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Via Electronic Filing

February 28, 2022

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

**Subject: Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 2514-186)
Filing of Final License Application**

Dear Secretary Bose:

Appalachian Power Company (Appalachian or Licensee), a unit of American Electric Power (AEP), is the Licensee, owner, and operator of the 30.1-megawatt, two-development Byllesby-Buck Hydroelectric Project (Project) (Project No. 2514), located on the upper New River in Carroll County, Virginia.

The Project is currently licensed by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission). The Project underwent relicensing in the early 1990s, and the current operating license for the Project expires on February 29, 2024. Accordingly, Appalachian is pursuing a new license for the Project pursuant to the Commission's Integrated Licensing Process (ILP), as described at 18 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 5. In accordance with 18 CFR § 5.17(a), Appalachian is hereby filing the Final License Application (FLA) for the Project.

Overview

As described in the FLA, Appalachian is proposing to continue the existing run-of-river mode of operation of the Project and proposes to modernize the Project in the new license term to include replacement of three of four turbine-generator units at the Byllesby Development and replacement of two of three turbine-generator units at the Buck Development. The upgrades will not result in a significant increase in the Project's authorized installed capacity or the maximum hydraulic capacities of the powerhouses, but due to efficiencies of the replacement units and modern components, the upgrades are expected to increase average annual generation at the Project by approximately 25,927 MWh.

On February 14, 2022 Appalachian filed with the Commission a request for an extension to file the Revised Aquatic Resources and Bypass Reach Flow and Aquatic Habitat Study Reports as supplemental information, within 45 days of the filing of the FLA. This extension was requested to provide the Licensee additional time to conduct additional study analyses to address FERC and agency comments on the Draft License Application and Updated Study Report. FERC approved Appalachian's request on February 17, 2022 and, as requested by the Commission, Appalachian

has included the schedule for filing this supplemental information in the Executive Summary of the FLA.

The FLA is composed of five volumes, as described below:

FLA Contents

Volume I of V (Public)

Volume I contains Public information and exhibits as listed below.

- Table of Contents
- Initial Statement and Additional Information Required by 18 CFR §5.18(a)
- Exhibit A – Project Description
- Exhibit B – Project Operations and Resource Utilization
 - Appendix A – Flow Duration Curves (Exhibit B)
- Exhibit C – Construction History and Proposed Construction Schedule
- Exhibit D – Costs and Financing

Volume II of V (Public)

Volume II contains Exhibit E – Environmental Report and Appendices. Study reports filed with the USR that have been revised based on comments received at or subsequent to the USR Meeting are included in this volume. As previously noted, this volume will be supplemented with a Revised Aquatic Resources and Bypass Reach Flow and Aquatic Habitat Study Reports 45 days after the FLA filing (by April 14, 2022). Also included in this volume is the draft Recreation Management Plan, which was developed by Appalachian based on the results of the Recreation Study and was distributed on January 26, 2022 to stakeholders for a 30-day review.

- Appendix A – Reserved for Bypass Reach Flow and Aquatic Habitat Study Report, to be filed as supplemental information post-FLA filing
- Appendix B – Water Quality Study Report
- Appendix C – Reserved for Aquatic Resources Study Report, to be filed as supplemental information post-FLA filing
- Appendix D – Terrestrial Resources Study Report
- Appendix E – Wetlands, Riparian, and Littoral Habitat Study Report
- Appendix F – Shoreline Stability Assessment Report
- Appendix G – Recreation Study Report
- Appendix H – Recreation Management Plan
- Appendix I – Consultation Summary

Volume III of V (Public)

Volume III contains Public information and exhibits as listed below.

- Exhibit F – List of General Design Drawings
- Exhibit G – Project Boundary Maps

- Exhibit H – Ability to Operate

Volume IV of V (CRITICAL ENERGY/ELECTRIC INFRASTRUCTURE INFORMATION [CUI//CEII])

Volume IV contains CUI/CEII materials not intended for public release, and includes the following:

- General Design Drawings (Exhibit F)
- Supporting Design Report (Exhibit F)
- Single Line Diagram (Exhibit H)

Volume V of V (PRIVILEGED [CUI//PRIV])

Volume V contains CUI/PRIV materials not intended for public release, and includes the following:

- Cultural Resources Study Report
- Draft Historic Properties Management Plan (HPMP)

Distribution

The Draft HPMP, which was developed by Appalachian based on the results of the Cultural Resources Study, is being distributed by Appalachian under separate cover to consulting parties for review and comment.

