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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Office of Energy Projects

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R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project : Docket Number P-2628-066
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Wedowee Marine
9681 Highway 48
Lineville, Alabama 36266
Monday, December 16, 2024

A public scoping meeting was held, pursuant to notice.
starting at 6:00 p.m.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 FERC: Thank you for coming. How is the sound?
3 Clearly good. Okay. Great. Thank you so much for coming.
4 In case you don't know me yet, my name is Sarah Salazar.
5 I'm at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, FERC, and
6 I'm an environmental biologist and I'm also the project
7 coordinator for the Harris Hydroelectric Project.

8 Tonight I have a few colleagues from our staff.
9 (Inaudible) is our engineer, Brian Maddox is our recreation
10 and land use specialist. So we're here tonight to talk
11 about a document that issued followed the draft
12 environmental impact statements or DEIS. In that document,
13 we have an analysis of Alabama Power's proposal to relicense
14 the Harris and it analyzes Alabama Power's proposal, the
15 agency recommendations, and it provides the staff
16 recommendations for the licensing decision.

17 And what we would like to get tonight is your
18 feedback on those recommendations. All of the issues that
19 were presented during the licensing were addressing the
20 document. And so we need to hear from you if you agree with
21 what the staff recommendations are or you disagree. And
22 either way we appreciate that you provide information as to
23 why you agree or disagree with the staff recommendations.

24 You could also agree or disagree with the agency
25 recommendations or Alabama Power's original proposal. So

1 the format of this meeting is going to be different than
2 scoping if you were here for that. We're not going to have
3 people take turns, come up here and promise to everyone.
4 We're holding out numbers. And we're going to call people
5 up individually one by one to speak with one of our court
6 reporters, one over here and one over here.

7 And we're going to just take oral comments with
8 them. If you want your comments to be on the FERC record
9 and to be considered in the licensing decision, they either
10 have to be made with the court reporters or filed for the
11 record by January 21st. If you picked up one of our public
12 notices in the back, it does say January 20th. That was my
13 mistake. I forgot to check if that's the holidays though,
14 so you have until the 21st.

15 So if you don't have a number yet, please see me
16 and I can give you a number to make your comments to the
17 court reporters. And we're going to start in chronological
18 order. I think we've only kicked out seven stickers,
19 though.

20 MALE SPEAKER 1: It will be a short night.

21 FERC: Hopefully more people will be animated to
22 provide some oral comments, but if not, that's fine. And if
23 you think of once tonight and you want to come back
24 tomorrow, we're going to do the same thing tomorrow. So
25 you're welcome to come back tomorrow and provide the oral

1 comments as well. Let me see here. So all of the comments
2 reported by the court reporters will become part of the
3 official FERC record, and the transcripts will be publicly
4 available on our e-library system.

5 Like I said before, if you choose not to speak
6 today or you're unable to attend, if you know someone who
7 wasn't able to attend one of these meetings, don't worry.
8 They can file the comments to the record by January 21st.
9 And I just want to emphasize that the commission provides
10 equal consideration to all comments, whether they be with
11 the court reporter or files, you know, certain comments to
12 the record.

13 And we do read every word of your comments. But
14 just to emphasize, again, unless you provide the comments
15 with the court reporter or filing of the record, the E-lib
16 system, they're not part of the FERC official record and
17 they won't be considered in the licensing decision. So it's
18 very important and I encourage you to either make your
19 comments with the court reporters here or filing your
20 comments to the record.

21 And also many of you have already visited our
22 table in the back. I have some resources back there to help
23 you all file your comments. We're happy to answer the
24 questions you have. If you want to go directly to the
25 draft impact statement, you just type that into your

1 computer. It'll take you directly to the document where you
2 can review everything that we said about all the issues and
3 decide what you feel about it, and then provide us your
4 feedback.

5 Alabama Power staff are also here and they're
6 being able to answer your questions in the back row there
7 about their proposal. And just general questions about the
8 project as well. So that's all I have. Question?

9 MALE SPEAKER 2: How far in the future will it be
10 before the comments that are taken tonight and tomorrow are
11 available on the front E-library?

12 FERC: I believe the transcripts are ready within
13 a couple of weeks or so. I have to double check. Yeah.

14 MALE SPEAKER 2: So it's hard to know what the
15 others are saying until that's posted, correct?

16 FERC: Yeah, you won't be able to unless you just
17 ask them. Any other questions about the format? Does
18 anyone else see or get a sticker to come make a comment to
19 the court reporter? Any questions?

20 MR. CAMPBELL: Over here. Is this where I sit?

21 FERC: Yeah.

22 MR. CAMPBELL: Oh good.

23 THE REPORTER: Hello, sir. Hi.

24 THE REPORTER: Basically what we're going to do
25 here, going to wait.

1 FERC: Sorry. Just one more thing. We're going
2 to have to try to keep our conversations at a lower level so
3 that the court reporters can accurately document everyone's
4 comments. If you want to have a conversation with your
5 neighbors or ask us question.

6 THE REPORTER: It's a different format.

7 FEMALE SPEAKER: Not a huge number of people that
8 want to comment that the commenters can say their comments
9 to the audience as well.

10 FERC: That's really not the format that they
11 want us to do anymore. I'm sorry.

12 MR. CAMPBELL: I have a question. Am I
13 addressing a group here or am I addressing the record?

14 FERC: Just the court reporter.

15 MR. CAMPBELL: I'm only addressing the record.
16 Oh, I see. Okay. Well, you don't even hear what I have to
17 say, these guys?

18 FERC: Yeah, it's just for the court reporter to
19 document your comments.

20 MR. CAMPBELL: Oh, okay. Wow, that's
21 interesting.

22 THE REPORTER: That's how it gets on the record.

23 MR. CAMPBELL: Yeah, I understand that. But you
24 don't get to talk to the group.

25 THE REPORTER: Okay. So --

1 MR. CAMPBELL: You ready to do it?

2 THE REPORTER: Yeah. Let's do it. Please use
3 the microphone, speak clearly and audibly, state your name
4 and the entity that you are representing, if there is any.
5 Please spell your name for accurate recording and define any
6 acronyms that you use in your comments.

7 MR. CAMPBELL: I got it.

8 THE REPORTER: Sound good? I'm going to read
9 that.

10 MR. CAMPBELL: Yes, I am.

11 THE REPORTER: Okay.

12 MR. CAMPBELL: My name is William M. Campbell
13 III. I'm known as Matt Campbell. I represent Lake Watch of
14 Lake Martin Incorporated, which is known as Lake Watch, is
15 an Alabama nonprofit corporation, representative of its
16 group of citizens who recreate on the Tallapoosa River below
17 Harris Dam. And I'm the president of that organization
18 authorized to represent my constituent members. Lake Watch
19 acknowledges the good work of FERC and Alabama Power
20 Company and all the stakeholders involved in the Harris Dam
21 relicensing proceedings. We celebrate the health of the
22 Tallapoosa River watershed and its tributary streams. We
23 celebrate the health of Lake Wedowee. I first got involved
24 in relicensing in 2018, but have not participated actively.
25 And so, again, I'll reiterate my thanks to those who have

1 done the diligent work here towards the last end.

