

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
K-57 SUBSTATION CONSTRUCTION
Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative, Geary County, Kansas
Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
Federal Emergency Management Agency
HMGP-DR-4640-02-KS

Flint Hills Rural Electric Cooperative (Flint Hills REC), located in Council Grove, Kansas, has applied to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for assistance with the construction of a new electric distribution substation in Geary County, Kansas through the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), as authorized by Section 404 of the Stafford Act.

Flint Hills REC purchased 15 acres of pastureland in 2023 to build the substation and associated structures. Less than 700 feet of 115kV transmission line will be constructed approximately two miles southeast of Grandview Plaza, Kansas, to provide the substation with a source of power. The new substation will be on a separate transmission grid and will be positioned between an existing substation in Grandview Plaza, Kansas, and an existing substation near Dwight, Kansas. When either of these substations lose power, the new substation to be built in this project will be able to provide backup power in Geary County. Since it is rare that both transmission services would be without power at the same time, construction of the new substation will substantially reduce the chances that long duration outages will occur in the project area. This project will also improve low voltage issues for customers at the distant ends of this service territory by reducing the distance between the customer and the source of power. The proposed K-57 Substation will serve all of Southern Geary County and will serve as a backup source of power for parts of Geary County served by the existing substations.

In accordance with FEMA Directive 108-1 and FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, an Environmental Assessment (EA) was prepared pursuant to Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The purpose of the EA was to analyze potential environmental impacts of the substation construction to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

As part of NEPA's public information process, a public notice with information about the availability of the Draft EA for public review and comment was published in the Junction City Union newspaper on August 21, 2024. The Public Notice and Draft EA were also posted on FEMA's website([here](#)) and on the Kansas Division of Emergency Management's website. A hard copy of the EA was made available for public review at the Flint Hills REC office and at FEMA's Region 7 office in Kansas City, Missouri. The notice stated that the K-57 Substation EA was available for a period of 30 days for the public to review the assessment and provide comment. The public comment period ended on October 4, 2024. Two comments were received, and considerations were incorporated into the final EA. In accordance with 44 CFR Part 9.12(c) the EA Public Notice of Availability will also constitute a final public notice for the Floodplain Analysis required by EO 11988, Floodplain Management.

Consistent with Executive Order 14154 (Unleashing American Energy), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is in the process of rescinding its NEPA implementing regulations and working with Federal agencies to revise or establish their own NEPA implementing procedures. Per CEQ Guidance, while revisions are ongoing agencies should continue to follow their existing practices and procedures implementing NEPA and can voluntarily rely on the regulation in 40 CFR 1500-1508 in completing ongoing NEPA reviews (Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act, February 19, 2025). Therefore, FEMA revised the final Flint Hills REC Substation EA to reflect this guidance. The EA was also updated to ensure compliance with EO 14148 Initial Recission of Harmful Executive Order and Actions (which revoked EOs 14030 and 13690 and overturned the Federal Flood Risk Management

Standard), and EO 14173 Ending Illegal Discrimination and Resorting Merit-based Opportunity (which revoked EO 12989 Environmental Justice). There were no changes to the analysis, determinations, or project conditions.

The public notice for the revised final EA was posted on the Flint Hills REC website and the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM) website on April 11, 2025. Due to the lack of substantive changes within the EA, the notice was submitted for an abbreviated 10-day comment period which ended April 21, 2025. No comments were received.

The Proposed Action, as described in the EA, will not result in any significant adverse impacts individually or cumulatively to geology, soils and seismicity; prime farmland; water quality; surface waters; floodplains; wetlands; vegetation; invasive species; fish, wildlife or avian species; threatened or endangered species; hazardous materials; public services and utilities; and cultural resources including archeological sites and historic structures within the project area. During the construction period, short-term impacts are anticipated to soils, Waters of the United States, floodplains, air quality, terrestrial and aquatic environments, wetlands, traffic, visual resources, noise, and safety. All anticipated short-term impacts will include conditions developed to minimize and mitigate impacts of the Proposed Action to the project site and surrounding areas.

The Proposed Action will be carried out in coordination with requirements of the Kansas Division of Emergency Management (KDEM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Kansas State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO) of Indian tribes with interests in the project area.

CONDITIONS

The following conditions were developed to mitigate the potential impacts of this project and must be met as a condition of project approval. Failure to comply with these conditions and the conditions contained in the EA may jeopardize obligation of federal funds:

- Erosion and sediment controls will be installed as needed during construction activities at the project site, including the use of silt fencing or geogrid slope stabilization techniques;
- If artifacts or human remains are found on site during construction or within borrow areas FEMA will be contacted immediately, Flint Hills REC will take all reasonable measures to protect the finds, work will cease in the area of discovery, and will not resume until FEMA consults with the SHPO and interested parties including Tribes;
- The proposed substation construction site does not have tree habitat suitable for roosting or hibernacula for the Northern long-eared bat and tree removal will not occur as part of the project activities. If the removal of trees is required to complete the project, Flint Hills REC must notify FEMA and coordinate with the USFWS before work begins.

FINDINGS

Based upon conditions and information contained in the HMGP grant application and the EA, and in accordance with FEMA's Directive 108-1-1, Environmental Planning and Historic Preservation Responsibilities and Program Requirements; EOs addressing floodplains (EO 11988), and wetlands (EO 11990); the DHS Instruction Manual 023-1-1;; and the Subrecipient's anticipated adherence to the standard and special conditions contained in this FONSI, FEMA has determined that the Proposed Action will not have significant impacts on the quality of the natural and human environment. As a result of this

FONSI, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared and the Proposed Action with the associated conditions described in the EA may proceed.

APPROVAL

**PORTIA M
ROSS** Digitally signed by
PORTIA M ROSS
Date: 2025.04.22
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April 22, 2025

Portia Ross
FEMA Environmental Officer

Date