

Friday, February 25, 2011

The Honorable Kimberly D. Bose
Secretary
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First St. NE
Washington, DC 20426

Subject: Stakeholder concerns and comments on the Martin Hydroelectric Project (FERC Project No. 349) Integrated Relicensing Process.

Dear Secretary Bose:

On behalf of the undersigned individuals and organizations, I am writing regarding the Martin Integrated Relicensing Process (Martin Project) and to raise concerns that we, as stakeholders, have with the restrictions on collaborative opportunities available to stakeholders in the process. While not mandatory, Alabama Power Company has vocally embraced the primary goals of the Integrated Licensing Process (ILP); “Increased public involvement” and to “facilitate and encourage cooperation and involvement of as many interested stakeholders as early as possible.” *Ideas for Implementing and Participating in the Integrated Licensing Process (ILP): Tools for Industry, Agencies, Tribes, Non-Governmental Organizations, Citizens, and FERC Staff*, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, Office of Energy Projects, pp 7-8 (February 2006).

Unfortunately, in the Martin Project, these goals have been undermined in an effort to speed through the process and to maximize operations for Hydropower utility. While we appreciate that Alabama Power has expended considerable time and resources in hosting the various Martin Interest Group (MIG) meetings, merely holding meetings and checking off the requirements of the ILP timeline are not sufficient to ensure meaningful stakeholder participation. We have patiently and diligently participated throughout this process and after reviewing the Preliminary License Proposal (PLP), we are uniformly dismayed that so many of our interests and concerns have not been adequately addressed.

The signatory stakeholder groups shown below have interests that are varied, diverse and in some cases conflicting, but we feel strongly enough about the future of Lake Martin and the Tallapoosa River to come together in this appeal for consideration by FERC. A particularly striking example of the breakdown in the process is the collapse of the Multi-Criteria Decision Analysis (MCDA) process in which the MCDA was promoted as an opportunity for stakeholders to have a meaningful role in determining potential rule curve changes. One of the stated goals of the MCDA in the MCDA Summary to Stakeholders document is to, “Develop an objective and defensible basis for selecting 2 or 3 preferred alternatives that will be further evaluated with respect to potential protection, mitigation, and enhancement measures.” Because non-applicant stakeholders were excluded from the development of the model, the decision making exercise resulted in a significant group of stakeholders being in absolute opposition to a seemingly predetermined result. Alabama Power has since remained recalcitrant in its refusal to re-open the model for meaningful stakeholder input.

As we move forward, we sincerely hope that we can work together towards a new license which provides for Hydropower while restoring, protecting, and enhancing our Tallapoosa River and Lake Martin. In accordance with this desire we would like set up a meeting between yourself, the utility, and the Stakeholder community to discuss these issues and to chart our way through the remainder of the relicensing process. To schedule a meeting, please feel free to contact me at any time at 205.322.6395 or by email at mreid@alabamarivers.org.

Sincerely,



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On Behalf of:

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