2 I find that there's something that is absent from
3 the environmental impact study, and I'm going to address
4 that now. The Tallapoosa River is remarkable for its clean
5 water, scenic beauty, its recreational value and the general
6 good health of its aquatic and riparian flora and fauna.
7 Its shield habitats support, amazing biodiversity and
8 populations of native fish and other unique Alabama
9 critters.

10 Fishing, kayaking, ecotourism in the river
11 contribute economic value to our economy. Moreover, the
12 pure recreational value of our river and streams is
13 fundamental to our Alabama heritage and our lifestyle.
14 Enhanced public recreational opportunities as a stated
15 priority for FERC in the Lake Martin area, we put great
16 value on canoeing, kayaking, and fishing on the stretch of
17 the Tallapoosa River that runs from Horseshoe Bend Landing
18 to Jaybird Landing. This is a very popular canoe and kayak
19 run that has a lot of public use.

20 We urge that text be included in the
21 environmental impact study and in the relicensing document
22 that recognizes the great importance of public recreation on
23 this stretch of the river. This seems like a small item.
24 It's not as important as lake levels in Lake Wedowee or
25 generation effective hydropower generation, but it's a very

1 available item that is a for priority and that is public
2 recreation on the river below the dam.

3 And I'm urging that I don't see that addressed in
4 the environmental impact study and I wish that it would be
5 addressed and the priority assigned to it. Specifically, we
6 urge that the environmental impact study and the relicensing
7 documents identify a priority of timing discharge schedules
8 that create water level and flow volumes that are favorable
9 for canoe and kayak and float fishing the Tallapoosa River
10 below Harris Dam.

11 And I am particularly including and advocating
12 for the stretch of the river from Horseshoe Bend National
13 Military Park Landing to Jaybird Landing, which is
14 maintained by Alabama Power as a public recreation area.
15 Public users have become accustomed to the fluctuations and
16 flow and water level that are sufficient for floating in the
17 morning and the afternoon when public demand is great to be
18 on the river within the whole regime that is decided upon
19 between FERC and Alabama Power Company.

20 In these relicensing, they have to decide on
21 pulse releases, on peak demand times, operating schedules,
22 release schedules, continuous flow, green plan, all this we
23 see discussed. Please settle upon making the volume and
24 duration and timing of releases a component of the
25 environmental impact study and the license that produce

1 downstream water level volumes that favor floating the
2 stretch of the Tallapoosa River from Horseshoe Bend down to
3 Jaybird Landing in the morning and afternoon as dependable
4 and safe and generally predictable. Thank you.

5 THE REPORTER: Excuse me, Mr. William, please.
6 May I have your last name?

7 MR. CAMPBELL: Campbell, C-A-M-P-B-E-L-L.

8 THE REPORTER: Okay. Got it. Thank you very
9 much for leaving that. We appreciate it.

10 MR. CAMPBELL: You're welcome.

11 THE REPORTER: You have a good voice too. It's
12 like --

13 MR. CAMPBELL: I have a frog in my throat, but I
14 do have a --

15 THE REPORTER: Well, no, but it sounds like a
16 radio voice.

17 MR. CAMPBELL: Generally I do.

18 THE REPORTER: Yeah. You do have a good voice.

19 MR. CAMPBELL: Although I have a frog right now.

20 THE REPORTER: Thank you for that. We very much
21 appreciate it. Yes. Okay. I don't know what number we're
22 on. So I'm not sure how I'm supposed to know that. All
23 right. So I'm just going to tell you that we will limit it
24 for five minutes, but we are here to record your comment
25 with the court recorder. She's going to record everything

1 that you say and we need to start by using the microphone,
2 speak clearly and audibly, state your name and entity that
3 you are representing, if there is any. Spell your name for
4 accurate recording and define any acronyms if you use them
5 in your comments.

6 MS. BROWN: Okay. All right. Sound good. I
7 think I got all that.

8 THE REPORTER: We can help you as you go.

9 MS. BROWN: Okay.

10 MS. BROWN: My name is Tammy Brown.

11 FERC: Does she need to be closer to the
12 microphone?

13 THE REPORTER: Closer and spell it out please.

14 MS. BROWN: Okay. Tammy, T-A-M-M-Y, Brown,
15 B-R-O-W-N. Basically, we're here addressing the issue of
16 the water moving faster than it already does. We're worried
17 about the erosion. We're also worrying about, you know,
18 people downstream, if they do pump the water faster, that
19 someone will get swept away in their kayaks because we do a
20 lot of kayaking, so we are concerned about that.

21 We would love for them to leave the lake level
22 alone, but that ain't going to happen. We've already
23 figured that out, but we're basically just wanting them to
24 stay calm, release the water like they are gently and not
25 give a big surge out so that we lose people and property.

1 That's all I got.

2 FERC: All right. Great. Yeah. Thank you very
3 much. We appreciate it. You're welcome. It's good to hear
4 from you. Okay. Now what number were we on? Five, six?
5 All right. Hello.

6 MS. KNIGHT: Hi, there.

7 FERC: Hi. How are you?

8 MS. KNIGHT: I'm fine.

9 FERC: Good. So this is the court reporter.
10 She's going to record your comments. You will have like a
11 five minute limit, but we can kind of work with that.

12 MS. KNIGHT: Oh, okay.

13 FERC: If you go over a little bit. But
14 basically start by using the microphone, state your name and
15 spell it out. Speak clearly and audible and define any
16 acronyms if you use any.

17 MS. KNIGHT: Okay.

18 FERC: So if you use --

19 MS. KNIGHT: Thank you. I don't have any.

20 THE REPORTER: Okay. Perfect. So name and spell
21 it out. Yeah.

22 MS. KNIGHT: My name is Carol Bugg, C-A-R-O-L
23 B-U-G-G, Knight, K-N-I-G-H-T. And I'm a resident of Wadley,
24 Alabama. I live downstream from the dam. And I live in, as
25 I said, a little town called Wadley. And that river has

1 been a part of our community and an important part of our
2 town for as long as anybody can remember. And my dad's
3 nearly 92. And you know, the river's always been important.

4 When I was growing up in South Alabama, my
5 grandmothers would write letters to us back then, and they
6 would say, well, the river's up this week, or the river's
7 kind of, you know, it's running low. It's something we just
8 keep up with in Wadley. So flow is very important for us,
9 but safety is another concern. If you're out on the river
10 and you don't understand when it starts running faster,
11 strangers don't understand you need to be getting out of the
12 water.

13 So safety is a concern for us. And having access
14 to recreation is also very important. But over the past
15 several years, I have talked with landowners and members of
16 the community and everybody's just concerned about the
17 amount of erosion, the historical aspects of the river bank
18 that we may be losing. And we just want to, I don't know
19 how to say it, except continue to enjoy the river in safety
20 and looking for ways to keep our river banks from eroding
21 away. But Tallapoosa River is certainly an important part
22 of our community.

