

**Susitna-Watana Hydroelectric Project  
(FERC No. 14241)**

**Health Impact Assessment Study  
Study Plan Section 15.8**

**Initial Study Report  
Part C: Executive Summary and Section 7**

Prepared for

Alaska Energy Authority



**SUSITNA-WATANA HYDRO**

*Clean, reliable energy for the next 100 years.*

Prepared by

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health Impact Assessment Study 15.8	
Purpose	The Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a structured planning and decision-making process for analyzing the potential positive and negative impacts of the Project on the health of residents in impacted communities. The overall goal of the HIA is to reduce potential negative health effects while maximizing the health benefits of an action. The hallmark of a comprehensive HIA is the collection of new data, to address critical data gaps that have been identified during the scoping process.
Status	The HIA is currently in Phase 2: Baseline Data Collection. An analysis of available federal/state/regional/tribal/community/household level health data was initiated that will proceed in 2014 and 2015. Data collected by other Project studies will be included where such studies will produce baseline data that may inform the HIA.
Study Components	<p>The major components of an HIA include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify potentially affected communities (PACs) and establish a community engagement plan.</li> <li>• Identify public issues and concerns regarding how community health might be affected during construction and operation of the Project.</li> <li>• Collect baseline health data at the state, borough, or census area level, tribal level, and PAC level, as available.</li> <li>• Identify data gaps and determine the most efficient method to fill those gaps, through community consultation and coordination with other interdependent studies.</li> <li>• Evaluate the baseline data against the Project description to initially determine the nature and extent of potential impact pathways, both positive and negative.</li> </ul>
2013 Variances	There were no variances to the study plan in 2013.
Steps to Complete the Study	The plans to complete the study include performing health interviews during 2014 scheduled ADF&G household harvest subsistence surveys. The remainder of the study effort will be performed in 2015 and include performing the remainder of the Phase 2 baseline data collection and Phase 3 identification of potential impact mechanisms and effects.
Highlighted Results and Achievements	This report designates PACs by Health Effect Category (HEC), based upon potential impacts scoped during Phase 1 of the HIA (Overview and Issues process). The ISR also provides an overall summary of baseline health data collected to date, important data gaps identified, and how these gaps may be filled by the other AEA interdependent studies.

## 7. COMPLETING THE STUDY

### 7.1 Proposed Methodologies and Modifications

As specified in RSP Section 15.8.4, AEA will implement the methods in the Study Plan except as described in Section 7.1.2. These activities include:

- Perform key informant health interviews during ADF&G household harvest subsistence surveys.
- Review all interdependent ISRs with results relevant for HIA input and continue to communicate with study leads regarding these results.
- Continue follow up as appropriate with key informant interviews in Health related PACs after TLK workshop process to identify cultural health beliefs and concerns.
- Continue to fill baseline data gaps identified during the ISR process, and develop methodology to fill data gaps, as appropriate, where no data currently exists.
- Identify potential impact mechanisms and potential health effects to provide input into Project design, construction, transportation routes, housing, etc.

#### 7.1.1. Decision Points from Study Plan

There were no decision points in the FERC-approved Study Plan to be evaluated for this study following the completion of 2013 work.

#### 7.1.2. Modifications to Study Plan

As described in Section 4.7 of this report, the specific health impacts for the Project will be identified when specific components of the Project have been defined to be included in AEA's proposal for the Project in its License Application to FERC. The assessment of impacts will need to conform with AEA's final proposal developed for its license application to the FERC. This information will not be available in 2014 or 2015 but will be available in 2016 as the study program is informing AEA on its licensing proposal.

The HIA Phase 3 work (Identification of Potential Impact Mechanisms and Effects) will therefore identify general impacts and mechanisms that may provide input into the overall Project design, construction, transportation route selection, worker housing plans, etc. Potential health impacts will then be further assessed in the license application phase once the complete Project proposal is available. As described in Section 4.7, the HIA analysis in 2013 - 2015 will not serve as a final HIA for the Project; however, the analysis can be updated and included in the FERC License Application once the AEA Project proposal is finalized. The USR, therefore will not describe specific impacts or include a ranking and rating but will include a "high level" overview of potential impact mechanisms and effects. This modification will achieve the study objective outlined in Section 2: "Evaluate the baseline data against the Project description to

initially determine the nature and extent of potential impact pathways, both positive and negative.”

## **7.2 Schedule**

AEA expects to complete this study during 2014 and 2015. The work in 2014 is limited to participating in scheduled ADF&G household harvest surveys by conducting community health interviews. The remainder of all other tasks under Phase 2 Baseline Data Collection and Phase 3 Identification of Potential Impact Mechanisms and Effects will be accomplished in 2015 and reported in the USR.

## **7.3 Conclusion**

Implementation of the Health Impact Assessment Study is proposed to occur in 2014 and 2015 with most of the effort in 2015. The work in 2014 is limited to participation with scheduled ADF&G household harvest surveys. The proposed study modifications involve re-orienting the efforts in the impact assessment component of the study to outline general impacts and mechanisms that may provide input into the overall Project design, construction, transportation route selection, worker housing plans, etc. A full Health Impact Assessment will be developed once AEA develops its licensing proposal with specific information that can then be used to define the likely health impact considerations. AEA expects study objectives to be fully achieved and reported in the USR.