



**Department of Energy**  
Washington, DC 20585

May 20, 2026

Ashley McVicar, P.E.  
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**Subject:** U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Dominance Financing, Completion of Environmental Review for a Federal Loan Guarantee to Alabama Power Company for the Bassett Creek – Sunny South 115kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project in Clarke and Wilcox Counties, Alabama

Dear Ashley McVicar:

The United States Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF), may provide Federal financial assistance (i.e., a loan or loan guarantee) under Title XVII of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (“Title XVII”) Public Law 109–58, title XVII (2005), as amended; 42 U.S.C. 16511 et seq.

DOE EDF is considering whether to issue Federal financial assistance to Alabama Power Company (APC) pursuant to its authority. In its application for Federal financial assistance, APC has identified the **Bassett Creek – Sunny South 115kV Transmission Line Rebuild project** (Project) in Clarke and Wilcox Counties, Alabama.

The Project involves rebuilding approximately 15.8 miles of the existing Sunny South Switching Station (SS) - Bassett Creek Transmission Substation (TS) 115kV transmission line within an existing 100-foot-wide right-of way (ROW), encompassing approximately 193.9 acres (Project Area). Currently, the Sunny South SS-Bassett Creek TS Transmission Line is located within an existing utility corridor but is offset from the existing ROW centerline. Therefore, APC will clear vegetation for 15.8 miles on the southeastern side of the ROW to allow rebuilding the transmission line in the center of the existing ROW. This clearing is not expected to exceed 14 acres and will not extend more than 40 feet from the existing cleared corridor. The Project involves the installation of 94 replacement structures and approximately 15.8 miles of 115kV overhead electric transmission line. The Project is scheduled to begin construction in June 2026, with a projected commercial operation date of February 2028.

DOE EDF, in coordination with the APC, has identified environmental statutes and EOs applicable to the proposed Federal financial support for the Project include, but are not limited to:

1. Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1536)
2. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (54 USC 306108)
  - a. Executive Order 13175, Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribal Governments
3. E.O. 11988, Floodplain Management, and 10 CFR 1022, Floodplains
4. Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 USC 4201-4209)

DOE EDF completed the environmental reviews and consultations associated with the Project, as summarized below.

### ***Section 7, Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1536)***

On April 10, 2026, DOE EDF initiated informal Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Alabama Ecological Services Office (USFWS project code: 2026-0073045). Seven threatened, endangered, or proposed for listing species were identified as having potential to occur in the project area. The project area does not overlap with designated Critical Habitat for any of these species.

For five species, DOE EDF reached a *may affect, not likely to adversely affect* determination:

- Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)
- Tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*)
- Gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*)
- Black pinesnake (*Pituophis melanoleucus lodingi*)
- Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)

In consultation with USFWS, APC has agreed to implement the following best management practices to avoid disturbance to listed species:

- All tree clearing will occur between July 16 and December 14 and/or between February 16 and March 14.
- A “no kill” policy will be implemented to avoid impacts to listed snake species.

For all other species, DOE EDF has reached a *no effect* determination (alligator snapping turtle (*Macrochelys temminckii*) and Georgia rockcress (*Arabis georgiana*)).

On May 19, 2026, USFWS concurred with DOE EDF’s effect determinations and confirmed that no further endangered species consultation will be required.

***Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act (54 USC 306108) and EO 13175***

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), on March 20, 2026, DOE EDF initiated consultation with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and seven Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas; Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town; Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana; Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians; Muscogee (Creek) Nation; and Seminole Tribe of Florida.

DOE EDF's consultation package indicated a Finding of No Historic Properties Affected, consistent with 36 CFR § 800.4(d)(1).

On April 17, 2026, the Alabama SHPO provided a letter of concurrence with DOE EDF's Finding of No Historic Properties Affected. The Alabama SHPO's concurrence letter stipulates:

If archaeological materials are encountered during construction, the procedures codified at 36 CFR 800.13(b) will apply. Archaeological materials consist of any items, fifty years old or older, which were made or used by man. These items include but are not limited to, stone projectile points (arrowheads), ceramic sherds, bricks, worked wood, bone and stone, metal, and glass objects. The federal agency or the applicant receiving federal assistance should contact [SHPO's] office immediately. If human remains are encountered, the provisions of the Alabama Burial Act (Code of Alabama 1975, §13A-7-23.I, as amended Alabama Historical Commission Administrative Code Chapter 460-X-10 Burials) should be followed. This stipulation shall be placed on the construction plans to ensure contractors are aware of it.

The Choctaw Nation requested to consult on the undertaking and delivered comments to DOE EDF on April 24, 2026. APC and DOE EDF have reviewed the Choctaw Nation's concerns. The following inadvertent discovery clauses will be added to all contracts, permits, and relevant construction documents:

In the event that ground-disturbing work uncovers significant archaeological materials, such as stone arrowheads, ceramics, or early building foundations, or if work uncovers human burials or human remains, ground disturbing activities will immediately be stopped within a 300-foot radius and the materials protected. The State Historic Preservation Officer and the Choctaw Nation Historic Preservation Department will be contacted as soon as possible and given an opportunity to provide input before construction resumes.

and,

If any archaeological or cultural materials are discovered during the project undertaking, neither the construction team nor the applicant will disclose this information to the public or the media in any manner, including social media. Discoveries of archaeological and historic materials will be kept private and confidential.

No other Tribes responded and no objections were received from these parties within 30 days of receipt of DOE EDF's Finding; therefore, in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.4(d)(1)(i), DOE EDF's responsibilities under section 106 are fulfilled.

***E.O. 11988, Floodplain Management, and 10 CFR 1022, Floodplains***

Approximately 9.3 acres of the existing right-of-way is within the 100-year floodplain. Four existing structures within the 100-year floodplain would be replaced with new structures. Each of these structures would be replaced in the same location. There would be no change to base flood elevations as a result of the in-kind replacement. No net new pole structures will be installed in the floodplain. No 500-year floodplain or regulatory floodways were identified within the project area.

***Farmland Protection Policy Act (7 USC 4201-4209)***

On May 6, 2026, NRCS determined that the Project is exempt from review under the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

**Conclusion**

DOE EDF notes that APC is responsible for obtaining permits, approvals, and/or authorizations required for the construction and/or operation of the Project.

With this letter, DOE EDF confirms that it has completed the environmental reviews and consultations required by the applicable and relevant environmental statutes and EOs associated with its proposed Federal financial support.

Respectfully,

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

cc: Denis O'Meara, EDF Vertical Lead and Deal Captain  
Todd Stribley, Director, EDF Environmental Programs  
Guilio Areinamo-Duque, EDF Portfolio Management Division