23 THE REPORTER: You have time.

24 MS. KNIGHT: Yeah.

25 THE REPORTER: If you have more to say you're

1 welcome.

2 MS. KNIGHT: Yes. Yes. There is a native
3 American site there in Wadley at the River Bridge named
4 Louina. And it was named after a Native American woman.
5 And it was at one time the most thriving place in the
6 county. And of course when the trail of tears, when all
7 Native Americans went to Oklahoma, it was deserted. And it
8 was always said that she buried gold there on the river
9 bank.

10 And there have been people to come back in the
11 later years looking for that gold. So, you know, that's
12 just an interesting story that we have about the river and
13 about, you know, how culturally important it is to those of
14 us who live there. It's just a very important part of our
15 lives.

16 FERC: Great.

17 MS. KNIGHT: Thank you.

18 FERC: Yes, thank you. We appreciate you.
19 Definitely appreciate everything you have to tell us.

20 MS. KNIGHT: Well, thank you.

21 FERC: Yes, thank you. You made it within three
22 minutes.

23 MS. KNIGHT: Oh, well, I could have talked more
24 of that. Anyway, that's fine. I'm a teacher. You really
25 don't want me to --

1 FERC: Thank you. All right. Number 7. Are you
2 seven or eight? Doesn't matter. Just one over here. We
3 want to hear what you have to say, so come on. I'm sorry.
4 It's a little --

5 MR. LOGAN: I was very persuasive, huh?

6 FERC: Yeah, there you go. Exactly. Okay. So
7 real quick, we're here. She's going to be the court
8 reporter that takes down everything that you have to say.
9 First and foremost, we have about a five minute limit. I'll
10 let you know 30 seconds beforehand if you're getting close
11 to that limit. But you need to use the microphone, you need
12 to speak clearly and audibly, you need to state your name
13 and the entity that you're with or representing if there is
14 any.

15 Please spell your name for accurate recording,
16 and define any acronyms if you use any when you use your
17 comments or when you state your comment.

18 MR. LOGAN: Okay. My name is Joe Logan. I am
19 representing Lake Martin Water Watch and Murphy Lake Water
20 Watch, which is in lower Tallapoosa County. It is more Lake
21 Martin affected by the Tallapoosa River. I spell my name
22 J-O-E L-O-G-A-N. Okay. That's all, right?

23 FERC: Yeah. You did all that. Yeah. So now
24 you can comment with what you want to comment in regards to
25 the --

1 MR. LOGAN: Okay. My wife and I, Marcy, are
2 concerned about water and we, through Auburn, have educated
3 ourselves. We're both certified in testing water, chemical
4 and biological. We have five streams that we test that go
5 into Lake Martin. Our concerns are anything coming in to
6 Lake Martin. How it affects the lake, how it affects the
7 people. There's a lot of recreation there.

8 There are fatalities there from drownings and,
9 you know, as far as anything that's coming in or whatever we
10 like to know so we can tell people we have swim sites that
11 we tell people, you know, it's good swim here. It's not
12 good swim here. It's the same in Murphy Lake. Now, my
13 concerns of coming upstream, because we are your downstream
14 neighbor, one of the biggest pollutants there are is
15 sediment. Controlling this red clay here in Alabama.

16 And the sediment is something that's very
17 difficult to control. We try to do it through, you know,
18 plant life and growing things and slowing things down or
19 whatever. So naturally my concerns are, you know, how fast
20 this water's coming is how fast, you know, how it's
21 regulated. And I have lost a friend under Neely Henry Dam
22 that there was no warning years ago, like '70s.

23 But is there going to be warnings of, you know,
24 are people going to be educated downstream as to what's
25 going on? How it affects plant life, our aquatic life, our

1 fisheries is a concern as well. And all these things have
2 burst in because Rusty Wright and the fisheries at Auburn
3 have taught me a lot over the years and safety and issue.
4 We had a drowning yesterday at Lake Martin, and he was the
5 chaplain of Auburn University , yeah, for the football
6 people.

7 But of course, naturally we have Horseshoe Bend
8 right there between us. Now, that is a big kayaking,
9 canoeing recreational event once a year. And there are
10 people that do it all the time in between. So their
11 awareness of what's coming at them is very important. You
12 know, if they get out there and some of them are not so
13 skilled and we, you know, try to get them to understand or
14 let them know, you know, how rapid the waters are. So we
15 don't need any surprises in between. So that is mainly, you
16 know, my concerns right there.

17 FERC: Okay. Perfect. Thank you.

18 MR. LOGAN: Thank you.

19 FERC: We appreciate it. Yeah.

20 MR. LOGAN: Well, thank you-all very much.

21 FERC: Definitely.

22 MR. LOGAN: And I appreciate what both of you-all
23 are doing.

24 FERC: Yeah. Well, thank you. Thank you for
25 your comment. We definitely need to hear all that.

1 MR. LOGAN: Okay.

2 FERC: Great. Thank you.

3 MR. LOGAN: You-all have a great day.

4 FERC: You too. All right. I don't know what
5 number. Oh, well, let's get this on the road.

6 MR. TRAYLOR: I live in two places actually.

7 THE REPORTER: All right. Well --

8 MR. TRAYLOR: This won't take long.

9 FERC: All right. So this is the court reporter.
10 She's going to --

11 MR. TRAYLOR: See what she does with my voice.

12 FERC: Oh yeah, exactly.

13 MR. TRAYLOR: We wouldn't know.

14 FERC: So you will be limited to about a five
15 minute comment, but I will let you know about 30 seconds
16 beforehand if you get close to that time. First and
17 foremost, use the microphone.

18 MR. TRAYLOR: All right.

19 FERC: Speak clearly and audibly. State your
20 name and the entity that you are representing. Please spell
21 your name so that we accurately record it in the record.

22 MR. TRAYLOR: Okay.

23 FERC: And define any acronyms if you use any.

24 MR. TRAYLOR: Okay.

25 FERC: Okay. And whenever you're ready.

1 MR. TRAYLOR: Can you hear me?
2 THE REPORTER: Yeah.
3 MR. TRAYLOR: Is it too loud or not?
4 THE REPORTER: If you can come close a little
5 closer.
6 FERC: Come a bit closer.
7 MR. TRAYLOR: A little closer. Okay.
8 THE REPORTER: Yeah. Scooch in, I guess.
9 MR. TRAYLOR: How about here?
10 THE REPORTER: Yes.
11 MR. TRAYLOR: Okay. All right. I got the
12 microphone. I'll speak as clear as I can. I'm ear
13 impaired. We'll see how this goes. My name is Steve, last
14 name is Traylor T-R-A-Y-L-O-R, property owner on the
15 Tallapoosa River at County Road 15. That's about that.
16 Now, I'll go to my comment. I have a concern on document
17 P2628066.
18 They referred to our property as canoe portage.
19 And my understanding is that we're going to have river
20 access at the dam for water below the dam, but where are
21 people going to take out? Our property is private. And
22 we've had problems with people defecating in the daylight
23 and we had to gate it. So we don't want to turn, I'm not a
24 parking lot attendant and I'm not going to become one. But
25 has any consideration been given to river access downstream

1 at every river bridge and dirt road access that needs to be
2 considered?

