

(c) The Department of Agriculture may pay for the settlement or compromise of a personal damage claim against a Department employee by the payment of available funds, at any time, provided that the Secretary or the Secretary's designee determines, in his or her discretion, that the alleged conduct giving rise to the personal damage claim was taken within the scope of the employee's employment, and such settlement or compromise is in the interest of the United States.

(d) Absent exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Secretary or his or her designee, the Department will not entertain a request to agree to indemnify or pay for a settlement of a personal damage claim before entry of an adverse judgment, verdict, or other monetary award.

(e) When a Department employee becomes aware that an action has been filed against the employee in his or her individual capacity as a result of conduct taken within the scope of his or her employment, the employee should immediately notify his or her supervisor that such an action is pending. The supervisor shall promptly thereafter notify the Office of the General Counsel.

(f) A Department employee may request indemnification to satisfy a verdict, judgment, or monetary award entered against the employee or to satisfy the requirements of a settlement proposal. The employee shall submit a written request, with appropriate documentation that includes a copy of the verdict, judgment, award or settlement proposal, as appropriate, to the head of his or her employing component, who shall thereupon submit it to the General Counsel, in a timely manner, a recommended disposition of the request. The Office of the General Counsel shall seek the views of the Department of Justice. The Office of the General Counsel shall forward the employee's request, the employing component's recommendation, and the General Counsel's recommendation, along with the time frame in which a decision is needed, to the Secretary or his or her designee for decision. The Secretary or his or her designee will decide promptly whether to indemnify or pay

for a settlement of a personal damage claim.

(g) Any payment under this section to indemnify a Department employee for a personal damage verdict, judgment, or award or to settle a personal damage claim shall be contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds of the employing component of the United States Department of Agriculture.

Subpart O—Conditions in FERC Hydropower Licenses

AUTHORITY: 16 U.S.C. 797(e), 811, 823d.

SOURCE: 70 FR 69817, Nov. 17, 2005, unless otherwise noted.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

§ 1.601 What is the purpose of this subpart, and to what license proceedings does it apply?

(a) *Hearing process.* (1) The regulations in §§1.601 through 1.660 contain rules of practice and procedure applicable to hearings on disputed issues of material fact with respect to mandatory conditions that the Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (Forest Service) may develop for inclusion in a hydropower license issued under subchapter I of the Federal Power Act (FPA), 16 U.S.C. 791 *et seq.* The authority to develop these conditions is granted by FPA section 4(e), 16 U.S.C. 797(e), which authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to condition hydropower licenses issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

(2) The hearing process under this subpart does not apply to recommendations that the Forest Service may submit to FERC under FPA section 10(a), 16 U.S.C. 803(a).

(3) The FPA also grants the Department of the Interior the authority to develop mandatory conditions and prescriptions, and the Department of Commerce the authority to develop mandatory prescriptions, for inclusion in a hydropower license. Where the Forest Service USDA and either or both of these other Departments develop conditions or prescriptions to be included in the same hydropower license and where the Departments agree to consolidate the hearings under § 1.623:

§ 1.602

(i) A hearing conducted under this subpart will also address disputed issues of material fact with respect to any condition or prescription developed by one of the other Departments; or

(ii) A hearing requested under this subpart will be conducted by one of the other Departments, pursuant to 43 CFR 45.1 *et seq.* or 50 CFR 221.1 *et seq.*, as applicable.

(4) The regulations in §§ 1.601 through 1.660 will be construed and applied to each hearing process to achieve a just and speedy determination, consistent with adequate consideration of the issues involved and the provisions of § 1.660(a).

(b) *Alternatives process.* The regulations in §§ 1.670 through 1.673 contain rules of procedure applicable to the submission and consideration of alternative conditions under FPA section 33, 16 U.S.C. 823d. That section allows any party to the license proceeding to propose an alternative to a condition deemed necessary by the Forest Service under section 4(e).

(c) *Reservation of authority.* Where the Forest Service notifies FERC that it is reserving its authority to develop one or more conditions during the term of the license, the hearing and alternatives processes under this subpart for such conditions will be available if and when the Forest Service exercises its reserved authority. The Forest Service will consult with FERC and notify the license parties regarding how to initiate the hearing process and alternatives process at that time.

(d) *Applicability.* (1) This subpart applies to any hydropower license proceeding for which the license has not been issued as of November 17, 2005 and for which one or more preliminary conditions or conditions have been or are filed with FERC.

(2) If the Forest Service has already filed one or more preliminary conditions or conditions as of November 17, 2005, the special applicability provisions of § 1.604 also apply.

§ 1.602 What terms are used in this subpart?

As used in this subpart:

ALJ means an administrative law judge appointed under 5 U.S.C. 3105 and

7 CFR Subtitle A (1-1-08 Edition)

assigned to preside over the hearing process under this subpart.

Alternative means a condition that a license party other than the Forest Service or another Department develops as an alternative to a preliminary condition from the Forest Service or another Department, under FPA sec. 33, 16 U.S.C. 823d.

Condition means a condition under FPA sec. 4(e), 16 U.S.C. 797(e), for the adequate protection and utilization of a reservation.

Day means a calendar day.

Department means the Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, or Department of the Interior.

Discovery means a prehearing process for obtaining facts or information to assist a party in preparing or presenting its case.

Ex parte communication means an oral or written communication to the ALJ that is made without providing all parties reasonable notice and an opportunity to participate.

FERC means the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Forest Service means the USDA Forest Service.

FPA means the Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. 791 *et seq.*

Hearing Clerk means the Hearing Clerk, USDA, 1400 Independence Ave., SW., Washington, DC 20250; phone: 202-720-4443, facsimile: 202-720-9776.

Intervention means a process by which a person who did not request a hearing under § 1.621 can participate as a party to the hearing under § 1.622.

License party means a party to the license proceeding, as that term is defined at 18 CFR 385.102(c).

License proceeding means a proceeding before FERC for issuance of a license for a hydroelectric facility under 18 CFR parts 4 or 5.

Material fact means a fact that, if proved, may affect a Department's decision whether to affirm, modify, or withdraw any condition or prescription.

NEPA document means an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement issued to comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*