

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

### Rural Development

#### **Big Rivers Electric Corporation (BREC): Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact**

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA

**ACTION:** Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

**SUMMARY:** The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance to Big Rivers Electric Corporation (BREC) for the proposed Transmission Operations Center (TOC) near 3740 U.S. Highway 60, Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky.

**FURTHER INFORMATION:** To obtain copies of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and FONSI, or for further information, contact: [RUSPublicComments@usda.gov](mailto:RUSPublicComments@usda.gov).

Copies of the EA, FONSI and supporting documentation are available for public review at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/transmission-operations-center-facility-project>

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The proposed transmission operations center will be placed on land owned by Big Rivers. The proposed project area is located off of Gradd Way in the City of Owensboro and consists of approximately 40 acres of farmland. The facility would include an office building, warehouse, enclosed and covered vehicle storage space, outdoor equipment storage, and a loading dock.

Alternatives considered by RUS and BREC included the No action and Action alternative. The alternatives are discussed in the Big Rivers Electric Corporation TOC EA. The RUS has reviewed and approved the EA for the proposed project.

A local newspaper advertisement announcing the availability of the EA and participation under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, was published on September 8, 11, and 12, 2023, in the Owensboro Messenger Inquirer, Owensboro, Kentucky. One public comment was received that expressed concerns about stormwater discharges to the Gilles Ditch watershed. However, the project area will discharge primarily to the north into the Persimmon Ditch with the remaining draining into an unnamed tributary and towards the south into Devins Ditch. A copy of the EA was available for public review at: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessment/transmission-operations-center-facility-project>

Based on the EA, commitments made by BREC and the public comment received, RUS has concluded that the project would have no significant impacts to water quality, wetlands, floodplains, land use, aesthetics, transportation, or human health and safety.

The proposed project will have no adverse effect on resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Agency has also concluded that the proposed project is not likely to affect federally listed threatened and endangered species

or designated critical habitat thereof. The proposed project would not disproportionately affect minority and/or low- income populations.

No other potential significant impacts resulting from the proposed project have been identified. Therefore, RUS has determined that this FONSI fulfills its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508), and USDA Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) for its action related to the project.

RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the proposed project have been adequately addressed. RUS' federal action would not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, and as such it will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its action related to the proposed project.

Dated: September 26, 2023