

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Presidential Permits and DOE's Role	1
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Analysis	2
Project Information.....	4

Presidential Permits and DOE's Role

1. What is the Department of Energy (DOE) Grid Deployment Office's (GDO) role in the Caribbean Transmission Development Company's (CTDC) Project Hostos?

DOE's role is to review and consider CTDC's application seeking a Presidential permit at the international border between Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. DOE is responsible for implementing Executive Order 10485 (E.O.), as amended by E.O. 12038, which requires the issuance of a Presidential permit for the construction, operation, maintenance, or connection of electric transmission facilities at the United States international border.

2. Did DOE decide where CTDC's proposed project, Project Hostos, would go?

No, DOE did not propose the location of the Project Hostos. DOE received a Presidential permit application from the CTDC to construct, connect, operate, and maintain electric transmission facilities along a route, proposed by the CTDC, that would cross the international border between the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

3. Is DOE providing any financial assistance for this project?

No, DOE is not funding any portion of Project Hostos. DOE is only evaluating an application for a Presidential Permit for this project.

4. Does issuing the Presidential permit mean the project is clear to proceed?

The Presidential permit only authorizes the construction, maintenance, and operation of electric transmission facilities at the U.S. border. Project applicants must still obtain all other requisite federal, state, and local authorizations and permits before commencing the project.

5. Is DOE in charge of issuing all permits for CTDC?

No. DOE has authority to issue a Presidential permit for the construction, operation, maintenance, or connection, at the borders of the United States, of facilities for the transmission of electric energy between the United States and a foreign country, pursuant to E.O. 10485. DOE also has authority to authorize exports of electric energy pursuant to the Federal Power Act. CTDC would need to receive all other applicable authorizations before their project could proceed, including federal, state, and local permits.

6. Are other agencies involved in the environmental review of CTDC's Presidential Permit application?

DOE sent a letter to all other relevant federal agencies inviting them to be a cooperating agency in our review. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Caribbean Division, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 accepted DOE's invitation to cooperate and will be involved in the preparation of the environmental review.

7. How many Presidential Permits have been issued, and for which projects?

Pending and archived Presidential Permits are available on DOE's website:

www.energy.gov/gdo/presidential-permits.

8. Can I still comment on the project?

On January 17, 2025, DOE opened a public scoping comment period for interested parties to submit comments on CTDC's proposal and the scope of DOE's NEPA review. The scoping period closed on February 25, 2025. **Comments received after this deadline will be considered to the extent practicable.**

DOE hosted two virtual public scoping meetings to share more information about Project Hostos and DOE's environmental review. A recording is available on DOE's website:

www.energy.gov/nepa/articles/doeea-2286-scoping-materials

9. Is this project part of the Puerto Rico Energy Resilience Fund (PR-ERF) program?

No. More information on PR-ERF is available on DOE's website: www.energy.gov/gdo/puerto-rico-energy-resilience-fund

10. Is this project part of the Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits (CITAP) program?

No, this project is not participating in the CITAP program. More information on CITAP is available on DOE's website: www.energy.gov/gdo/coordinated-interagency-transmission-authorizations-and-permits-program

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Analysis

11. What is the difference between an environmental assessment (EA) and an environmental impact statement (EIS)?

Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), both documents provide analysis of the potential environmental impacts of a proposed action. An agency "shall issue an [EIS] with respect to a proposed agency action requiring an environmental document that has a reasonably foreseeable significant effect on the quality of the human environment." An agency "shall prepare an [EA] with respect to a proposed agency action that does not have a reasonably foreseeable significant effect on the quality of the human environment, or if the significance of such effect is unknown...." An EA results in either a finding of no significant impact (FONSI), a determination by a Federal agency that a proposed agency action does not require the issuance of an EIS, or determination that an EIS is necessary.

12. Who made the determination to prepare an environmental assessment (EA)? DOE or the project proponent?

DOE made the determination.

13. What is the timeline for publishing the environmental assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), if necessary, and, ultimately, the Presidential Permit for Project Hostos, if granted?

