

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

**Proposal to Eliminate the Chulitna Corridor  
from Further Study**



Prepared by  
Alaska Energy Authority

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## PROPOSAL TO ELIMINATE THE CHULITNA CORRIDOR FROM FURTHER STUDY

The Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) is in the pre-application phase of a federal licensing process before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for the licensing of the Susitna-Watana Hydro Project (Project). As part of this licensing process, AEA originally proposed and has been evaluating three access and transmission corridors: the Gold Creek Corridor, which would run south of the Susitna River and extend to the Gold Creek area; the Denali Corridor, which would run due north for a distance of about 44 miles to the Denali Highway, with a transmission line continuing east to connect near the community of Cantwell; and the Chulitna Corridor, which would run north of the Susitna River and extend to the Chulitna rail siding area.

Throughout this licensing process, AEA has continued to evaluate and refine its Project proposal and explore various options for its licensing and development. In its June 2014 Initial Study Report (ISR), AEA explained that this continuing effort has led AEA to pursue the study of an additional alternative north-south corridor alignment for transmission and access from the dam site to the Denali Highway and the existing transmission line (Denali East Option). AEA also explained that, in addition to the inclusion of the Denali East Option, it was investigating the possibility of eliminating the Chulitna Corridor from further study.

As part of its continued evaluation of the Project, and based in part upon information obtained through the licensing process, AEA is proposing to eliminate the Chulitna Corridor from further detailed study. This AEA proposal is based primarily on a desire by AEA to avoid the need to cross Indian River and Portage Creek subwatersheds. Adoption of the Chulitna Corridor would require crossing Indian River and Portage Creek and paralleling Portage Creek for about 8 miles. Both streams contain important anadromous salmon spawning and rearing habitat (as described in Initial Study Report 9.13 (Salmon Escapement; [http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/09.07\\_ESCAPE\\_ISR\\_PartA.pdf](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/09.07_ESCAPE_ISR_PartA.pdf)) and Initial Study Report 9.06 (Fish Distribution and Abundance in the Middle Lower Susitna River; [http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/09.06\\_FDAML\\_ISR\\_PartA\\_1\\_of\\_5.pdf](http://www.susitna-watanahydro.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/09.06_FDAML_ISR_PartA_1_of_5.pdf))). In addition, the Chulitna corridor would require the road and transmission line routes to be located at higher elevations along more avalanche prone slopes than the other corridors and thus would not provide as reliable access and transmission operations as the other corridors.

Based upon AEA's proposal to eliminate the Chulitna Corridor from further consideration, AEA is proposing additional modifications to the FERC approved Study Plan as part of the ISR process under FERC's Integrated Licensing Process. Specifically, AEA is proposing to modify the study areas for Studies 4.5, 6.5, 9.13, 10.5, 10.8, 10.10, 10.11, 10.12, 10.14 – 10.17, 10.19, 11.5, 11.7 – 11.9, 12.5, 12.6, 13.5, 13.6, and 15.7 – 15.9 from that described in the Revised Study Plan. AEA is proposing to eliminate the Chulitna Corridor from the study area for those

studies. Furthermore, AEA proposes to not conduct any additional study activities within the Chulitna Corridor for those studies.

AEA is making this proposal at this time in order to provide licensing participants and the general public with the opportunity to comment on this proposal during the October ISR meetings or during the ISR comment period.

AEA will continue to evaluate the remaining alternate corridors, and will propose preferred access and transmission routes in the FERC license application. The ultimate proposal of preferred routes will be made based upon a thorough evaluation of all relevant environmental and engineering considerations, including, but not limited to: land ownership, potential environmental (including socioeconomic and cultural) impacts, cost, and technical and engineering feasibility. License participants and the public will have future opportunities to comment on the alternative corridor routes after AEA proposes a preferred access and transmission routes.