



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

August 3, 2026

Joseph Bell
Executive Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711

cc:

Jeff Posey, Fisher County Historical Commission

SUBJECT: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Dominance Financing, Section 106 Consultation, American Electric Power, Hamlin to Roby 69 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Rebuild Project, Fisher and Jones Counties, Texas

Dear Mr. Bell,

The United States Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF) has executed a Federal loan guarantee agreement with American Electric Power (AEP or Borrower) pursuant to DOE's authority under Title XVII of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, as amended. The loan guarantee to AEP is intended to provide financing for many projects over the life of the Federal loan guarantee. Each project is reviewed and considered individually prior to being approved for financing under the Federal loan guarantee. AEP has identified the Hamlin to Roby 69 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Rebuild Project (the Project), located in Fisher and Jones Counties, Texas, for potential inclusion in the loan guarantee.

The purpose of this letter is to formally initiate consultation with the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), represented by the Texas Historical Commission (THC), under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended (54 United States Code [U.S.C.] 306108), and its implementing regulations, 36 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 800, "Protection of Historic Properties." This letter presents a description of the undertaking, the Area of Potential Effects (APE), the efforts to identify historic properties, and the undertaking's effects on historic properties; and seeks your concurrence with DOE's Finding of No Adverse Effect for this Project. A cultural resources report is included as Attachment 1, and a Request for SHPO Consultation Form is included as Attachment 2.

The parties listed above that are copied on this letter are invited to participate as consulting parties to the Section 106 consultation and may provide their comments on the undertaking to DOE EDF. In accordance with the confidentiality provisions of the Section 106 regulations at 36 CFR 800.11(c), to avoid the disclosure of potentially sensitive cultural

resources information to the public, DOE EDF has respectfully withheld Attachment 1 from dissemination to those members of the public invited to participate as consulting parties. DOE EDF has made this consultation letter available for public view to solicit comments from the general public on the undertaking.

Description of the Undertaking

DOE's action is the issuance of a proposed Federal loan guarantee to the Applicant for the undertaking (i.e., the Project), which involves rebuilding approximately 25.2 miles of existing linear transmission line infrastructure in the general location of each pole structure within the existing 100-foot-wide right-of-way (ROW). The Project originates at the Hamlin Substation in Jones County, proceeds west and north to the Round Top Substation, and then proceeds southwest to the Roby Tie-In Dead End (DE) transmission structure in Fisher County, Texas. A total of 471 transmission structures will be removed, and only 258 new transmission structures are proposed to be constructed due to increased span lengths and three small reroutes along the transmission line route. All existing transmission structures, generally 50-foot-tall wood poles, will be removed from the ROW and replaced with new transmission structures, generally 80-foot-tall steel monopoles, and new conductor. Existing roads and ROW will be used for construction. Construction activities consistent with transmission lines typically include erosion and sediment control, crane pad grading, foundation installation, structure assembly and erection, conductor and shield wire installation, and restoration activities following construction completion. Project maps are provided in the cultural resources report that is included as Attachment 1.

Description of the Area of Potential Effects

As defined in the Section 106 regulations (36 CFR § 800.16(d)), the APE is the geographic area or areas within which an undertaking may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties, if any such properties exist. The dimensions of the APE are influenced by the scale and nature of an undertaking and may be different for different kinds of effects caused by the undertaking. Within the APE, DOE EDF distinguishes different survey areas for identifying archaeological and historic architectural resources (hereafter, the "archaeological survey area" and "architectural survey area"). The archaeological survey area is defined as the construction footprint of the Project where potential physical effects caused by ground-disturbing activities may occur, also known as the limits of disturbance (LOD). The architectural survey area includes the area in the Project LOD and may apply a distance buffer, as appropriate, within which potential non-physical effects (e.g., visual, vibrational, auditory, or atmospheric) could occur. These survey areas collectively comprise the APE for the Project.

The Project's archaeological survey area includes the approximately 25.2-mile-long and 100-foot-wide existing ROW corridor, plus all areas external to the ROW necessary for construction (e.g., pull pads and access roads), totaling approximately 318 acres. The Project's architectural survey area includes the ROW and the area within a 0.25-mile radius of the Project.

