

# Public Notice

August 29, 2007

## US Army Corps of Engineers Charleston District

### Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Proposed Santee Cooper Pee Dee Electrical Generating Station near Kingsburg, SC and Notice of Scoping Meeting, P/N 2006-3574-SIB

Following the December 22, 2006, publication of the Public Notice for the proposed construction of the Pee Dee Electrical Generating Station facility, the South Carolina Public Service Authority (Santee Cooper) was advised and has agreed that based on the significant social, economic and environmental effects associated with the proposed construction, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be prepared by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), Charleston District.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Corps has sent a Notice of Intent to be published in the Federal Register. This Notice of Intent informs the public of the location and time of the *Public Scoping Meetings*. However, in order to insure that all concerned individuals are notified, this local public notice is being issued to announce the *Public Scoping Meetings* on September 25 and 27, 2007.

<b>WHAT</b>	<i>Public Scoping Meetings</i>	
<b>WHEN</b>	September 25, 2007 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm	September 27, 2007 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm
<b>WHERE</b>	Coastal Carolina University Recital Hall Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts Conway, South Carolina	South Florence High School Commons Area and Auditorium 3200 South Irby Street Florence, South Carolina
	Map directions to each meeting location are included in Attachment A	
<b>WHY</b>	The Corps requests input and comments from the public in order to evaluate the Santee Cooper proposed Pee Dee Electrical Generating Station in an EIS.	
<b>Comment Deadline</b>	October 26, 2007 (30 days after the <i>Public Scoping Meeting</i> )	

**Background:** When any applicant, in this case the Santee Cooper, applies to the Corps for a Department of the Army permit, the Corps evaluates the application in accordance with the policies and procedures that are established in the National Environmental

Policy Act, which is commonly referred to as NEPA. The law is the “basic national charter for protection of the environment” and it contains provisions to ensure that federal agencies (the Corps in this case) carry out the policies of NEPA in accordance with its letter and spirit. NEPA also required the establishment of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which issued regulations that federal agencies must use to implement NEPA. These regulations instruct federal agencies on what they must do to comply with the process and procedures outlined in the NEPA. One of the basic tenets of these regulations is that comprehensive information is made available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken. This comprehensive information must be of high quality and contain accurate scientific analysis. There are two forms in which this information can be documented: an Environmental Assessment (EA) or a more in-depth document entitled an EIS. Both of these documents must identify and evaluate the issues that are truly significant to the action in question. The process that leads to the preparation of these documents is called the *NEPA process*. Essential to the NEPA process are expert agency comments and public input. The NEPA process is intended to help public officials (in this case the Corps) make decisions that are based on an understanding of the environmental consequences, and take actions that protect, restore and enhance the environment.

As indicated above, the Corps has determined that it will prepare an EIS. The EIS will be prepared in two stages, a Draft EIS and a Final EIS. Both of these documents will be circulated for public comment and a public hearing will be held after the circulation of the DEIS. Ultimately, when the Corps is prepared to make a final decision on the application, we will prepare a Record of Decision (ROD).

**Scoping:** One of the first ways that the public can participate in the NEPA process is called “scoping”. Scoping is an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action. In order to ensure that everyone is heard and that there is open communication, the Corps will hold two formal “Public Scoping Meetings”. The purpose of the Public Scoping Meetings is for the public to provide input to the Corps on the scope (see paragraph #4 under **Existing Information** for a clarification of this term) of the issues to be addressed in the EIS, to identify the potential social, economic, and environmental impacts related to the proposed project, and identify potential alternatives to the proposed project. This meeting is not a public hearing nor is it the proper forum to express broad-ranging opinions, either pro or con, about the proposed project. The sole purpose is to identify specific issues on which to focus during the development of the EIS.

As previously indicated, the public’s input is essential to the NEPA process in identifying significant issues, offering relevant information based on personal experience or knowledge, and providing assistance in defining the scope of the EIS. Upon arrival at the Public Scoping Meeting, each attendee will be asked to sign in and indicate whether they would like to make comments at the meeting. In addition to, or in lieu of, oral comments, attendees are welcome to bring written comments or complete a provided comment form. Written comments will be accepted at the meeting or up to 30 days after the date of the

meeting, in this case October 26, 2007. Information on how to submit written comments will be provided at the meeting and below in this public notice.