3 If people are going to put in at the river and
4 they have adequate water flow to navigate, how do they get
5 out and where? It's very important to our family to find
6 out where we're headed. We don't want to turn it into a
7 Yellowstone episode. Sorry about that. Then one question
8 for the power company. I haven't been able to get an
9 answer. Out of the total hydroelectric power generation for
10 Alabama power, how much has RL Harris contributed since the
11 start up in 1982, I think it was?

12 I think 11% of their power output is
13 hydroelectric, and there's no way this dam can be worth it
14 to them. Maybe a hundred year payoff. I don't know.
15 That's for them to answer. But I'm curious about how much
16 power generated out of that dam and is it worth it to the
17 State of Alabama and property owners downstream considering
18 the ecological damage that's been done and being done. And
19 that's it for me.

20 FERC: Great. Thank you.

21 MR. TRAYLOR: We'll get home before midnight.

22 FERC: Yeah, exactly.

23 MR. TRAYLOR: Are you going to put that on there?

24 FERC: No. Thank you very much. I appreciate
25 it.

1 MR. TRAYLOR: I'll get home on time.

2 FERC: That's right.

3 MR. TRAYLOR: Take a shower.

4 FERC: There you go. Exactly. Thank you for
5 being here.

6 MR. TRAYLOR: Are you-all number 11? Number 11
7 go over there.

8 FERC: All right. Good. So we're on 12. All
9 right. Hi.

10 MR. STRYKER: Hey, how are you?

11 FERC: Good. So this is our court reporter.

12 MR. STRYKER: Okay.

13 FERC: You will have about five minutes to make
14 your comment. Basically what we're going to need is for you
15 guys to use the microphones.

16 MR. STRYKER: Okay.

17 FERC: Speak clearly and audibly, please state
18 your name and the entity that you represent. Please also
19 spell your name so that we can make sure to record it
20 accurately.

21 MR. STRYKER: Okay.

22 FERC: And define any acronyms if you use any
23 abbreviations.

24 MR. STRYKER: Okay.

25 FERC: Okay.

1 MR. STRYKER: Super.

2 FERC: Sound good?

3 MR. STRYKER: Sounds great.

4 FERC: All right. And I'll have a timer I'll let
5 you know about.

6 MR. STRYKER: Okay. I don't think we'll --

7 FERC: If you get to like, say, 30 seconds --

8 MR. STRYKER: Okay.

9 FERC: -- or five minutes, I'll --

10 MR. STRYKER: You'll wave at us.

11 FERC: I'll give you something.

12 MR. STRYKER: All right. So my name is Matt,
13 M-A-T-T, Stryker, S-T-R-Y-K-E-R. And this is my wife Angie
14 Stryker, A-N-G-I-E. My opinions are my own. They're not of
15 my employer. I had to state that. And generally I'd like
16 to express support for the commission staff's
17 recommendations in response to the application.
18 Specifically for the kind of middle ground, for the
19 continuous minimum flow unit to be between 300 and 450 CFS.
20 I also would like to express positive support for the
21 recreation proposals, which are contained therein.

22 So that is both the addition of the recreation
23 area below the tail race for canoe kayak access, as well as
24 the day use area which would be kind of in the middle of the
25 like near Marine South. I believe that's kind of an

1 underserved area at this lake where there's not a lot of
2 recreation areas, especially for swimming, for folks who do
3 not have or own property, so I believe that would address
4 some of the congestion issues around Flat Rock State Park.
5 That's it.

6 FERC: Great. Thank you. We appreciate your
7 comment. And this will put it on the record so then we can
8 take into account for the final environmental impact
9 statement.

10 MR. STRYKER: Super great.

11 FERC: Yeah. Awesome.

12 MR. STRYKER: Thank you.

13 FERC: Thank you very much. Thank you for being
14 here.

15 MR. STRYKER: Yeah.

16 FERC: All right. So this is our lovely court
17 reporter and she's going to take down your comments.
18 Basically there's a couple quick rules. You need to use the
19 microphone.

20 MR. TAYLOR: Which one?

21 THE REPORTER: Either one.

22 FERC: Either one's fine. Okay. Yeah.

23 THE REPORTER: Get a little bit closer.

24 FERC: Just make sure you kind of stay close to
25 it, speak clearly and audibly. State your name and the

1 entity that you represent. Please also spell your name so
2 that we can record it accurately.

3 MR. TAYLOR: The entity that I represent being
4 what?

5 FERC: Like if you're with an organization.

6 MR. TAYLOR: I'm a landowner.

7 FERC: That's perfect.

8 MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

9 FERC: Say that. Yeah, that's good. And if you
10 use any acronyms, just define them.

11 MR. TAYLOR: Okay.

12 FERC: A little bullet point list there. And I
13 will flag you down if you get to about four minutes and 30
14 seconds, because we're trying to limit it to about five
15 minutes.

16 MR. TAYLOR: Yeah.

17 FERC: So --

18 MR. TAYLOR: Okay. Just whenever?

19 FERC: Yes, sure.

20 MR. TAYLOR: Okay. So my name is Robert Taylor.
21 I'm a landowner below the lake. My name is spelled
22 R-O-B-E-R-T, Taylor, T-R-A-Y-L-O-R. So a couple of things
23 that I wanted to hit on was in the docket from FERC
24 P-2628-066 on page, I think, 272. It says Tallapoosa River
25 recreation Malone canoe portage. There is not canoe portage

1 there. That is private property.

2 Unless we give you access, you cannot enter that.
3 That needs to be taken off the docket. There's a train
4 track on the other side. You can go over there. The other
5 part I wanted to mention is that like for example, we have
6 over a mile of riverfront property. On that mile of
7 riverfront we have two creeks. And whenever we go hunting,
8 doing whatever, and we go across the creek and we come back
9 and the creek is flooded, then now we're stuck, you know,
10 over a mile from our campsite, our home, and have to figure
11 out a way to get back.

12 Usually sometimes 8:00, nine o'clock at night,
13 sometimes early in the morning. And that usually requires a
14 lot of work. The other thing is the safety of the river.
15 So we cannot go down the river in a canoe or kayak and do
16 anything unless we go up river and then come down because
17 when we get out there and we don't know when they're going
18 to generate, this is the same thing, getting stuck on the
19 creeks.

20 You know, wherever you're at, you get stuck. The
21 generation is massive up there. You know, one turbine is an
22 eight foot rise where we're at, so you can't cross it on any
23 vehicle, you know, you can't paddle upstream. You can't run
24 a boat motor up there because when there's no water in the
25 lake, you can't use a boat motor because you're just in

1 rocks. Erosion. So I'm 29. In my lifetime I've seen the
2 bank erode probably another 15 feet. Our bank's giving out,
3 we have trees falling in the river. It's not safe.

