Alabama Power

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December 4, 2023

VIA ELECTRONIC FILING

Project No. 2628-066
R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project
Water Quality Certification

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 for the Harris Project on November 23, 2021, and on January 17, 2023, FERC issued a Ready for Environmental Analysis. On March 3, 2023, Alabama Power submitted the Harris Project's water quality certification application to the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM), the certifying agency, and filed it with FERC. ADEM's 401 water quality certification for the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project is included as an attachment to this letter.

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 Stakeholder List

Attachment

Attachment

Alabama Department of Environmental Management Water Quality Certification for the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project

LANCE R. LEFLEUR
DIRECTOR

KAY IVEY
GOVERNOR

Alabama Department of Environmental Management
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1400 Coliseum Blvd. 36110-2400 ■ Post Office Box 301463
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November 29, 2023

Mr. Mike Godfrey
Environmental Affairs Manager
Alabama Power Company
600 North 18th Street
P.O. Box 2641
Birmingham, AL 35291

RE: Water Quality Certification
R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project
FERC Project No. 2628

Dear Mr. Godfrey:

Because action pertinent to water quality certification is required by Section 401(a)(1) of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. Section 1251, et seq., the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) hereby issues certification that there is reasonable assurance that the proposed project, as outlined in the licensee's November 2021 Final License Application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), will not violate applicable water quality standards established under Section 303 of the Clean Water Act and Title 22, Section 22-22-9(g), Code of Alabama, 1975, provided the applicant acts in accordance with the following conditions as specified for the hydroelectric development included in FERC project number 2628.

LIMITATIONS

1. The operation of the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project, including but not limited to, the operation of the existing turbines, the turbine aeration systems, the skimmer weir, and the proposed continuous minimum flow, shall be managed such that no less than 5.0 mg/L of dissolved oxygen (DO) shall be maintained at all times in the tailrace waters below R.L. Harris Dam.

COMPLIANCE SCHEDULE

2. Alabama Power Company (APC) shall implement measures to maintain the DO downstream of R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project to comply with the limitations herein through structural and/or operational modifications throughout the duration of the FERC license. If monitoring results do not demonstrate compliance with state

water quality standards after structural and/or operational modifications have been implemented, as outlined in the Final License Application, Alabama Power Company shall develop and implement additional measures to ensure compliance with limitations described in Paragraph 1.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

3. APC shall conduct monitoring in the R.L. Harris Dam tailrace to determine compliance with Paragraphs 1 and 2. The monitor shall be located approximately 800 feet downstream of the dam on the west bank of the river at 33.255448° N and 85.615765° W. The tailrace monitor shall record dissolved oxygen and temperature at 15-minute intervals for the period January 1 through December 31. Monitoring shall be at a depth of 5 feet below the water surface if the total depth is 10 feet or greater, or at mid-depth if the total depth is less than 10 feet. Monitoring shall begin no later than 1 year after issuance of the Final FERC License and continue for the duration of the License as outlined in Paragraph 2.

4. APC shall coordinate with USGS to conduct additional monitoring of the Tallapoosa River to document water quality conditions following APC's proposed structural and operational changes as outlined in the Final November 2021 License Application. River monitoring shall begin no later than one year after issuance of the Final FERC License and continue for the duration of the License. All river monitoring data shall be collected, stored, and maintained by USGS and made available to the public via the National Water Information System (NWIS). The river monitoring locations and additional requirements are as follows:

    A. Tallapoosa River at Malone, AL (USGS Station 02414300). The approximate location is at 33.197062° N and 85.577177° W. APC shall contract with USGS to operate and maintain this gaging station and collect river stage (ft), river flow (cfs), water temperature (°F) and dissolved oxygen (mg/L) on a continuous basis (15-minute interval at minimum) for the period January 1 to December 31. Monitoring shall be at a depth of 5 feet below the water surface if the total depth is 10 feet or greater, or at mid-depth if the total depth is less than 10 feet.

    B. Tallapoosa River at Wadley, AL (USGS Station 02414500). The approximate location is at 33.116787° N and 85.560788° W. APC shall contract with USGS to operate and maintain this gaging station and collect river stage (ft), river flow (cfs), water temperature (°F) and dissolved oxygen (mg/L) on a continuous basis (15-minute interval at minimum) for the period January 1 to December 31. Monitoring shall be at a depth of 5 feet below the water surface if the total depth is 10 feet or greater, or at mid-depth if the total depth is less than 10 feet.

5. During the term of the new FERC license, APC and ADEM may work together to modify the monitoring and reporting requirements.

6. All monitoring shall be conducted according to applicable ADEM and/or USGS Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). All monitoring equipment shall receive appropriate maintenance and calibration utilizing the manufacturer's recommended procedures or other equivalent methods.

7. Subsequent to implementation of APC's proposed structural and operational changes, dissolved oxygen and temperature monitoring reports shall be submitted with appropriate certifications to ADEM within 90 days following the end of the annual monitoring period. In addition to dissolved oxygen and temperature data, the monitoring reports shall specify whether turbines were in operation at the time of the Harris tailrace dissolved oxygen and temperature measurements and the discharge rate of water flow passing through each turbine at the time of the measurements. The annual reports shall also include an assessment of the effects of the operation of the R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project on the State of Alabama's water quality standards using the results of the monitoring as described in the previous paragraphs. Annual monitoring reports shall be submitted in an electronic form compatible with the Microsoft™ Excel and Word software.

The Department also certifies that there are no applicable effluent limitations nor other limitations imposed under Sections 301(b) or 302 or other standards imposed under Sections 306 or 307 of the Clean Water Act. This certification does not, however, exempt Alabama Power Company from requirements imposed under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System for other discharges at these facilities regulated by the Department.

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (334) 271-7823 or Mr. Chris Johnson, Chief, Water Quality Branch at (334) 271-7827.

Sincerely,

Jeffery W. Kitchens, Chief
Water Division

JWK/CLJ/djm