

138 FERC ¶ 62,015
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County

Project No. 637-043

ORDER APPROVING STEHEKIN AREA EMISSIONS 5-YEAR REPORT

(January 11, 2012)

1. On November 3, 2011, and supplemented on November 17, 2011, Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County (Chelan PUD or licensee) licensee for the Lake Chelan Hydroelectric Project (FERC No. 637), filed a Stehekin Area Dust Emissions Report (report) pursuant to the project's approved Stehekin Area Implementation Plan and article 403 of the Order on Offer of Settlement and Issuing New License.¹ The project is located on the Chelan River, near the City of Chelan, in Chelan County, Washington. The project occupies 465.5 acres of federal lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS).
2. On May 6, 2008, the Commission issued an Order Modifying and Approving Stehekin Area Implementation Plan under Article 403.² The plan includes provisions required under article 403 (c) for the licensee to file a report for Commission approval in years 5, 10, 15, and 20 of the license detailing the measures implemented to reduce dust emissions within Stehekin Flats, results of the total suspended particulate sampling, and any recommendations for additional measures to achieve a reduction in the magnitude and duration of dust events by 50 percent by year 20 of the license. Further, the article and plan require the report be developed in consultation with the NPS.
3. The report notes two potential approaches to dust abatement: placement of large woody debris as windbreaks, and irrigation of the primary dust source areas (approximately 19 acres). The report states that both Chelan PUD and NPS have reservations about anchoring woody debris on the lakebed as it may present a hazard when placed in a popular area for recreational boating. The preferred approach to dust abatement is some form of irrigation to dampen the primary dust source areas. During 2008 and 2009, the NPS investigated various options for irrigation systems and water

¹ 117 FERC ¶ 62,129 (2006).

² 123 FERC ¶ 62,100 (2008).

sources. NPS also carefully observed changing conditions on the flats in order to better delineate the dust source area(s) so that irrigation resources might be better utilized.

4. In addition to irrigation testing, the report notes that testing activities also addressed sediment accumulation. In 2010, a nephelometer was purchased to measure suspended particulates (TSP) and measure wind speed and direction. The dust emissions plan objective is to reduce the duration of dust events and the concentration of TSP measured at Stehekin Landing during dust events by at least 25 percent within the first ten years of the license period, to reach 50 percent reduction by year 20, and to continue at that level or better for the remainder of the license. Results of further testing will be included in the 2016, 5-year report.

5. The report notes that current and recent testing and weather observation support the determination that an appropriately designed irrigation system does have good potential for mitigating dust development. Normal year-to-year variations in the lake level cycle and weather can produce major differences in the dust source area and the frequency and severity of dust events. Further, these naturally occurring effects will require additional study and may slow further testing and development due to the natural cycle of weather related events.

6. Based on the report findings, proposed next steps include: 1) pursuit of a well designed irrigation system solution covering the key dust source area; 2) plan and design of an appropriate water source that may include a well; 3) further evaluation, with NPS, of the 2011 spring testing and determination as to whether additional testing may be required; 4) determination and securing of appropriate water source rights; and 5) construction of an irrigation system and further monitoring of its performance.

7. Chelan PUD provided a record of NPS email communications for the period between February 5, 2009 and November 2, 2011 detailing consultation and exchange of information in preparation of the report. A draft of the report, dated November 3, 2011, was distributed to the NPS. The NPS has not provided any comments on the report.

8. The report takes into account the effects of dust emissions from Stehekin flats, documents research, testing and mitigation measures undertaken in close consultation with the NPS, and provides for continued testing and permanent mitigation measures. The licensee's report is consistent with the approved plan and the requirements of article 403 (c), and should be approved.

The Director orders:

(A) Public Utility District No. 1 of Chelan County's Stehekin Area Dust Emissions Report, filed on November 3, 2011, for the Lake Chelan Hydroelectric Project, No. 637, is approved.

(B) This order constitutes final agency action. Any party may file a request for rehearing of this order within 30 days from the date of issuance, as provided in sections 313(a) of the FPA, 16 U.S.C. § 8251 (2006), and the Commission's regulations at 18 C.F.R. § 385.713 (2011). The filing of a request for rehearing does not operate as a stay of the effective date of this order, or of any other date specified in this order. The licensee's failure to file a request for rehearing shall constitute acceptance of this order.

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Administration and Compliance