4 I mean, it's just a straight drop off now where
5 the creek flows out. And when you get down in there, it's
6 all muck and leaves and it's just nasty. And that's because
7 whenever a big rain comes, all the water comes out of our
8 creeks. And then at that time, the river rises while the
9 creeks are flushing out all the natural sediment and stuff.
10 You know, how God intended it to work.

11 Starts to come out and then it backs up and it
12 all gets stuck right there where we do our recreation. So
13 that's another thing. The water temperature changes so
14 drastically that kills any fish. When I was a kid, you
15 could be swimming out there and the fish would bite the hair
16 on your legs. Now you can go out there and fish for two
17 hours and not catch anything.

18 There's no fish in the river. You can run a trot
19 line. The trot line will have two or three turtles on it.
20 And that's it. It used to be full. You know, you run a
21 trot line from bank to bank and it was every hook had a fish
22 on it. Catfish on it. Now, nothing. So that's all I got.

23 FERC: Great. Thank you.

24 MR. TAYLOR: Thank you.

25 FERC: I appreciate your comments. You have

1 about five minutes. I can allow you or you know --

2 MS. CALHOUN: I won't be that long.

3 FERC: You know, cut you off after that I guess.

4 But basically she's going to record everything you need to
5 use the microphone.

6 MS. CALHOUN: Okay.

7 FERC: Speak into it clearly and audibly, state
8 your name and any entity or organization that you're with or
9 representing. Spell your name so that we can accurately
10 record your name and define any acronyms.

11 MS. CALHOUN: Okay.

12 FERC: So if you have any abbreviations that you
13 use.

14 MS. CALHOUN: Okay.

15 FERC: Sound good?

16 MS. CALHOUN: Uh-huh.

17 FERC: I will start the timer and I will let you
18 know if you get close to the five minute mark.

19 MS. CALHOUN: Okay.

20 FERC: You are all set.

21 MS. CALHOUN: You're ready. Okay. My name is
22 Melissa Calhoun, M-E-L-I-S-S-A, Calhoun, C-A-L-H-L-U-N. I'm
23 a homeowner on Lake Wedowee. Continuous flow is a concern
24 for me and my husband, mainly not knowing if the lake level
25 may drop lower than what is normal regardless of what time

1 of the year it is. Especially real concern for me would be
2 in the summer if we had a drought and it started dropping
3 really low in the summertime.

4 And if you're not having more rain or even, you
5 know, I'd just like to be guaranteed that with continuous
6 flow, that the level never drops below what is normal for
7 that time of year. I know from just talking to others that
8 it was denied that we change the amount of that our lake
9 drops each winter. Currently, it's dropping eight feet. At
10 our home we don't have water access at eight feet. We're
11 avid fishermen throughout the year.

12 Winter time's our favorite time to fish, so I'd
13 really like to see the lake level change to drop to at least
14 no more than six feet. It'd be nice if it was only dropped
15 four feet. We had a -- a home there and I know that their
16 lake level changed from six feet to three feet, is how much
17 it dropped just within a few years ago. And I think Lake
18 Martins, their lake level has changed for the betterment of
19 the homeowners recently.

20 And I just think it would be nice for homeowners
21 in the Lake Wedowee area to have that same opportunity and
22 still protect, you know, below the dam as well. And I think
23 that's all the comments for now. No, I did have one other
24 thing. I would like to see the timeframe of the water
25 dropping not to start so early in the year and go so far

1 out. It'd be nice if we could not start dropping the water
2 level until November and be back full pool at least by March
3 1st so we wouldn't be so high and dry so long.

4 FERC: Thank you very much for your comments.

5 MS. CALHOUN: Thank you.

6 FERC: We really appreciate it.

7 MS. CALHOUN: Certainly.

8 FERC: Well, this is our court reporter and she's
9 going to record everything you say so that it gets in the
10 public record. You're going to start by spelling your name
11 and if you are talking about a particular property or if
12 you're representing someone you just want to let us know
13 that and spell your name. And then basically I will let you
14 know if you get close to five minutes.

15 MR. WESELOH: Great.

16 FERC: Because you'll have about a five minute
17 limit.

18 MR. WESELOH: Name is Morris Weseloh, M-O-R-R-I-S
19 W-E-S-E-L-O-H. I live at 351 Esther Circle Pinewood on
20 Lakewood Alley or Harris Reservoir. I can think of three,
21 maybe four issues that I'd like to ask about. Why do they
22 only lower the lake or should I think only during periods
23 needed for hydroelectric or dam maintenance? They come to
24 find out from the eight Alabama power people, maintenance
25 can be done on those turbines, even a full pool.

1 So why the lowering of the lake as I understand
2 supposedly it's due to flood control. Well, in 2002 or '3
3 it flooded and never got above the 800 level, but yet they
4 weren't dumping. Well, they said they were dumping as fast
5 as possible. Well, from people I've heard downstream of the
6 dam, that it never did flood down that way. The water did
7 come up, but it didn't flood.

8 So to me there was too much held back and I think
9 there could be more let go. It's an issue with Lake Martin.
10 The people kept complaining that they were letting the water
11 down too low. It took them maybe about 10 years, but as I
12 understand, now they don't let the lake level drop in Lake
13 Martin. So why can't that be the same scenario here at RL
14 Harris Reservoir?

15 It just seems treat one set of people different
16 than others. And part of my aggravation with the system is
17 I think there's some of all powerful people from Alabama
18 power that live on Lake Martin. And for some reason I think
19 they're being treated different than we are here at Lake
20 Wedowee. I suggest we lower the lake, possibly three to
21 four weeks to provide an adequate time for cleaning the
22 debris and trash and driftwood out of the, you know,
23 shoreline or the coves where it collects.

24 Also, I think maintaining a higher level of water
25 attracts more activity, tax dollars to the state, county,

1 and cities and towns surrounding the area. I understand
2 that now, Lake Martin, it'll be a number of years before
3 they ever have to reconsider arguing to keep their lake up.
4 It'll be 40 years, as I understand before that can ever be
5 addressed again. I think that is a little inconsiderate to
6 the property owners.

7 I really can't think of anything else. I guess
8 being a property owner, yes, if I had four feet more water,
9 I could probably use my boat during the winter. It would be
10 nice. I'm not that big of a fisherman or anything of that
11 nature, but once in a while it'd be maybe a little bit more
12 fun to take it out on a cool, you know, day, right, around
13 the lake just to be a tourist on my own self, you know, I
14 don't know what else to say.

15 FERC: That's perfect. Thank you. Thank you for
16 giving us your comments. That's what we needed.

17 MR. WESELOH: This portion of my comment, it
18 describes my feeling, what I think is a politics involved
19 here. Southern Company, I believe, has control or some
20 fingers into Alabama Power as well as Georgia Power. And
21 there's some kind of agreement that the water in RL Harris
22 Dam, the electricity is not supposed to be shipped, that is
23 generated by the dam not to be shipped or shared with
24 Georgia Power for some reason.

