

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Salem Bulk to Valley View 69kV Transmission Line
Sainte Genevieve County, Missouri**

**Rural Utilities Service
U.S. Department of Agriculture**

Citizens Electric Corporation

**Prepared by:
Engineering and Environmental Staff
Rural Utilities Service**

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A. INTRODUCTION

Citizens Electric Corporation (CEC) plans to submit a financing request to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to construct the proposed Salem Bulk to Valley View 69 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line (Project) in Sainte Genevieve County, Missouri. RUS is considering this financing request. Prior to taking a federal action (i.e., providing financial assistance), RUS is required to complete an environmental analysis in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. §§ 4321–4347), and RD’s NEPA implementing regulations, Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970). After completing an independent analysis of an environmental report prepared by Citizens Electric Corporation and its consultant, RUS concurred with its scope and content. In accordance with 7 CFR § 1970.102, RUS will adopt the report and issue it as the Agency’s Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Project. RUS finds that the EA is consistent with federal regulations and meets the standards for an adequate assessment. Citizens Electric Corporation published newspaper notices, announcing the availability of the EA for public review, in accordance with 7 CFR § 1970.102. In addition, RUS considers the proposed Project an undertaking subject to review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 16 USC 470(f), and its implementing regulation, “Protection of Historic Properties” (36 CFR Part 800).

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE/NEED

The overall purpose of the Project is to construct the Salem Bulk to Valley View 69kV Transmission Line Project in Sainte Genevieve County, Missouri. Citizens Electric Corporation proposes to construct approximately 21.3 miles of new 69kV transmission line. It will connect the Salem Bulk Substation north of Farmington to the Valley View Substation north of Bloomsdale. The proposed Project will provide increased energy in the community. RUS has reviewed the purpose and need for the Project and determined that the proposal will meet the RUS purpose and need.

C. ALTERNATIVES EVALUATED

1. No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, RUS will not provide financial assistance to Citizens Electric Corporation, and/or the proposed Project will not be constructed. This alternative will not assist Citizens Electric Corporation in providing electricity to rural residents.

2. Action Alternative (Preferred Alternative)

Under the Action Alternative, RUS will consider financing the proposed Project, and Citizens Electric Corporation will construct approximately 21.3 miles of new 69kV transmission line. It will connect the Salem Bulk Substation north of Farmington to the Valley View Substation north of Bloomsdale. The proposed Project will provide increased energy in the community.

3. Alternatives Eliminated from Further Consideration

In addition to the No Action Alternative and Action Alternative, Citizens Electric Corporation considered other technology and siting alternatives, which are documented in the Alternatives section of the EA: alternate routes.

D. SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The analysis in the EA documented that the proposed Project will have no adverse effects to land use, farmland, floodplains, wetlands, water resources, coastal resources, biological resources, cultural resources and historic properties, aesthetics, air quality, noise, transportation, human health and safety, and corridors. In accordance with the requirements of § 1970.104(b), a summary of anticipated impacts on the human environment is provided below, including any mitigation measures deemed necessary to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts. Citizens Electric Corporation is responsible for implementing these measures.

There are no federal lands or formally classified lands within the Project route. The majority of the Project route is not on prime farmland. Additionally, the Project route is mostly along property boundaries instead of through tracts of agriculture land. The Project will have no impact to formally classified lands or significant impact to important farmland.

The Project route does cross floodplains and wetlands, but the Project will avoid impacts to these resources. Transmission line poles will not be placed in floodplains or wetlands, which will be spanned between poles. The Project area will not impact water resources (including sole source aquifers) or coastal resources. The Project will have no significant impact to floodplains, wetlands, water resources, or coastal resources.

The Project may affect, not likely to adversely affect two federally listed or proposed species and have no effect to one listed species. The Project may affect, likely to adversely affect three federally listed or proposed bat species. The Missouri Ecological Services Field Office signed a Biological and Conference Opinion (BCO) on May 16, 2025 for the Project. The

BCO included an Incidental Take Statement and terms and conditions for the Project. The Project will conduct tree removal during the winter bat inactive season (October 15 to April 1) for approximately 75 percent of its route. For the remainder of the route, it will conduct tree removal outside the bat maternity roost season of May 15 to July 31. CEC will purchase mitigation credits from a conservation bank for tree clearing from August 1 to October 14, which is between the bat maternity roost season and the winter inactive season. CEC may implement an acoustic bat survey to determine areas where federally listed bats have no presence, which may be cleared with no mitigation. There are no critical habitats or suitable eagle habitat within the Project area. Therefore, the Project will have a mitigated impact to biological resources.

A cultural resources survey was completed in the Project Area of Potential Effect (APE). Emergency notifications were sent to the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Indian Tribes. The Project will use an inadvertent discovery provision during construction. The Project will not affect historic properties and cultural resources.

The Project area is in attainment for criteria air pollutants. The Project may have temporary impacts during construction to aesthetics, noise, and transportation. The Project will have no significant impact to aesthetics, air quality, noise, transportation, and human health and safety.

E. PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

A local newspaper advertisement, announcing the availability of the EA and participation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, was published on June 4 & 11, 2025, in Ste. Genevieve Herald, Sainte Genevieve County, Missouri. A copy of the EA was available for public review at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/salem-bulk-valley-view-transmission-line>. The 14-day comment period ended on June 17, 2025. RUS received no comments on the EA during the public review period.

F. FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Based on its EA, RUS has concluded that the proposed Project will have no significant effects to land use, farmland, floodplains, wetlands, water resources, coastal resources, biological resources, cultural resources and historic properties, aesthetics, air quality, noise, transportation, human health and safety, and corridors. The proposed Project will have no effects on historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places and no effects to federally listed species or designated critical habitat.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended, and RD's Environmental Policies and Procedures, RUS has determined that the environmental impacts of the proposed Project have been adequately addressed and that no significant impacts to the quality of the human environment will result from construction and operation of the proposed Project. Any final action by RUS related to the proposed Project will be subject to, and contingent upon, compliance with all relevant federal and state environmental laws and regulations. Because RUS action will not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, RUS will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its potential federal action associated with the proposed Project.

G. LOAN REVIEW AND RIGHT OF ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW

This FONSI is not a decision on a loan application and therefore not an approval of the expenditure of federal funds. Issuance of the FONSI and its notices concludes RUS's environmental review process. The ultimate decision on loan approval depends upon conclusion of this environmental review process in addition to financial and engineering reviews. Issuance of the FONSI and publication of notices will allow for these reviews to proceed. The decision to provide financial assistance also is subject to the availability of loan funds for the designated purpose in RUS's budget. There are no provisions to appeal this FONSI or the agency's other environmental determinations. Legal challenges to the FONSI may be filed in Federal District Court under the Administrative Procedures Act.

H. APPROVAL

This Finding of No Significant Impact is effective upon signature.

Dated:

**CHRISTOPHER
R MCLEAN** Digitally signed by
CHRISTOPHER MCLEAN
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For additional information on this FONSI and EA, please contact Terry Czerwien, Environmental Protection Specialist, at terry.czerwien@usda.gov.