

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Development

East Kentucky Power Cooperative, Inc.: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment for public review

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's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) in relation to possible financial assistance for a proposed project by East Kentucky Power Cooperative, Inc. (EKPC). The proposal is for the construction of the Northern Bobwhite Solar Generating Facility (proposed project) in Marion County, Kentucky (KY). EKPC has submitted an application to RUS for funding of the proposal. The proposed project would impact up to 635 acres of privately owned property.

Construction of the proposed project would enable EKPC to generate and distribute clean, renewable photovoltaic solar energy to the existing electrical grid. The proposed location will allow EKPC to tie into its existing transmission network via a short generation tie line linked to the existing EKPC Marion County Substation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or to obtain copies of the EA, EMAIL:

RUSPublicComments@usda.gov

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: EKPC is proposing to construct the 96-megawatt alternating current photovoltaic (PV) Northern Bobwhite Solar Generating Facility roughly two miles north of the city of Lebanon, Kentucky. The limits of disturbance for the proposed facility would impact up to 635 acres. The new solar facility would be installed on properties generally located to the east of KY Highway 55, north of US Highway 68, west of KY Highway 1195, and south of the Marion/Washington County line. Project components would include up-to-15-foot-tall PV solar tracking panels, associated ground-mounted racking structures, access roads, inverters, medium voltage transformers, buried electrical collection cabling, a step-up transformer, a short 161-kilovolt generation tie line, security fencing, laydown areas, and an operations and maintenance building.

EKPC has prepared an EA for RUS that describes the proposed project, assesses the proposed project's environmental impacts, and summarizes any applicable mitigation measures used to minimize environmental effects. RUS has conducted an independent evaluation of the environmental assessment and believes that it accurately assesses the impacts of the proposed project. No significant impacts are expected as a result of the construction of the project.

Written questions and comments should be emailed to RUS at: RUSPublicComments@usda.gov

RUS will accept questions and comments on the environmental assessment for 14 days from the first date of publication of this notice. All comments must be provided electronically with no hard copy comments being accepted at this time.

Copies of the Environmental Assessment and supporting documentation are available for public review at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/northern-bobwhite-solar-project>

Any final action by RUS related to the proposed project would 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.

A general location map of the project is shown below.

Dated: XXXX

