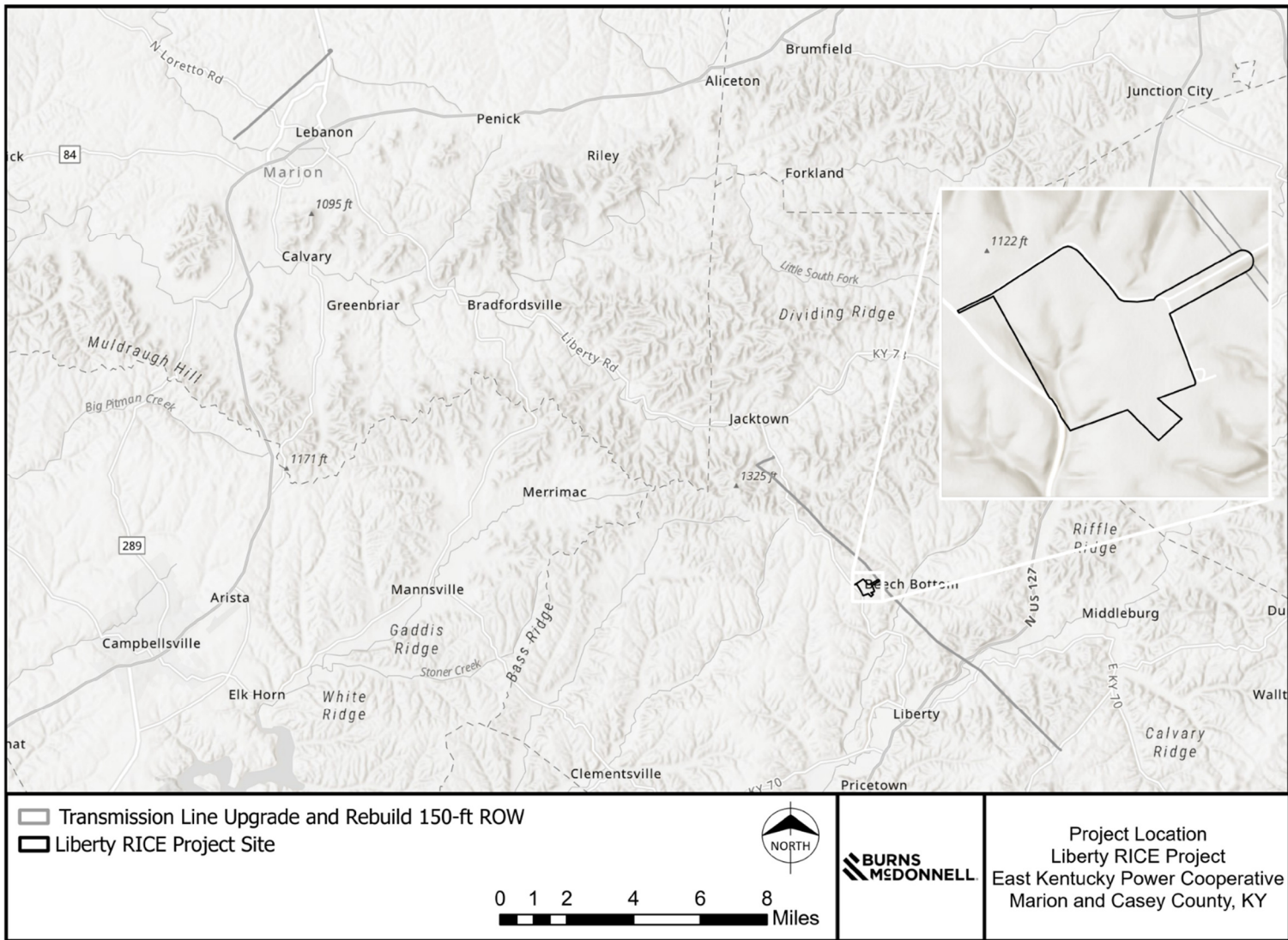


Figure 2: Project Site Disturbance Areas