**How can YOU assist the Corps in complying with the letter and spirit of NEPA and be an active participant in the NEPA process?**

At the meeting, you are encouraged to offer **YOUR** input on the issues you think should be evaluated in the EIS. The following topics may help you identify the issues important to you.

- What are the potential impacts of the proposed project?
- What is the “scope” of the EIS?
- Are there potential alternative electrical generating strategies, locations, layouts, and construction methods available that may have fewer impacts to the natural and human environment?
- In what ways do you foresee the proposed project affecting YOU, YOUR community, and/or the environment?
- Are there methods of communication, which the Corps has not considered, that could keep you better informed on the permit application and EIS process?
- What criteria should the Corps utilize to choose which alternatives should be fully assessed in the EIS?

NOTE: So that the Corps can hear everyone who wants to provide their input at the Public Scoping Meetings, a time limit will be placed on each speaker. Therefore, it is essential that you prepare your oral comments so that you can provide the input that you deem important. Written comments will also be accepted by the Corps through October 26, 2007.

**Existing Information.** In order to assist you in providing us with your comments and input during the scoping process, we have listed some of the information that we currently know.

1. The Applicant’s Proposed Project. The project proposed by Santee Cooper is to construct a coal-fired electrical generating station with associated facilities on the Great Pee Dee River, in Florence County, SC. The proposed facility will involve the installation of an intake and discharge structure in the Great Pee Dee River in the vicinity of the Bostic Landing and this public notice will refer to the proposed project as the Pee Dee Station. The Pee Dee Station development will include the generating station structure and facilities that include intake and discharge structures, solid waste landfills, ash ponds, onsite-rail, rail switchyard, transmission lines, cooling towers, and roads. In total, approximately 93.75 acres of jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional wetlands may be impacted to construct the proposed Pee Dee Station. Construction of the Pee Dee Station may require filling an estimated 9.45 acres of jurisdictional wetlands and 5.10 acres of fill in non-jurisdictional wetlands, 8.14 acres of mechanized land clearing in jurisdictional wetlands, 2.32 acres mechanized land clearing in non-jurisdictional wetlands, and 0.67 acres of excavation in waters of the United States. Construction/upgrade of the rail line extension may require filling of 4.49 acres of jurisdictional wetlands and 4.90 acres of mechanized clearing. Construction of the transmission line may involve converting an

estimated 58.68 acres of jurisdictional wetlands from forested wetlands to scrub shrub wetlands. Construction drawings provided by the applicant were included in the original public notice of December 22, 2006, and are available on Charleston District's public website at <http://www.sac.usace.army.mil/?action=publicnotices.pn2006>.

2. Issues. At this time, the Corps has made a preliminary list of issues that may be addressed in the EIS. Issues associated with the proposed project to be given significant analysis in the DEIS are likely to include, but may not be limited to, the potential impacts of the proposed excavation, placement of fill, construction and operation of the proposed generating station and development of associated surface transportation, and related developments on the following: conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, flood plain values, land use, navigation, shore erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, air quality, energy needs, public health and safety, hazardous wastes and materials, food and fiber production, mineral needs, considerations of property ownership, environmental justice and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people. This preliminary list of issues is provided in tabular format in Attachment B for your convenience and to assist you in organizing your comments.
  
3. Alternatives. The alternatives analysis "is the heart of the EIS". That phrase is quoted directly from NEPA. The Corps must evaluate *reasonable* and *practicable* alternatives to the project as proposed by Santee Cooper that will avoid or minimize effects on the quality of the human environment. "*Reasonable*" alternatives are those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint and using common sense, rather than simply desirable from the standpoint of the applicant. "*Practicable*" alternatives are those that are available and capable of being done after taking into consideration cost, existing technology, and logistics in light of overall project purposes.

