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Project Name: Economic Development Grant – City of Fort Payne  
Project Number: 2014-27

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

### **TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**

#### **TVA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROPOSAL FOR PREPARATION OF A PAD-READY SITE AT FORT PAYNE INDUSTRIAL PARK, CITY OF FORT PAYNE DEKALB COUNTY, ALABAMA**

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) proposes to provide a grant to the Industrial Development Board of the City of Fort Payne (City) for the preparation of a 330,000 square feet (SF) (400 by 825 feet) earthen/gravel “pad ready” site and access road within a 39.6-acre parcel which has been zoned for “Light Industrial” activity. The “pad ready” site would be raised to an elevation of approximately 974 feet Mean Sea Level (MSL). The elevation of this “pad ready” site would eliminate the primary barrier to making the site eligible for industrial development.

TVA provides financial assistance for projects within the TVA area of service for economic development. The Program is a multi-year economic development program designed to bring to market new/improved sites and facilities within the TVA area and position communities to compete successfully for new jobs and investment. An industrial or commercial facility at this site could provide long-term economic growth and development opportunities for Northeast Alabama by creating a more diverse regional economy and stronger economic base.

The potential environmental effects of this proposed action are described in an environmental assessment (EA) which is incorporated by reference.

#### **Alternatives**

The subject EA evaluates two alternatives, i.e., the No Action Alternative and the Action Alternative. Under the No Action Alternative, TVA would not provide the grant. In this event, the City could seek funding alternative non-TVA sources for the project, resulting in impacts similar to the Action Alternative. Under the Action Alternative, TVA would provide the grant. The site would be prepared and available for industrial and/or commercial development. The Action Alternative is TVA's preferred alternative.

#### **Impacts Assessment**

The construction of the building pad and associated infrastructure would not have impacts on navigation, unique or important aquatic wildlife habitats, prime or unique farmland, recreation, visual resources, wetlands, natural areas, and wild and scenic rivers. The impacts on groundwater, floodplains, threatened and endangered terrestrial species, cultural resources, terrestrial ecology, water quality, socioeconomics, environmental justice, transportation, noise, air quality, and solid waste, would be minimal and insignificant. The impacts on socioeconomics are considered beneficial but insignificant on a regional basis.

The building pad would be located entirely within the Big Wills Creek 100-year floodplain. Under Executive Order (EO) 11988 (Floodplains), fill for a building pad is not considered to be a repetitive action in the 100-year floodplain. However, TVA has made a determination that there is no practicable alternative to the proposed floodplain siting. Therefore, the proposed project would be consistent with EO 11988 and have no significant impact on floodplains. No wetlands occur on the site and no permanent streams will be impacted. Thus, the proposed action would not require permitting under Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act, and complies with

EO 11990 (Protection of Wetlands). Adoption of the Action Alternative is not expected to cause direct or indirect impacts to any threatened or endangered terrestrial or aquatic plant or animal species or their habitats. Therefore, the requirements of Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act are satisfied.

One heronry is located in a tree within the project area, near the northern end of a stream and in close proximity to the western boundary. However, there would be minimal impacts with the use of a buffer during nesting season.

No historic properties would be affected by the proposed undertaking. TVA has coordinated this finding with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Officer. Pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act are satisfied.

### **Public and Intergovernmental Review**

The City solicited reviews of the proposed action by several federal and state agencies when the grant application was transmitted to TVA. Responses were received from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the Alabama Historical Commission. TVA also received responses from The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma and The Chickasaw Nation who had no objections to the project. TVA received no comments in response to a public notice posted in the Fort Payne local newspaper between July 11 and 21, 2012, about the no practicable alternative for use of a floodplain appeared.

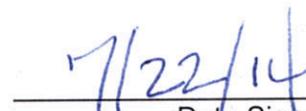
### **Mitigation**

Best management practices and other routine measures will be implemented during construction activities. To minimize disturbance to nesting herons during construction, any construction activity will stay at least 330 feet away from the heronry during the nesting season (i.e., February 15 – July 15).

### **Conclusion and Findings**

Based on the findings in the EA, TVA concludes that providing a grant to the Industrial Development Board of the City of Fort Payne as described under the Action Alternative will not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. Accordingly, an environmental impact statement is not required.

  
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Date Signed