DOE made a determination that an EA is appropriate because at this time, DOE does not have sufficient information to determine the significance of the potential environmental impacts of Project Hostos. Therefore, DOE is proceeding with preparing an EA. If DOE determines that an EIS is needed, DOE will issue a notice of intent to prepare an EIS but may decide not to conduct additional scoping meetings.

DOE expects to publish a draft EA by late Spring/mid-Summer 2025.

In addition to its environmental review, DOE will review and determine the project's impact on reliability of the U.S. electric grid as part of the public interest analysis required under E.O. 10485. DOE must also obtain favorable recommendations from the Department of State and Department of Defense before issuing a Presidential permit. Timelines for issuing new Presidential permits thus vary based on the complexity of performing such reviews for any given project.

14. What resources will DOE evaluate in the EA?

The typical topic areas that are evaluated in an EA include: air and water resources (including wetlands, floodplains, and water quality); biological resources, including fish, wildlife, and plant species; soils and geological resources; human health and safety; socioeconomics; recreation, transportation, and visual, scenic, or aesthetic resources; and cultural and historic resources. DOE will use input provided during the scoping period to identify important environmental issues deserving of study. DOE is also working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service, and Puerto Rico's State Historic Preservation Office to evaluate potential impacts to terrestrial and marine species and identify any potential cultural or historic impacts from the proposed project.

At this time, DOE does not have sufficient information to determine the significance of potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. Therefore, DOE is proceeding with an EA. If DOE determines the proposed project will have reasonably foreseeable significant potential environmental impacts, an EIS would be prepared instead.

15. Will this project result in any significant potential impacts to marine ecosystems?

Pursuant to NEPA and the Endangered Species Act, among other laws, DOE is working with NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife to assess the potential impacts to marine species including corals, fish, and marine mammals. At this time, DOE does not have sufficient information to determine the significance of potential environmental impacts, including to marine ecosystems, of the proposed project. Therefore, DOE is proceeding with an EA. If DOE determines the proposed project would have any reasonably significant potential environmental impacts, an EIS would be prepared instead.

16. Is DOE considering any alternatives to the Project?

DOE's environmental document will discuss alternatives to the proposed action, as appropriate, consistent with NEPA and DOE NEPA implementing regulations, and describe the reasonably foreseeable environmental effects of the alternatives. When applying for a Presidential permit for electric transmission facilities at the international border, applicants are required to include a description of all practical alternatives to the proposed facility and a discussion of the general environmental impacts of each alternative.

17. What happens next?

DOE determined, based on review of the permit application and more detailed information gathered since the application submission, that there is currently insufficient information to determine the significance of the potential environmental impacts of Project Hostos and is preparing an EA to help determine whether to issue a FONSI or prepare an EIS for Project Hostos. DOE will review and consider the input it received during scoping, as well as other information, to inform preparation of the EA. If DOE determines that an EIS is required, DOE will issue a notice of intent to prepare an EIS but may decide not to conduct additional scoping meetings.

Project Information**18. Would this project impact Puerto Rico's electrical grid?**

A Presidential permit will only be issued if DOE determines that granting the permit is in the public interest. In making the public interest determination, DOE will consider the impact of the project on grid reliability, in addition to analyzing the project's potential environmental impacts. DOE will review the reliability impacts of the proposed project on electrical power supply by reviewing the Presidential Permit application and other relevant documents such as interconnection system reliability studies and other impact studies.

19. Would electricity be sent to the Dominican Republic from Puerto Rico?

According to CTDC's application, Project Hostos would operate with bi-directional (two-way) capabilities. However, CTDC's application states that "the project does not initially consider that Puerto Rico will have the capacity to export generation to the Dominican Republic."

Exporting electricity from Puerto Rico to the Dominican Republic across the proposed Project Hostos would require an additional export authorization pursuant to the Federal Power Act (16 U.S.C. § 824a(e)) and DOE's regulations (10 C.F.R. §§ 205.300-309). DOE has responsibility for reviewing export authorization applications. Pending and archived electricity export authorizations are available on DOE's website: www.energy.gov/gdo/export-authorizations.

20. Where can I learn more about CTDC's application and the proposed project?

CTDC's Presidential permit application is available on DOE's website: www.energy.gov/gdo/pp-502-caribbean-transmission-development-company.