When determining which alternatives to the applicant's proposal should be rigorously explored and objectively evaluated in the EIS, the Corps will assess at least the following:

- The potential for modification of existing Santee Cooper facilities to meet the purpose and need of the proposed project
- Alternative locations within the jurisdictional authority (service area) of Santee Cooper where the proposed generating station might be developed,
- Alternative facility layouts for the proposed generating station,
- Alternative fuel sources to power the generating station
- Mitigation measures

- No Action

The “No Action” alternative means that the proposed activity would not take place. This alternative is used to compare the effects of the proposed project to what would occur if the proposed project were not constructed. Keep in mind that the effects from the proposed project will not be compared to conditions that exist today; the effects will be compared to the projected future conditions. For example, if the project was not constructed, the need for power in the Pee Dee Region would continue to grow in the future; it would not stay the way it is today. Therefore, a specific period of time in the future will be chosen and projections will be made on what the conditions will be at that time and THAT is what we will use to compare the proposed project’s effects under the “No Action” alternative.

Of course, every alternative location cannot be rigorously explored in the EIS. Therefore, the Corps will utilize criteria to identify those alternatives that should be rigorously explored. Your input on what those criteria should be is requested as part of the scoping process.

4. Scope. The terms “scoping”, “scoping process” or “scoping meeting” should not be confused with the term “scope”. “Scope” is the term used to define the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be considered in an EIS. There are three types of actions, three types of alternatives and three types of impacts that the Corps must consider in determining the “scope” of an EIS.

3 types of **Actions:**

- Connected (closely related)
- Cumulative (viewed with other proposed actions)
- Similar (common timing or geography, etc)

3 types of **Alternatives:**

- No Action
- Other reasonable Courses of Action to achieve the project purpose
- Mitigation Measures (not in the proposed action)

3 types of **Impacts:**

- Direct
- Indirect
- Cumulative

A description of each one of these “types” is found at Attachment C of the Public Notice.

**Public Outreach Program.** The Corps wants you to be involved throughout the NEPA process. At present, we are planning to use the following methods to keep you informed

and get your input. Therefore, please remember to let us know at the Public Scoping Meeting(s) and/or in your written comments, the method by which you prefer to obtain information and provide input during the process.

A) Project Website: [www.peedeepowereis.com](http://www.peedeepowereis.com). Information and updates on the project will be available on the project website. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), descriptions of the proposed project, explanation of terminology, project status, project schedule, meeting announcements, directions to meeting locations and overview of the NEPA process are examples of the information that will be available at the project website. Visitors to the website will also be able to register for the project mailing list, sign up for an e-mail notification system and submit comments via a standard comment form.

B) Public Meetings. Public information meetings will be held to provide information to stakeholders about the proposed project. It is our current plan to announce these meetings on the website, hotline and through the mailing list.

C) Workshops. Stakeholder meetings/workshops will be held after the Public Scoping Meetings and other comments are collected and sorted. Invitations to a stakeholder workshop will be distributed to certain interest groups and non-governmental organizations. If you are a representative of a group or organization that you believe is a stakeholder in the proposed project, please make yourself known to the Corps at the Public Scoping Meeting(s) and/or via written comments following the Meeting(s).

D) Newsletters. Newsletters will be distributed at certain milestones during the NEPA process in order to update the public on the status of the EIS and the Corps decision-making process. Newsletters will feature a project status update, articles explaining aspects of NEPA and updates on studies being performed for the EIS evaluation.

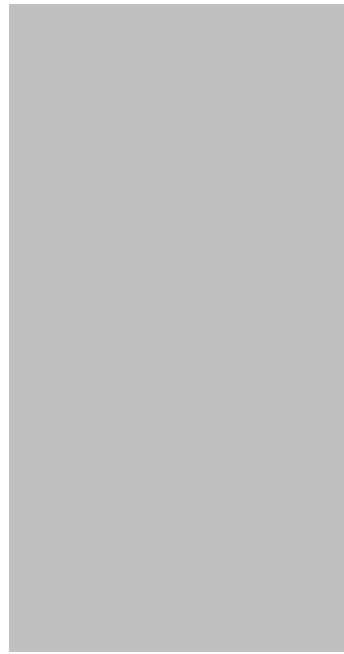
**Water Quality Certification.** The District Engineer has concluded that the discharges associated with this project, both direct and indirect, should be reviewed by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) in accordance with provisions of Section 401 of the Clean Water Act. The District Engineer will not process this application to a conclusion until such certification is received.

