

following a tagged whale to observe its behavior), and controlled exposure to playbacks of a whale-finding sonar, airgun sounds, and/or sperm whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*) social vocalizations (codas). When the DTAGs are retrieved after release, small fragments of sloughed skin are often found in the suction cup. These tissue samples will be exported from field sites and imported for genetic analyses.

Project 1 will involve applying DTAGs to a variety of whale and dolphin species to study the baseline behavior of animals tagged throughout the North Atlantic. There are three main goals of Project 1: (1) to obtain continuous sampling of marine mammal vocal and motor behavior, (2) to determine correction factors that can be applied to visual sighting data to better estimate population and stock abundance, and (3) to serve as a control group for Projects 2 and 3, described below.

For Project 2, tagged whales and dolphins in the Mediterranean Sea will be used as test subjects in controlled tests of a whale-finding sonar developed by a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) undersea research lab in Italy. Maximum received level will be 160 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa rms. Playbacks of sperm whale codas will be used as a control stimulus. The goal of Project 2 is to validate the effectiveness of a whale-finding sonar, to calibrate measurements of the target strength of marine mammals as a function of aspect, and to assess the received levels at which animals that can hear the sonar may start to show changes in behavior.

For Project 3 the responses of tagged sperm whales to short impulses from airgun arrays at received levels no higher than 180 dB re 1  $\mu$ Pa rms will be studied in the Gulf of Mexico. Playbacks of sperm whale codas will be used as a control stimulus. These studies will involve visual observations of surfacing sperm whales, passive acoustic tracking of diving sperm whales, and tagging sperm whales with DTAGs. The primary research objective of the Project 3 airgun playbacks is to determine what characteristics of exposure to specific sounds evoke behavioral responses in marine mammals.

The purpose of the research, as stated in the application, is to study the biology, foraging ecology, communication, and behavior of cetacean species, with a focus on their responses to anthropogenic sounds in the marine environment. The permit will be valid for a period of five years.

Issuance of this permit, as required by the ESA, was based on a finding that such permit (1) was applied for in good

faith, (2) will not operate to the disadvantage of the endangered species which is the subject of this permit, and (3) is consistent with the purposes and policies set forth in section 2 of the ESA.

Dated: June 4, 2003.

**Stephen L. Leathery,**

*Chief, Permits, Conservation and Education Division, Office of Protected Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

**[Docket No. EA-236-A]**

### **Application To Export Electric Energy; American Electric Power Service Corp.**

**AGENCY:** Office of Fossil Energy, DOE.

**ACTION:** Notice of application.

**SUMMARY:** American Electric Power Service Corporation (AEPSC), on behalf of its public utility operating companies, has applied for authority to transmit electric energy from the United States to Mexico pursuant to section 202(e) of the Federal Power Act.

**DATES:** Comments, protests or requests to intervene must be submitted on or before June 25, 2003.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments, protests or requests to intervene should be addressed as follows: Office of Coal & Power Im/Ex (FE-27), Office of Fossil Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-0350 (FAX 202-287-5736).

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Xavier Puslowski (Program Office) 202-586-4708 or Michael Skinker (Program Attorney) 202-586-2793.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Exports of electricity from the United States to a foreign country are regulated and require authorization under section 202(e) of the Federal Power Act (FPA) (16 U.S.C. 824a(e)).

On April 5, 2001, the Office of Fossil Energy (FE) of the Department of Energy (DOE) received an application from AEPSC, on behalf of its public utility operating companies, to transmit electric energy from the United States to Mexico. Notice of the export application was placed in the **Federal Register** on April 18, 2001, and an order authorizing exports to Mexico was issued on June 15, 2001. That order will expire on June 15, 2003.

On May 21, 2003, AEPSC applied for an extension of its authorization. This application was again filed by AEPSC

on behalf of its public utility affiliates, namely: Appalachian Power Company; AEP Texas Central Company; Columbus Southern Power Company; Indiana Michigan Power Company; Kentucky Power Company; Ohio Power Company; Public Service Company of Oklahoma; Southwestern Electric Power Company; and AEP Texas North Company (collectively, the "AEP Operating Companies" or the "Applicants"). AEPSC is incorporated under the laws of the State of New York and has its principal place of business in Columbus, Ohio. The electric energy which the applicants propose to export to Mexico would be either from surplus generation of the AEP Operating Companies or from purchases made on the wholesale market.

The applicants propose to arrange for the delivery of electric energy to Mexico over the international transmission facilities owned by San Diego Gas & Electric Company, El Paso Electric Company, Central Power and Light Company, and Comision Federal de Electricidad, the national electric utility of Mexico. The construction of each of the international transmission facilities to be utilized by the applicants, as more fully described in the application, has previously been authorized by a Presidential permit issued pursuant to Executive Order 10485, as amended.

**Procedural Matters:** Any person desiring to become a party to this proceeding or to be heard by filing comments or protests to this application should file a petition to intervene, comment or protest at the address provided above in accordance with §§ 385.211 or 385.214 of the FERC's rules of practice and procedures (18 CFR 385.211, 385.214). Fifteen copies of each petition and protest should be filed with the DOE on or before the date listed above.

Comments on the AEPSC application to export electric energy to Mexico should be clearly marked with Docket EA-236-A. Additional copies are to be filed directly with F. Mitchell Dutton, Esq., American Electric Power Service Corporation, 1 Riverside Plaza, 15th Floor, Columbus, Ohio 43215-2373 and John R. Lilyestrom, Esq., Hogan & Hartson, LLP, 555 13th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20004.

A final decision will be made on this application after the environmental impacts have been evaluated pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), and a determination is made by the DOE that the proposed action will not adversely impact the reliability of the U.S. electric power supply system.