

July 25, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Project No. 2628-066
R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project
Update on Evaluation of Notification System

Ms. Kimberly D. Bose
Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street N.
Washington, DC 20426

Dear Secretary Bose,

Alabama Power Company (Alabama Power) is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) licensee for the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project (Harris Project) (FERC No. 2628-066). Alabama Power filed the Final License Application (FLA) for the Harris Project on November 23, 2021. In Section 12 of the Exhibit E of the FLA¹, Alabama Power indicated it was researching whether it can update its Smart Lakes mobile application to include a “push” notification to notify users when certain events occur at Harris Dam (e.g., a generator loads or spillway gate opens) and whether it could notify users via text messages and/or e-mails for these same events. Alabama Power further stated that it would inform FERC of its findings by July 31, 2022.

Since the filing of the FLA, Alabama Power has determined that it can redesign its Smart Lakes mobile application to allow users to receive notifications of generation events (the loading of a unit or units) if the user chooses to receive such notification. Alabama Power is currently redesigning the application to include this notification feature for generation events and this option will be offered to users when the redesigned application is available (currently targeting the 2nd quarter of 2023). Once the redesigned application is released, users will be able to opt in to this feature, which will enable them to receive notifications of generation events through the application.

While Alabama Power is going to provide notification of generation events, there are other tools available to the public to receive information about river flows and flood events. The U.S Geological Survey (USGS) maintains WaterAlert, a free subscription service that allows users to receive an e-mail when certain user-defined parameters are exceeded at a USGS monitoring location.² The USGS also provides WaterNow, a

¹ A revised Exhibit E was filed on June 15, 2022 (Accession No. 20220615-5192).

² According to its website (<https://maps.waterdata.usgs.gov/mapper/wateralert/>), the USGS is modernizing the WaterAlert system and text message notifications will be available later in 2022.

system where users can query via text message or e-mail current conditions at stream gages that collect instantaneous data.³

Additionally, Alabama Power coordinates closely with the National Weather Service (NWS) Office in Calera, Alabama and the NWS - Southeast River Forecast Center (SERFC) through sharing of operational data, including when spillway gates are being used for flood control at Harris Dam. The SERFC uses this information to forecast river conditions and determine if a flood stage warning is required for certain forecast points along the Tallapoosa River, including the USGS Wadley gage. When those conditions are triggered, as part of its legal responsibility, the NWS Office in Calera formally issues flash flood watches and warnings for those forecast points along the Tallapoosa River, including the USGS Wadley gage. Those flash flood watches and warnings are then broadcast on the NWS NOAA Weather Radio network, which is widely available to the public.

While Alabama Power is taking extensive efforts to make this new notification feature available through the Smart Lakes application, and will strive to ensure its reliability, it is ultimately the responsibility of the end user to stay connected and to stay alert to conditions that are of interest to them.

Though Alabama Power evaluated the possibility of push notifications in the context of the Harris relicensing process, the new notification option for generation events will be available to users for all of Alabama Power's hydropower developments as a new feature on the Smart Lakes application. For this reason, it is not part of Alabama Power's license proposal and therefore, it is unnecessary to include a requirement in the new Harris license concerning the notification option.

If there are any questions concerning this filing, please contact me at arsegars@southernco.com or 205-257-2251.

Sincerely,



Angie Anderegg
Harris Relicensing Project Manager

cc: Harris Action Teams Stakeholder List

³ <https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/water-resources/science/waternow>