DOE EDF also acknowledges that Attachment 1 refers to the archaeological survey area as the “Direct APE” and the architectural survey area as the “Indirect APE”, and notes that in accordance with the 2019 D.C. Circuit Court decision in *National Parks Conservation Association v. Semonite*, visual effects that are caused by the undertaking are considered direct effects.

Description of Efforts to Identify Historic Properties

Tribal Outreach

In accordance with Section 106, DOE identified federally recognized Native American Indian Tribes (Tribes) that may have an interest in the Project area. DOE has notified the following four (4) federally recognized Tribes to see if they have an interest in the Project: Apache Tribe of Oklahoma; Comanche Nation, Oklahoma; Tonkawa Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma; and Wichita and Affiliated Tribes (Wichita, Keechi, Waco, and Tawakonie), Oklahoma.

By separate letter sent concurrently with this submission to the SHPO, DOE EDF has requested Tribal respondents to provide their comments on the undertaking, provide information regarding historic properties of religious or cultural significance to Tribes that may be present in the APE, and to identify any additional Tribes that may share an interest in the Project area so DOE EDF can promptly invite them to consult. DOE EDF will consider all comments received from Tribes during the 30-day consultation period and will coordinate with the SHPO and other consulting parties, as appropriate, if additional consultation is requested or necessary.

Records Search

As part of the Section 106 process, the Applicant contracted WSP, Inc. (WSP) to conduct cultural resource identification surveys. WSP prepared the cultural resources report that is included as Attachment 1 and summarized below.

Prior to the initiation of fieldwork, WSP conducted a file review for a 1-mile radius study area surrounding the Project. The online restricted-access Texas Historical and Archeological Sites Atlas was reviewed to identify previously recorded archeological and historical sites within the study area. In addition, previously recorded cultural resource data available online from the Texas Historical Sites Atlas were reviewed to identify the locations of historical sites, cemeteries, National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) properties, State Antiquities Landmarks, and Official Texas Historical Markers recorded within the study area. The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Historic Resources Aggregator was reviewed for resources that are listed or determined eligible for listing on the NRHP. NPS websites and data centers were reviewed to identify locations and boundaries for historic properties and historic trails. WSP also reviewed historical topographic mapping and aerial photography within the APE and study area.

The review indicated four (4) previous cultural resource surveys within the 1-mile radius study area, none of which intersect or overlap the current Project. Four (4) previously

recorded archaeological sites are documented within the study area, none of which are within the Project ROW. Two (2) recorded cemeteries are mapped within the study area, neither of which are within the Project ROW corridor, but one (1) of which is within the 0.25-mile radius APE. Seven (7) Official Texas Historical Markers are mapped within the 1-mile radius study area, one (1) of which is within the Project ROW and one (1) of which is within the 0.25-mile radius APE. No NRHP-listed historic properties are mapped within the 1-mile radius study area. Additional details and maps are provided in Attachment 1.

Following the completion of background research, WSP completed Phase I cultural resource surveys to identify newly recorded archaeological sites and historic architectural resources within the APE. The results of the surveys are provided in Attachment 1 and summarized below.

Archaeological Resources

A Phase I archaeological survey was conducted to identify archaeological resources within the Project ROW and temporary workspace (e.g., access roads and pull pads). The survey was conducted by qualified WSP archaeologists and in accordance with applicable state and federal guidelines. The survey consisted of pedestrian reconnaissance supplemented by subsurface shovel testing where field conditions allowed. A total of 656 shovel tests were excavated within the survey area. Shovel tests were excavated to an average depth of 51.2 centimeters (20.16 inches) below the surface. Of the 656 shovel tests, most (n=621) were terminated in sterile subsoils, 31 were terminated in dense gravels, three (3) were terminated due to depth in sand, and one (1) was terminated in mottled disturbed clay. Soil varied across the survey area and descriptions of shovel tests can be found in Appendix A of Attachment 1.

One newly recorded archaeological site (41FS177) was recorded during the investigation. The site was identified as a surface artifact scatter in a recently plowed agricultural field. Of the 19 shovel tests excavated in the site vicinity, only one (1) was positive for cultural material, and the material recovered from this positive shovel test was both sparse and restricted to the uppermost plow zone stratum. No features were identified in the Project area. The artifact assemblage is primarily associated with razing of abandoned twentieth-century structures. The site was observed to extend outside of the ROW corridor and the site boundary could not be fully delineated during the field survey. Therefore, the newly recorded site remains unevaluated for the NRHP due to incomplete delineation of site boundaries; the undertaking's effects on this potential historic property are discussed in the following section, below.