25 I don't know what kind of strange agreement that

1 is, but it seems like, you don't have a neighbor you can't
2 share electricity with because of some bureaucratic, you
3 know, decision or set of regulations.

4 FERC: Thank you. Thank you for giving us --

5 MR. WESELOH: Okay.

6 FERC: Well, yeah, it's good that you gave us
7 your comment. We appreciate it. Thank you very much.

8 MR. WESELOH: Bye, bye. Thank you.

9 (Whereupon the above proceedings concluded at
10 8:00 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL REPORTER

2

3 This is to certify that the attached proceeding
4 before the FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION in the
5 Matter of:

6 Name of Proceeding:

7 R. L. Harris Hydroelectric Project

8

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12

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14 Docket No.: P-2628-066

15 Place: Lineville, Alabama

16 Date: Monday, December 16, 2024

17 was held as herein appears, and that this is the original
18 transcript thereof for the file of the Federal Energy
19 Regulatory Commission, and is a full correct transcription
20 of the proceedings.

21

22

23 Meron Tesfaye

24 Official Reporter

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Office of Energy Projects

- - - - - x
R.L. Harris Hydroelectric Project : Docket Number P-2628-066
- - - - - x

Wedowee Marine
9681 Highway 48
Lineville, Alabama 36266
Monday, December 16, 2024

A public scoping meeting was held, pursuant to notice.
starting at 6:00 p.m.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. WILLIS: Hold it up here? Okay. All right.
3 Okay. My name is Ken Willis, K-E-N, last name W-I-L-L-S, and
4 I'm representing the Alabama Glade Conservation Coalition.
5 And as far as my comments, we at the Alabama Glade
6 Conservation Coalition, we support the EIS proposal to
7 reclassify 57 acres adjacent to Flat Rock Park at Harris
8 Lake, from recreation to natural undeveloped in the
9 Shoreline Management Plan.

10 This will provide protection for a pristine,
11 granite outcrop rare plant community outside the developed
12 Flat Rock Park. This will be the first granite outcrop
13 community to receive protection in Alabama. Once the site
14 is reclassified, we plan to work with Alabama Power to
15 remove exotic plants from the area. Thank you.

16 MR. ALLIOTT: My name is Jesse Carlton Elliot. I
17 own some land below Malone, J-E-S-S-E, period, C.,
18 A-L-L-I-O-T-T. And I own two and a half acres below Malone
19 Bridge between Wadley Bridge and Malone Bridge. I wonder if
20 they're going to do anything about the erosion problem they
21 have created with the dam. There's so much river bank
22 washed away that I'm losing a lot of trees and a lot of
23 land. So I'm wondering if they're going to do any kind of
24 bank reclamation for all that they have destroyed in the
25 river, such as the white sucker. It is a fish. It's gone.

1 There's no more muskrats in the river. They're
2 gone. There's no more water dogs in the river. They're
3 gone. There's no more moss on the rocks like they used to
4 be in the river. It's gone. So therefore you have a very
5 poor fishery. Very poor fishery. And that's about all I
6 can think of right this second. Yes. That's all I have at
7 this time. If I think of anything else, I will come back up
8 after we're finished.

9 FERC: Thank you. Readers essentially can
10 understand what you're talking about.

11 MR. TRAYLOR: Yeah. So name Jimmy Traylor,
12 T-R-A-Y-L-O-R. We own land in Malone at the Malone Bridge,
13 roughly 650 acres of riverfront.

14 FERC: No, that's good. Just your comment.

15 MR. TRAYLOR: Okay. So my father originally
16 started, well, affiliations. I was affiliated with Middle
17 Tallapoosa River Alliance originally, and that kind of
18 dissolved. More affiliated with Alabama River Lines, and
19 then the local landowners. So I'm speaking on behalf of the
20 landowners below the dam, a lot of them anyway. I've been
21 involved in that with my dad since about 1990, so 34 years
22 roughly.

23 I grazed through the EIS proposal and there's a
24 couple things that stood out. The third turbine stood out,
25 and also there was a schematic drawn out for a seasonal

1 water flow. So why are these two important? First of all,
2 I'm one of the few people in this room that have fished the
3 river for many, many years prior to the dam and then after
4 the dam. You can't float the water, the river, when there's
5 no water being released, period. You're walking.

6 So that's kind of a gimmick, a river has to have
7 water. Why is the third turbine important versus two peak
8 turbines? So if you do the math and this is one of our
9 arguments, going back 30 years, it's basically like flushing
10 a toilet. So at 6,500 cubic feet per second roughly for a
11 three hour turbine generation, I think comes out to about 66
12 million cubic feet of water total and release versus 300
13 cubic feet per second on a third turbine for 24 hours comes
14 out to around 26 million.

15 So it's a win-win for both the lake and the
16 river. Based off of my previous knowledge, that would bring
17 the water level constantly up to basically a drought
18 condition prior to the dam being built. That to me is
19 acceptable. That would also give a back storage of water at
20 the dam for the lake. And I think it's a good, good thing
21 for everybody. I think that the 300 feet cubic feet per
22 second could be bumped up maybe to 400.

23 But a third turbine to me is a win for everybody,
24 both lake and the river people. Water temperatures. So,
25 about 15 years ago, I asked a biologist in one of these

1 meetings, I said, have you ever thought about stocking trout
2 in the tail race? He said, sir, this is a warm water
3 fishery. I politely said back to him, then why are you
4 releasing in 58 degree water temperature into a warm water
5 fishery? There was no response to that.

6 So to me, even with a third turbine in a constant
7 flow, if you're not putting seasonal water in, you're fixing
8 50 percent of the problem. I think there was something in
9 the EIS about water flows would be higher during winter and
10 spring. Well, that's natural. That's the way I look at it.
11 If you're going to live by the water, sooner or later, you
12 are going to get wet.

13 But, you know, I grew up with no dam and I'm used
14 to the river being up for three or four months at a time.
15 That's the way it's supposed to be. So to me, I approve of
16 the third turbine. I would like to see seasonal water
17 temperatures with that. And I also accept the
18 responsibility of, hey, we might get flooded. So I'm good.
19 One thing that is of concern to me, I believe there's a
20 five year monitoring put on Alabama power post the third
21 turbine.

22 Part of the reason why I was in a battle for 30
23 years, because there was no solution. If someone had a
24 problem, there was no monitoring being done. If this
25 license is, I think it's for 50 years this time. Is that

1 correct?

2 FERC: It's recommended, I think, for 50. I'm
3 not sure.

4 MR. TRAYLOR: Yeah. You're going to give Alabama
5 power for 45 years to do what they want with no monitoring.
6 That is not acceptable. There needs to be constant
7 monitoring with an adaptive management plan in place so we
8 can avoid the situations like I've been in for the last 30
9 years or more. Sedimentation and erosion. I would ask
10 that, you know, everyone's going to have this issue.
11 Better documentation of pre-licensing, what is happening to
12 the river banks?