**Contact Information.** If there are any questions regarding this public notice, please contact me at (843) 329-8043 or toll free at 1-866-329-8187, or the mailing address included below. However, the Corps respectfully requests that comments regarding the proposed electrical generating station and the NEPA process be submitted in one of the following ways:

1. at the Public Scoping Meetings
2. written comments submitted by October 26, 2007
3. accessing the website, [www.peedeepowereis.com](http://www.peedeepowereis.com)

Using one or more of these methods will ensure that your comments are made a part of the Corps' formal record for the proposed electrical generating station. For inquiries from the media, please contact the Corps, Charleston District Public Affairs Officer (PAO), Ms. Connie Gillette.

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**ATTACHMENT A**









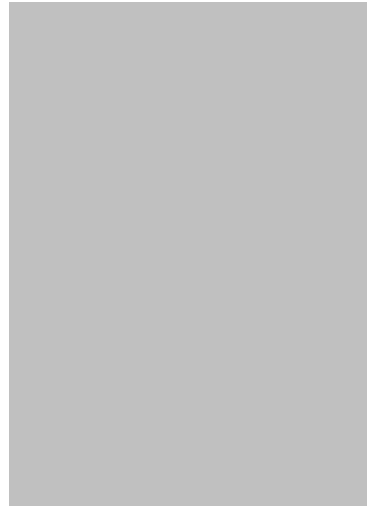
**ATTACHMENT B**



## **Preliminary List of Issues That May Be Addressed In The EIS**

(Space Has Been Inserted To Afford You Room To Organize Your Comments)

Conservation	Economics
Aesthetics	General Environmental Concerns
Wetlands	Historic Properties
Fish and Wildlife Values	Flood Hazards
Flood Plain Values	Land Use
Navigation	Shore Erosion and Accretion
Recreation	Water Supply and Conservation
Water Quality	Air Quality
Energy Needs	Public Health and Safety
Hazardous Wastes and Materials	Food and Fiber Production
Mineral Needs	Considerations of Property Ownership
Needs and Welfare of the People	Environmental Justice



**ATTACHMENT C**



## DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 3 Types of Actions:

- **Connected Actions**, which means that they are **closely related** and therefore should be discussed in the same impact statement. Actions are connected if they:
  - automatically trigger other actions which may require Environmental Impact Statements
  - cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously
  - are independent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification
  
- **Cumulative Actions**, which when **viewed with other proposed actions** have cumulatively significant impacts and should therefore be discussed in the same impact statement
  
- **Similar Actions**, which when viewed with other reasonably foreseeable or proposed agency actions, have similarities that provide a basis for evaluating their environmental consequences together, such as **common timing or geography**. An agency may wish to analyze these actions in the same impact statement. It should do so when the best way to assess adequately the combined impacts of similar actions or reasonable alternatives to such actions is to treat them in a single impact statement.

### 3 types of Alternatives:

- **No Action Alternative**
- **Other Reasonable Courses of Action**
- **Mitigation Measures (not in the proposed action) Include:**
  - Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action
  - Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation
  - Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment
  - Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action
  - Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

### 3 Types of Impacts

- **Direct Effects**, which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place
- **Indirect Effects**, which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to the induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

*Effects* and *impacts* as used in the context of NEPA are synonymous. Effects includes ecological (such as the effects on natural resources and on the components, structures, and functioning of affected ecosystems), aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic, social, or health, whether direct, indirect, or cumulative. Effects may also include those resulting from actions which may have both beneficial and detrimental effects, even if on balance the agency believes that the effect will be beneficial.

- **Cumulative Impact**, is the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.