Additional details on the archaeological survey methods and results, maps, photographs, and site descriptions are provided in Attachment 1.

Historic Architectural Resources

WSP conducted a reconnaissance-level survey to document historic-age resources (at least 50 years old) within the APE. No above-ground historic structures were recorded within

the Project ROW, and a total of 67 historic architectural resources within the 0.25-mile radius APE were identified during the survey. Construction dates of the newly recorded architectural resources ranged from circa 1936 to circa 1984, representing early twentieth century architectural house designs, which included National Folk, Minimal Traditional, and Ranch styles. None of the 67 above-ground historic structures recorded during this investigation indicated a significant association with events, patterns of history, or individuals, nor did they exhibit a distinct architectural style or rarity of preservation that would make them eligible for the NRHP. Therefore, WSP recommends that the 67 newly recorded above-ground historic resources are not eligible for listing on the NRHP, either individually or as contributing resources to a potential historic district. Additional information and photographs of the surveyed resources are included in Attachment 1.

Description of the Undertaking's Effects on Historic Properties

Newly recorded archaeological site 41FS177 was recorded during the survey. The site was observed to extend outside of the limits of the survey area and the site boundary could not be fully delineated during the field survey beyond the limits of the ROW; therefore, it remains unevaluated for the NRHP. However, the investigated portions of the site within the APE was found to lack depositional integrity and significant information potential; therefore, the portions of site 41FS177 within the APE would not be considered to contribute to the overall significance of the site were it to be fully delineated and evaluated in the future. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no adverse effect on this potential archaeological historic property.

The records search provided in Attachment 1 also identified the Swedonia Cemetery and the Official Texas Historical Marker #4313 for the Roby Cemetery as within the APE. Swedonia Cemetery is mapped 20 meters (or about 65 feet) south of the ROW, and the Historical Marker for Roby Cemetery is mapped as being within the ROW, though the actual Roby Cemetery is 700 meters (or about 2,300 feet) west of the Project. Attachment 1 does not evaluate the NRHP eligibility of the cemetery or the historical marker, nor address the Project's potential effects on them; however, DOE EDF finds that because the Project is a rebuild of an existing transmission line, the Project would not cause any new visual intrusions or other changes to the setting or use of the cemetery or historical marker that would diminish the integrity of their potential character-defining features. Therefore, the proposed Project would have no adverse effect.

Requesting your Concurrence and Next Steps

Based on DOE's review of the efforts to identify historic properties and conclusions drawn from this information, DOE is issuing a Finding of No Adverse Effect, consistent with 36 CFR § 800.5(d)(1). As part of the Section 106 process, DOE EDF requests the concurrence of the Texas SHPO on the Finding of No Adverse Effect, as well as any comments you may have on the APE or the Project **within thirty (30) days of receipt of this letter.**

The parties listed above that are copied on this letter are invited to participate as Section 106 consulting parties and may provide their comments on the undertaking to DOE EDF **within thirty (30) days of receipt of this letter.** In accordance with the confidentiality

provisions of the Section 106 regulations at 36 CFR 800.11(c), to avoid the disclosure of potentially sensitive cultural resources information to the public, DOE EDF has respectfully withheld Attachment 1 from dissemination to those members of the public invited to participate as consulting parties. DOE EDF has made this consultation letter available for public view to solicit comments from the general public on the undertaking.

In the event of a post-review unanticipated discovery of cultural resources and/or human remains during construction, DOE EDF will determine actions to resolve adverse effects and notify the SHPO, any Tribe that might attach religious and cultural significance to the affected property, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) within 48 hours of the discovery, pursuant to 36 CFR 800.13(b)(3).

We look forward to consulting with your office throughout the Section 106 process. If you have any questions or would like to discuss this project further, please contact me at 240-687-7266 or via email at EDF_Environmental@doe.gov.

Sincerely,

Molly R. Cobbs
Environmental Project Manager
Office of Energy Dominance Financing

Attachments:

Attachment 1. Cultural Resources Report

Attachment 2. Request for SHPO Consultation Form