13 Map it out so we can measure for bank loss,
14 because I will tell you, on our property, we've lost over 20
15 feet of bank in a mile of river. And I've heard people say
16 that it is because of logging, it's because of pastures. I
17 have Virgin Timber that I walked on all my youth, and I
18 can't even walk there anymore because there's no bank.
19 Sedimentation. Same thing with the tributaries flowing in
20 to the turbine below the dam.

21 They need to be studied up to the point where the
22 generations don't affect that tributary such as Courthouse
23 Creek and no Business Creek. I think that's really it. In
24 short, I like the plan and need more monitoring for a longer
25 period of time with adaptive management built in and address

1 not only the flow out of the third turbine, but also the
2 seasonal water temperatures.

3 MR. MORRIS: All righty. My name is Barry
4 Morris, B-A-R-R-Y M-O-R-R-I-S. I represent the Lake Wedowee
5 Property Owners Association. I have a written statement and
6 I would like to submit into the record, so I don't have to
7 read this thing and you don't have to copy it all down. I
8 think that will be easier for you.

9 PRINTED COMMENTS

10 1. The Lake Wedowee Property Owners Association (LWPOA),
11 representing more than 500 homeowners, landowners and
12 businesses on R.L. Harris reservoir (and by extension
13 hundreds more who are not members), agrees with the findings
14 of the draft EIS (P-2628, dated November 21, 2024), with the
15 following stipulations and comments regarding the
16 staff-recommended Continuous Minimum Flow (CMF).

17 a. LWPOA agrees that both Alabama Power's
18 proposed 300 cfs CMF and FERC's staff recommended varying
19 CMF are acceptable compromises that maintain lake levels
20 while enhancing the downstream river environment. We have
21 no opinion on the engineering feasibility of either option.

22 b. The staff-recommended varying CMF must not
23 cause lake surface levels lower than prescribed in the R.L.
24 Harris operating rule curve, 785' winter and 793' summer,
25 except when Alabama Drought Response Operation Plan (ADROP)

1 is implemented.

2 c. If CMF as recommended by FERC staff in the
3 draft EIS would cause lower lake levels at any time of year,
4 particularly during low flow periods but before ADROP is
5 implemented, then CMF must be at least partially curtailed.
6 While current "Green Plan" releases are tied to river
7 inflows upstream, LWPOA wants assurance in the final EIS
8 that low inflow criteria are applied specifically to the
9 staff recommended CMF.

10 d. While LWPOA supports the environmental health
11 of the river downstream of the dam and the rights of
12 landowners along the river, Alabama Department of
13 Conservation and Natural Resource's (ADCNR) requested CMF
14 would unquestionably result in lower lake levels and thus
15 must not be implemented. ADCNR's requested CMF at the dam
16 does not appear to consider intervening stream inflows from
17 creeks downstream of the dam, which would normally bring the
18 river flow up to ADCNR's requested levels. It seems logical
19 that CMF should be measured, in part if not in whole, at the
20 Malone and Wadley USGS stream gauges, not simply as
21 throughput at the dam.

22 2. LWPOA commends the FERC staff for their recognition of
23 the harmful effects of lower lake levels as written in
24 paragraph 3.3.5.2 (pp 3-66/67) of the draft EIS. LWPOA and
25 its members concur with the FERC staff that lower lake

1 levels are harmful to safety, recreation, land and home
2 values around the lake, and the local economy, which is
3 largely driven by R.L. Harris reservoir. Levels lower than
4 prescribed in the Harris operating rule curve, whether
5 caused by eventual Continuous Minimum Flow or current
6 "Green Plan" pulsing, should not occur unless ADROP is
7 implemented.

8 Respectfully submitted,
9 Barry Morris on behalf of the Lake Wedowee Property Owners
10 Association

11 FERC: Can you just accept them and put them in
12 or, I don't know how that works.

13 THE REPORTER: Yeah. We can do that.

14 FERC: Okay.

15 MR. MORRIS: Is it possible to get a time date
16 stamp on that or do I just --

17 FERC: It'll basically be timestamped because
18 it'll be part of the transcript.

19 MR. MORRIS: Okay.

20 FERC: Which will have today's date and the
21 speeding time.

22 MR. MORRIS: Okay. I just want to make sure that
23 the Lake Wedowee Property Owner Association position on
24 water levels is thoroughly recorded.

25 FERC: Right. So you can get that in the record.

1 No problem. Okay. Okay. Is there anything else you need
2 from us? Okay. Clear so that any person reading the record
3 could understand what you're talking about.

4 MR. ELLIOTT: That's perfect. Can you hear me?
5 Name Freeman Elliot. F-R-E-E-M-A-N E-L-L-I-O-T-T. I'm not
6 affiliated with any group or organization. I have two
7 pieces of property on Lake Wedowee or Lake Harris, I think
8 we call it in this format. And I have property about seven
9 miles below the dam. So I'm one of the few in this room
10 that I'm on both sides of the dam. And that was my comment
11 or question. I don't know if this is comment time or
12 question time, I just have a question.

13 FERC: It's comment time.

14 MR. ELLIOTT: Okay. My question is, I know that
15 FERC did a re-licensing study where they are going to keep
16 the winter pool at eight feet below the normal level. So
17 they drop at eight feet in the winter, in other words. And
18 then I guess that was Alabama Power, maybe FERC. And then
19 they came out, and I read the information about the dam is
20 going to do a constant release turbine, or minimum flow
21 turbine, whatever we call it. I don't know the exact
22 vernacular.

23 My question is, which came first? And if the
24 winter pool decision came first and the constant flow
25 decision came next, is there any desire or any movement to

1 go back and revisit the winter pool drop? Because if you're
2 going to hold it at eight foot, you know, bring it down
3 eight feet in the winter and you're going to have a constant
4 flow and release.

5 If you have a dry winter, you have no reserve.
6 Whereas if you were to drop it, let's say seven feet or six
7 feet, you'll have a little reserve under your winter pool
8 level. That's my only comment or question is, is there any
9 desire to go back and revisit the winter pool? And does it
10 make more sense to have it drop less, let's call it, I don't
11 know, 4, 5, 6, 7, seven and a half? I don't know. But that
12 was my only comment.

13 I'm happy with the decision to have a constant
14 flow release because I can tell you, I grew up on that river
15 and I remember the fish we used to pull out of there, and
16 you don't anymore because the temperature fluctuations are
17 so high with the temperature coming off the bottom of the
18 lake. So that was really my only comment or question is, is
19 there any desire to go back and revisit the winter pool and
20 should we look at depths other than eight feet, six feet,
21 give you a little bit of relief if you have a drought in the
22 winter or seven feet. And that's it. Mine was easy.
23 Anything else you need from me? Anything else you need from
24 me? Okay. Thanks guys. Appreciate it.

25 FERC: Thank you.

1 MR. CROUCH: My name is Gene, G-E-N-E. My last
2 name's Crouch, C-R-O-U-C-H. I'm self-employed. I'm a
3 realtor broker here and on Lake Wedowee and been doing this
4 for about 22 years. I've been enjoying the lake since 1990.
5 So got a lot of love for this place. And my comment is, and
6 if I'm affiliated with anybody, I'm a member of the Lakewood
7 Allway Property Owner Association.

8 And again, I have my own business here at Crouch
9 Team Realty, Keller Williams. So my concern is the lake
10 levels and my hope that we were going be able to drop or
11 raise the winter level from eight feet drop to at least a
12 six foot drop. It'd be two feet. It would be a great deal
13 for many of the stakeholders that have places on the lake
14 that have docks. They'd be able to use the lake a lot more
15 in the winter, especially in the late fall and the early
16 spring for the fishing.

17 So if we had two more feet, and in other words,
18 don't drop it eight feet, just drop it six feet, that is
19 what I'm asking for. And that's my comment that we would
20 appreciate you going or realizing that six feet would work
21 just as well as eight feet. And I've been here for a lot of
22 years and I've never seen it come out of the banks with the
23 current way you do it now.

24 And I think today with the weather forecasting
25 that we have, you know, someone could really take that and

1 do a great job keeping the lake levels the same without
2 hurting that other two feet that you're going to give us in
3 the winter. So thank you and I appreciate you letting me
4 comment.

5 MS. CAMPBELL: Ready? My name is Ann, A-N-N
6 Campbell, C-A-M-P-B-E-L-L. I'm associated with Lake Watch
7 of Lake Martin, which is a downstream lake from the
8 Tallapoosa River below Lake Wedowee. And I guess that's it.
9 And I want to go on record to object to the format that is
10 being presented this evening. This method of giving
11 statements via a court reporter is advertised. This is
12 supposed to be a public meeting. And I think this fails to
13 deliver what most of the people came here for this evening.

14 I don't think that it's being handled in the
15 spirit of the statement, inviting public participation.
16 When it was announced that there was to not to be a public
17 discussion, several people left this evening. Many who
18 attended this evening came in hopes of gaining a better
19 understanding of the draft environmental impact statement.
20 This event is most disappointing and does not deliver what
21 the public of, excuse me, the office of public
22 participation states as their mission. The mission is
23 stated that FERC's office of public participation is to
24 empower, promote, and support public voices at the
25 commission. This is not being done this evening.

1 FERC: You done?

2 MS. CAMPBELL: Yeah.

3 FERC: Okay. Thank you.

4 MS. CAMPBELL: You're welcome.

5 MR. O'QUINN: So my name is James O'Quinn. Last
6 name is O, apostrophe, Q-U-I-N-N. I'm a resident of
7 Randolph County and outdoorsman and would like to be able to
8 make use of the Tallapoosa River. I have spent much in many
9 hours in the little Tallapoosa River, and I floated it from
10 above Carrollton all the way to Lake Wedowee. Not as much
11 in the big Tallapoosa.

12 In looking at the proposed plan, one of the
13 initial things that I find interesting and ultimately
14 unsustainable is the idea that the 300 cubic feet per second
15 constant flow will ultimately improve the usability for
16 recreational purposes downstream of the dam. Immediately
17 downstream of the dam, a quick measurement from Google Earth
18 shows that the river is 441 feet wide currently. Let's call
19 it 440 feet wide.

20 While 300 cubic feet per second and a 400 foot
21 wide drainage will provide eight inches of water, it will
22 only do so temporarily. Upstream of Lake Harris at Hollis,
23 the Tallapoosa River is approximately 120 feet wide.
24 Upstream of Lake Harris at Newell, the little Tallapoosa is
25 a hundred feet wide. Those two inputs combined only equals

1 a 200 foot wide stream. What you have now, immediately
2 downstream of the dam is a 440 foot wide stream.

3 The reason for a 440 foot wide stream is that
4 since 1984, when the dam was put into use that segment of
5 stream has experienced ultimately what amounts to three or
6 more flash floods per day. That has wintered away all of
7 the sediment down to bedrock. When you go to the area
8 immediately downstream of Harris Dam, the stream bed is in
9 bedrock, in shiest.

10 That shiest strikes perpendicular to the flow of
11 the stream dips upstream. The rocks that are present in the
12 stream right now represent an energy condition that is not
13 present to my knowledge in any other reach of the little
14 Tallapoosa River upstream or in my knowledge, the Tallapoosa
15 River upstream. What you have downstream immediately below
16 the dam is an energy condition that has been created by the
17 repeated flash floods that has a very well sorted gravel
18 that is approximately three to five inches long and one and
19 a half to three inches wide.

20 These gravels are relatively thin because the
21 parent rock is a shiest. There is no silt and a very
22 limited quantity of core sand. With the continuous flow of
23 300 cubic feet of water per second, the stream below the
24 Harris Dam will once again widen. Perhaps the new regime
25 that does not cause multiple flash floods every day will not

1 be as erosional, will not present the same energy regime
2 that currently is produced by the operation of the dam, but
3 a constant flow eight inches deep across bedrock, that
4 energy regime, it cannot descend vertically.

5 The stream bed is already in bedrock. So those
6 energies are going to be exerted against the banks of the
7 stream. When those energies are exerted against the banks
8 of the stream, they're going to make the stream that much
9 wider. Who knows how long it will take for the stream to
10 widen? But however long that is, once it has reached the
11 width that will sustain 300 cubic feet per second, the depth
12 will no longer be the proposed constant eight inches.

13 So you're talking about perhaps providing for
14 recreational use downstream of the dam, but that will be
15 very temporary and any monies that are invested in that will
16 ultimately be lost. Part of the idea of having continuous
17 slow down stream is to improve habitat by maintaining a more
18 constant stream temperature rather than hot water when the
19 flow regime is almost zero, when you have a 400 foot wide
20 gray shift heating up in the sun to the flash flood
21 situations that you have now.

22 But after the river widens itself, its depth will
23 once again approach zero and the sun's going to heat the
24 water and you will have gained nothing. I appreciate that
25 this is an attempt being made, but I don't see that it's

1 going to accomplish the goals of the modification for any
2 long period of time. In addition to that part of the
3 original charter plan for Harris Dam was to diminish
4 downstream erosion.

5 I have not researched what the original stream
6 width was downstream of the dam, but I have difficulty
7 believing that when your inputs are less than 200 feet wide
8 that 30 miles later it would be twice that wide. So I don't
9 think that the project is being successful in preventing
10 downstream erosion and I think that constant flow of 300
11 cubic feet per second will increase downstream erosion and I
12 think that the landowners downstream will suffer the
13 consequences. Thank you very much.

14 (Whereupon the above proceedings concluded at
15 8:00 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE OF OFFICIAL REPORTER

2

3 This is to certify that the attached proceeding
4 before the FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION in the
5 Matter of:

6 Name of Proceeding:

7 R. L. Harris Hydroelectric Project

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14 Docket No.: P-2628-066

15 Place: Lineville, Alabama

16 Date: Monday, December 16, 2024

17 was held as herein appears, and that this is the original
18 transcript thereof for the file of the Federal Energy
19 Regulatory Commission, and is a full correct transcription
20 of the proceedings.

21

22

23 Bala Chandran

24 Official Reporter

25