Appalachian is filing the FLA with the Commission electronically and is distributing this letter electronically or by USPS to the parties listed on the attached distribution list. All parties interested in the relicensing process may obtain a copy of the FLA electronically through FERC's eLibrary system at <https://elibrary.ferc.gov/idmws/search/fercgensearch.asp> under docket number P-2514-186, or on Appalachian's website at <http://www.aephydro.com/HydroPlant/ByllesbyBuck>.

The FLA can also be reviewed during normal business hours at the Carroll County Public Library, located at 101 Beaver Dam Road, Hillsville, VA 24343. In addition, paper copies of the applications can be reproduced at a cost of \$0.10/page, plus postage (both prepaid)¹, by contacting:

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¹ Except as provided in 18 CFR § 5.2(b)(4).

In accordance with 18 CFR § 5.17(d)(2), Appalachian will publish public notice of the filing of the FLA twice in the *Galax Gazette*, a weekly newspaper in circulation in the City of Galax and Carroll County, Virginia. The public notices will be published within 14 days of the filing of this FLA (i.e., on or before March 13, 2022).

Summary of Measures Proposed in the FLA

In addition to upgrades to turbine-generator units at both developments, the FLA provides for PM&E measures related to aquatic species and habitat and recreation associated with the Project. Proposals presented by in the FLA reflect careful consideration of available information, the results of studies conducted, and issues specific to the Project. Appalachian believes that the proposed PM&E measures as described in the FLA adequately take into consideration the important power and non-power values of the Project, the diverse interests of stakeholders, and the physical and social context of the Project.

The Applicant is proposing to continue the fundamental operation of the Project and to implement certain resource enhancements, including:

- Continue to operate the Project in a run-of-river mode, maintaining the Byllesby reservoir between EL. 2,078.2 ft and 2,079.2 ft and the Buck reservoir between EL. 2,002.4 ft and 2,003.4 ft.
- Continue funding of the USGS New River at Galax and Ivanhoe gages.
- Continue to provide a minimum flow of 360 cfs, or inflow to the Project, whichever is less, to the New River downstream of each powerhouse.
- Implement a modified ramping rate for spillway gate operations at the Buck Development; whereby, following periods of spill when a spillway gate has been opened 2 ft or more, water will continue to be released into the bypass reach through a 2-ft-gate opening for at least 2 hours, then the gate opening will be reduced to 1.0 ft for 2 hours and then to 0.5 ft for 2 hours before closing.
- Develop and implement a Bypass Reach Aquatic Resources Protection Plan in consultation with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR) and for FERC approval. The Bypass Reach Aquatic Resources Protection Plan will include provisions for the spillway gate and ramping rate procedures, measures to identify and address (through visual inspection and relocation, if appropriate) isolated incidents of fish stranding in isolated pools along the left descending bank in the Buck bypass reach, and measures to reduce impacts of scheduled powerhouse outages.

- Conduct Project maintenance and new license implementation activities, as applicable, in accordance with the USFWS's prevailing eagle management guidance and regulations.
- Finalize and implement the Recreation Management Plan (RMP) in consultation with Project stakeholders, including provisions for improvements to existing Project facilities (Byllesby Boat Launch, Byllesby Dam Fishing Access, Byllesby Canoe Portage (Take-Out), New River Canoe Launch (Put-In), and Buck Canoe Portage (Take-Out and Put-In) as well as construction of the Non-Project Loafer's Rest Area and Fishing Trail.
- Finalize and implement the HPMP in consultation with consulting parties.

Closing

On behalf of Appalachian, thank you to the Commission staff and relicensing participants for participation throughout this process. Appalachian looks forward to continuing to work with FERC and relicensing participants through the last phase of the ILP and toward the timely issuance of a new license for the Project.

If there are any questions regarding this filing, please do not hesitate to contact me at (540) 985-2441 or via email at ebparcell@aep.com.

Sincerely,



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