

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Rural Development

Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

Agency: Rural Utilities Service, USDA

Action: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact – Seminole Generating Station (SGS) – Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA) 230kV Transmission Line Upgrade

Summary: The Rural Utilities Services (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance to Seminole Electric Cooperative, Inc (SECI) for the replacement of two-hundred and sixty transmission structures within the approximately 65-mile SGS and JEA Seminole Plant-Keystone-JEA Firestone 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line in Clay and Putnam Counties, Florida.

For Further Information or to obtain copies of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and FONSI, contact: RUSPublicComments@usda.gov The EA and FONSI are also available at:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/seminole-generating-station-sgs-jea-transmission-line-upgrade>

Supplementary Information: SECI proposes the replacement of 260 existing Corten steel poles with 260 new galvanized steel poles within an existing, approximately 65-mile, 230-kV transmission line right-of-way (ROW). The existing transmission poles, with an average height above ground of 75 feet (ft) to 90 ft and average diameter at ground of 24 inches (in), will be replaced by new transmission poles that match the height and diameter at ground of the existing pole. Each pole being replaced will have an approximately 100 ft by 100 ft temporary work area associated with it where the work activities will occur, for an approximate total work area of 102.57 acres. All structures will be replaced within 10 ft of the existing structure. There are no borrow areas associated with the proposed project and all staging of equipment and construction materials will be within the temporary work areas.

The transmission line ROW begins at the SGS substation adjacent to US Highway 17 north of the City of Palatka, heads west to parallel State Road 100, then northwest through agricultural and rural residential areas to Keystone Heights. From this point the transmission line continues north/northeast along State Road 16 towards Middleburg, turns east to cross Black Creek, and continues northeast towards State Road 23. The ROW then turns north, parallel to State Road 23, to reach the interconnection with JEA at the Clay County-Duval County line. A general location map of the proposal is shown below.

A local newspaper advertisement announcing the availability of the EA for public review and comment was published in the *Palatka Daily News* on May 3rd, 7th, and 8th, 2025, and in the *Clay Today* on May 8th, 2025. The EA was also available for public review at the USDA Rural Development's office and on its website:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/seminole-generating-station-sgs-jea-transmission-line-upgrade>

The 14-day comment period ended on May 21, 2025 with no comments received to date.

Based on the EA and mitigation commitments made by SECI, 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: