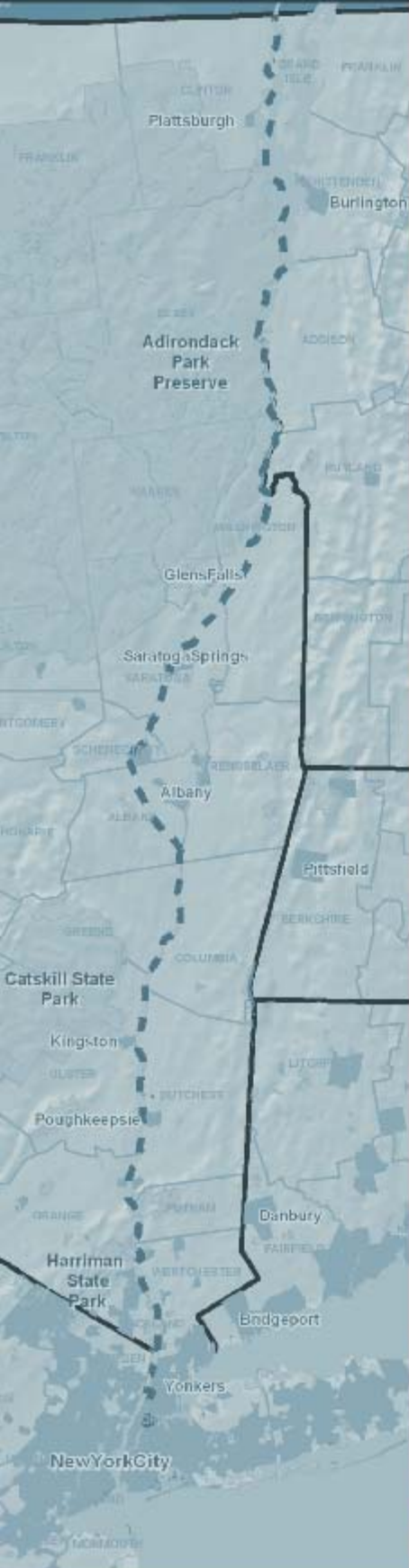




DOE/EIS-0447

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Champlain Hudson Power Express Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement Summary



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ELECTRICITY DELIVERY AND ENERGY RELIABILITY
WASHINGTON, DC

September 2013



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1. Lake Champlain at sunset obtained from Wikipedia.com
2. Cable laying ship courtesy of CHPEI
3. Upper Hudson River Railroad obtained from snrr.com
4. New York City skyline and new World Trade Center obtained from wtc.com
5. Project route courtesy of CHPEI
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**CHAMPLAIN HUDSON POWER EXPRESS
TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

Summary

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ELECTRICITY DELIVERY
AND ENERGY RELIABILITY**



COOPERATING AGENCIES

**U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
U.S. COAST GUARD
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE
NEW YORK STATE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION**

SEPTEMBER 2013

COVER SHEET

RESPONSIBLE FEDERAL AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability

COOPERATING AGENCIES: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, New York State Department of Public Service, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

TITLE: Summary for the Champlain Hudson Power Express Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

LOCATION: Clinton, Essex, Washington, Saratoga, Schenectady, Albany, Greene, Ulster, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Westchester, Bronx, New York, and Queens counties in New York State

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ABSTRACT: Champlain Hudson Power Express, Inc. (CHPEI) has applied to the DOE for a Presidential permit to construct, operate, maintain, and connect a 336-mile (541-kilometer) electric transmission line across the international border between the United States and Canada, near the town of Champlain, New York. This EIS addresses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed transmission line and the No Action Alternative. The proposed transmission line would include both aquatic (underwater) and terrestrial (primarily underground) segments. The underwater portions of the transmission line would be buried in the beds of Lake Champlain and the Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers, and the terrestrial portions would be buried, principally in railroad and roadway rights-of-way. The transmission system would consist of one 1,000-MW, high-voltage direct current transmission line and ancillary aboveground facilities (e.g., cooling stations). The transmission line would be a bipole consisting of two transmission cables. A new converter station in Queens, New York, would convert the electrical power from direct current to alternating current and then interconnect with the New York City electrical grid at two points.

DOE invites comments on this Draft EIS during the 45-day comment period that begins with the USEPA publication of the Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register*. The EIS Web site (<http://www.chpexpresseis.org>) provides information on public hearings to be held at several locations in New York State during the comment period. Comments on the Draft EIS may be made verbally or in writing at a public hearing, or may be sent to Mr. Brian Mills at the address or email above or by fax to (202) 586-8008. Written and oral comments will be given equal weight, and any comments received after the comment period ends will be considered to the extent practicable.

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**CHAMPLAIN HUDSON POWER EXPRESS TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT SUMMARY**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARYS-1

S.1 BACKGROUNDS-1

S.2 DOE’S PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR AGENCY ACTIONS-3

S.3 APPLICANT’S OBJECTIVES.....S-3

S.4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.....S-4

 S.4.1 Cooperating AgenciesS-4

 S.4.2 Public InvolvementS-5

S.5 ALTERNATIVES ANALYZED.....S-5

 S.5.1 No Action AlternativeS-5

 S.5.2 DOE’s Proposed ActionS-5

S.6 PROPOSED CHPE PROJECT OVERVIEWS-6

 S.6.1 Proposed CHPE Project Route Segments.....S-6

 S.6.2 Proposed CHPE Project DetailsS-11

 S.6.3 Construction and Schedule.....S-14

 S.6.4 Operations and MaintenanceS-16

S.7 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER DETAILED ANALYSISS-17

 S.7.1 Alternative Upland Transmission Line RoutesS-17

 S.7.2 Conservation and Demand Reduction Measures.....S-17

 S.7.3 Use of HVAC Versus HVDC Technology.....S-18

 S.7.4 Interconnection and Converter Station AlternativesS-19

 S.7.5 Alternatives to the Luyster Creek Converter StationS-19

S.8 SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL IMPACTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED CHPE PROJECTS-20

 S.8.1 Land UseS-34

 S.8.2 Transportation and Traffic.....S-35

 S.8.3 Water Resources and QualityS-36

 S.8.4 Aquatic Habitats and SpeciesS-38

 S.8.5 Aquatic Protected and Sensitive Species.....S-39

 S.8.6 Terrestrial Habitats and SpeciesS-41

 S.8.7 Terrestrial Protected and Sensitive Species.....S-43

 S.8.8 Wetlands.....S-45

 S.8.9 Geology and SoilsS-47

 S.8.10 Cultural ResourcesS-47

 S.8.11 Visual ResourcesS-48

 S.8.12 InfrastructureS-50

 S.8.13 Recreation.....S-50

 S.8.14 Public Health and SafetyS-51

 S.8.15 Hazardous Materials and WastesS-52

 S.8.16 Air Quality.....S-53

 S.8.17 Noise.....S-54

 S.8.18 Socioeconomics.....S-56

 S.8.19 Environmental JusticeS-57

 S.8.20 Cumulative Impacts.....S-58

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

S.9 REFERENCESS-60
S.10 ACRONYMSS-61

FIGURES

S-1. Proposed CHPE Project Location Overview MapS-2
S-2. Lake Champlain SegmentS-7
S-3. Overland SegmentS-8
S-4. Hudson River SegmentS-9
S-5. New York City Metropolitan Area Segment.....S-10

TABLES

S-1. Summary of Potential Impacts Associated with the Proposed CHPE ProjectS-21

Summary

S.1 Background

On January 25, 2010, Champlain Hudson Power Express Incorporated (CHPEI) applied to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for a Presidential permit in accordance with Executive Orders (EOs) 10485 and 12038, and 10 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 205.320 *et seq.* The Presidential permit, if issued, would authorize CHPEI to construct, operate, maintain, and connect the U.S. portion of an electric transmission line that would cross the international border between the United States and Canada near the town of Champlain, New York.

The proposed Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) Transmission Line Project (proposed CHPE Project) would be an approximately 336-mile (541-kilometer [km])-long, 1,000-megawatt (MW), high-voltage merchant electric power transmission system that includes a transmission line that would extend to Astoria, Queens, New York (**Figure S-1**). The system would include the transmission line, transmission line cooling stations at certain locations along the route, a direct current (DC) to alternating current (AC) converter station, and high-voltage alternating current (HVAC) interconnections from this converter station to the New York Power Authority (NYPA) Astoria Annex and the Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc. (ConEd) Rainey substations in Queens.

The DOE Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability is responsible for reviewing Presidential permit applications and determining whether to grant a permit for electrical transmission facilities that cross the U.S. international border. The Presidential permit for the Applicant (OE Docket Number PP-362), if issued, would authorize the Applicant to construct, operate, maintain, and connect the U.S. portion of the project at the international border.

DOE has determined that the issuance of a Presidential permit would constitute a major Federal action and that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the appropriate level of environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] 4321 *et seq.*). In 2010, DOE issued in the *Federal Register* a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the Proposed Action and conducted public scoping (75 *Federal Register* [FR] 34720). In 2012, DOE issued an amended NOI to modify the scope of the EIS to reflect Applicant-proposed revisions to the project and conducted additional public scoping (77 FR 25472).

DOE prepared the EIS in compliance with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500–1508) and DOE's NEPA regulations (10 CFR Part 1021), and other applicable Federal laws. The preparation of an EIS includes two formal opportunities for public input: (1) the public scoping period (completed), and (2) the Draft EIS public comment period, both of which are described further in the Public Participation section of this summary.

Other environmental review requirements are being implemented in coordination with or integrated with the NEPA process to the fullest extent possible, namely, floodplains and wetlands assessments, in accordance with EOs 11988 and 11990, respectively (both signed on May 24, 1977) and 10 CFR Part 1022, DOE floodplain and wetland environmental review requirements; Clean Air Act Conformity requirements; threatened and endangered species consultation required under the Endangered Species Act (ESA); and consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

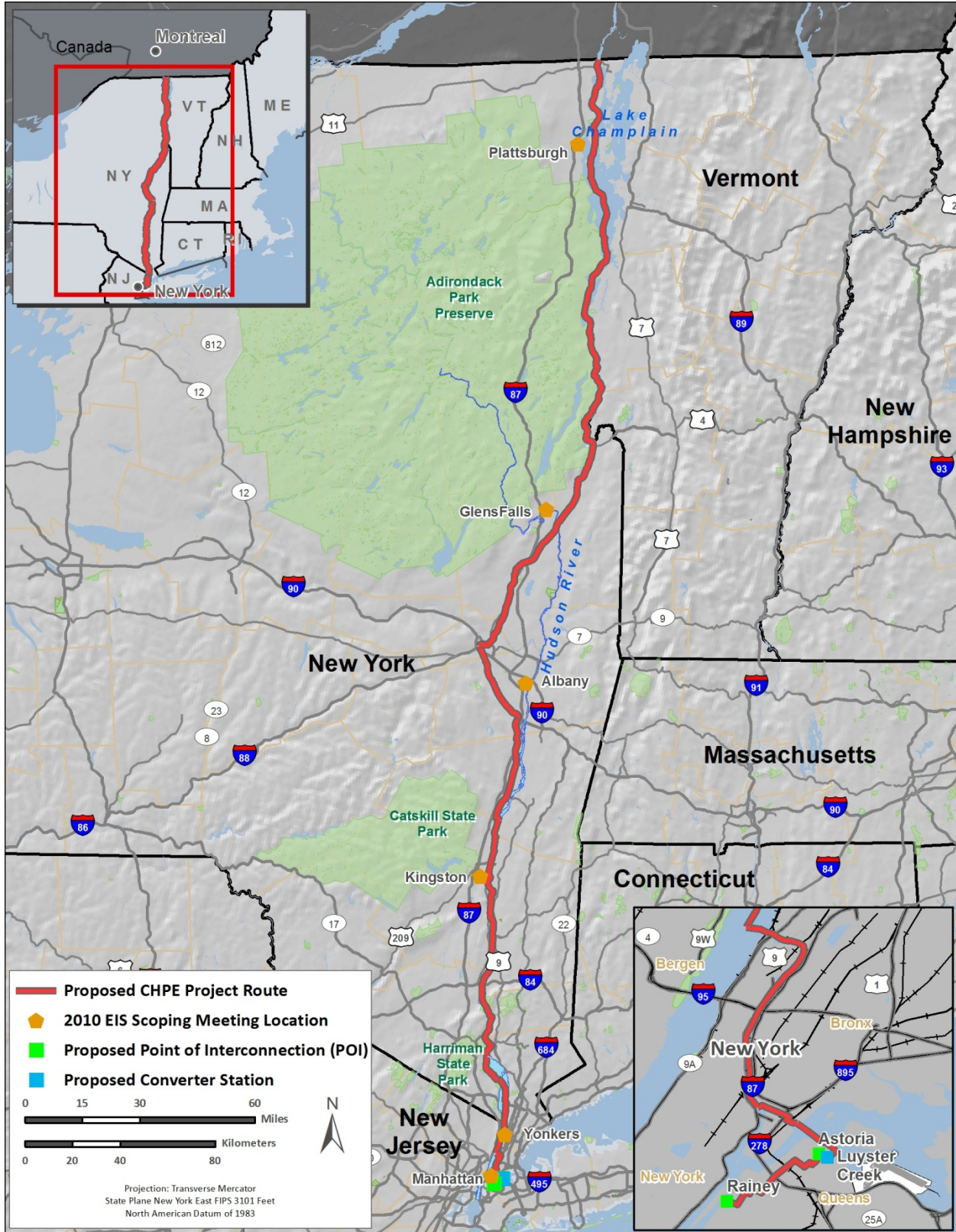


Figure S-1. Proposed CHPE Project Location Overview Map

S.2 DOE's Purpose of and Need for Agency Action

CHPEI has applied to DOE for a Presidential permit that would allow the company to construct, operate, maintain, and connect the approximately 336-mile (541-km), 1,000-MW, high-voltage electric power transmission system in the United States that would cross the U.S.-Canada border. If granted, the Presidential permit would authorize the international border crossing.

The purpose of and need for DOE's action is to decide whether or not to grant a Presidential permit for the proposed CHPE Project. Applications for Presidential permits are evaluated based on the potential impacts that a proposed project could have on the environment, the operating reliability of the U.S. electric power supply, and any other factors relevant to the public interest. In determining whether a proposed action or a reasonable alternative is in the public interest, DOE considers the potential impacts of the proposed action and any reasonable alternatives on the environment pursuant to NEPA, the Proposed Action's impact on the reliability of the U.S. electric power supply system, and any other factors that DOE considers relevant. If DOE determines that granting a Presidential permit is in the public interest, the information contained in this EIS will also help to inform DOE's decision regarding potential mitigation measures and other conditions of the permit.

S.3 Applicant's Objectives

According to the Presidential permit application, the proposed CHPE Project would be a merchant transmission facility that would provide needed electrical energy, primarily hydroelectric and wind energy generated in Canada, to the New York City metropolitan area, which the Applicant states would result in lower wholesale electric power prices, reductions in emissions, greater fuel diversity, and increased energy supply capability and system reliability.

CHPEI has estimated that importing 1,000 MW of lower-cost Canadian energy into the power markets in New York City would be expected to save consumers in the New York Control Area between \$554 million to \$654 million per year (LEI 2011). Independent modeling conducted by the New York State Department of Public Service (NYS DPS) projected that ratepayer benefits in the New York Control Area would total approximately \$405 million to \$720 million per year (CHPEI 2012).

Therefore, it is possible that the proposed CHPE Project power would be purchased first and displace natural gas and oil-fueled sources of electrical generation supplying the region. This would result in the potential to reduce regional greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Using the initial year of operation of 2018 as an illustration, NYSDPS predicted that the proposed CHPE Project would reduce annual emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂) by approximately 1.5 million tons, sulfur dioxide (SO₂) by 751 tons, and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) by 641 tons (NYSDPS 2012).

DOE has designated southeastern New York State as a Critical Congestion Area, defined as "Areas where it is critically important to remedy existing or growing congestion problems because the current and/or projected effects of the congestion are severe" (DOE 2009). The *U.S. Department of Energy's National Electric Transmission Congestion Study* (DOE 2006) determined that consumers in the Mid-Atlantic area of the United States, including southeastern New York State, are adversely affected by transmission congestion. These adverse effects on consumers result in consistently higher energy prices and reduced reliability of electricity.

CHPEI's application predicts that the proposed CHPE Project would result in an improvement to the overall reliability of the New York Independent System Operator's (NYISO) electricity system, because the CHPE Project would provide supplemental power capacity from Québec, thereby improving resource adequacy and reducing loss of load expectations. The high-voltage direct current (HVDC) technology

proposed for use in the proposed CHPE Project would possess four-quadrant control technology, allowing the transmission supplier to control voltage and power separately, therefore providing reactive power (i.e., used to control voltage on the transmission system to improve system efficiency) for real-time voltage control.

According to the Applicant, the voltage source converter technology that would be used in the CHPE Project would increase the efficiency of the transmission and distribution system, incorporate greater levels of renewable energy, improve power quality and stability to support new digital demands, and increase operational flexibility and greatly reduce the risk of failure that might affect the entire grid.

The Applicant notes that the proposed CHPE Project intends to accomplish the following:

- Provide 1,000 MW (7,640 gigawatt hours [GWh] per year) of electricity to New York City without contributing to additional transmission congestion on the existing electricity transmission infrastructure in the United States
- Provide additional new transmission infrastructure capacity into New York City using HVDC and HVAC cables that would be buried to avoid potential visual impacts from traditional overhead transmission lines
- Apply downward pressure on the price of electricity in the Location Marginal Price (LMP) spot markets operated by Independent System Operators (ISOs) in the New York City market
- Reduce air pollution and GHG emissions within the New York City area by alleviating the need to operate one or more existing fossil-fueled power plants within the region during periods of transmission congestion
- Improve stability of the electric grid serving the New York City metropolitan area due to the highly reliable and controllable nature of HVDC technology and its compatibility with Smart Grid initiatives
- Reduce the dependency of the New York City region on fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and natural gas.

S.4 Public Participation and Interagency Coordination

Public participation and interagency coordination are integral elements of the NEPA process and are intended to promote open communication between DOE and regulatory agencies, Native American tribes, potential stakeholder organizations, and the public. All individuals and organizations with a potential interest in the proposed CHPE Project are encouraged to participate in the public involvement process.

S.4.1 Cooperating Agencies

DOE has invited several Federal and state agencies to participate in the preparation of the EIS as cooperating agencies because of their special expertise or jurisdiction by law (40 CFR Part 1501.6). The cooperating agencies are U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) Region 2, the New York District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the New York Field Office (Region 5) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the NYSDPS, and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC).

S.4.2 Public Involvement

Initial Public Scoping. On June 18, 2010, DOE published in the *Federal Register* its *Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and to Conduct Public Scoping Meetings; Notice of Floodplains and Wetlands Involvement; Champlain Hudson Power Express, Inc.* (75 FR 34720). This and other relevant documents are available on the EIS Web site: <http://www.chpexpreseis.org>. During the initial public scoping period, DOE conducted seven scoping meetings: one in Connecticut and six within the Lake Champlain and Hudson River Valley corridors of New York State.

Additional Public Scoping. In response to the Applicant's submission of an amended Presidential permit application, DOE published on April 30, 2012, an *Amended Notice of Intent to Modify the Scope of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Champlain Hudson Power Express Transmission Line Project in New York State* (77 FR 25472). DOE announced that it would revise the scope of the EIS to address the proposed changes and that it was accepting public comment on the revised scope until June 14, 2012. DOE received scoping comments and prepared scoping reports, which are available as **Appendix D** of this EIS and available for review on the EIS Web site.

Draft EIS Public Review Period. DOE is providing a 45-day public review period and will hold public hearings for the Draft EIS. The public review period has been initiated through publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register* by the USEPA. Methods similar to those used during the scoping period have been used to notify the public and applicable Federal and state agencies of the public review period for the Draft EIS, including distributing the document to individuals or parties who submitted scoping comments, and to other interested parties that requested a copy of the EIS.

DOE has made the Draft EIS available online at the CHPE EIS Web site (<http://www.chpeexpreseis.org>) and on the DOE NEPA Web site (<http://energy.gov/nepa>). The Draft EIS has also been circulated to Federal, state, and local agencies with jurisdiction by law or special subject matter expertise and to any person, stakeholder organization, or agency that has requested a copy (40 CFR Part 1502.19). The Final EIS will include, in an appendix, all comments on the Draft EIS. All comments on the Draft EIS received or postmarked during the comment period will be considered in preparing the Final EIS. Comments received after the end of the comment period will be addressed to the extent practicable.

S.5 Alternatives Analyzed

This EIS addresses the No Action Alternative and DOE's Proposed Action. The Applicant's proposed CHPE Project is described in **Section S.6**.

S.5.1 No Action Alternative

CEQ and DOE regulations require consideration of the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative serves as a baseline against which the potential environmental impacts of a proposed action can be evaluated. Under the No Action Alternative, DOE would not issue a Presidential permit for the proposed CHPE Project, the transmission system would not be constructed, and the potential impacts from the project would not occur.

S.5.2 DOE's Proposed Action

DOE's Proposed Action is the issuance of a Presidential permit that would authorize the construction, operation, and maintenance of the proposed CHPE Project that would cross the U.S./Canada border. This EIS has been prepared to comply with NEPA and facilitate DOE's decisionmaking associated with the issuance of the Presidential permit for the proposed CHPE Project.

S.6 Proposed CHPE Project Overview

S.6.1 Proposed CHPE Project Route Segments

The proposed CHPE Project would include construction, operation, and maintenance of an approximately 336-mile (541-km)-long, 1,000-MW, high-voltage electric power transmission system that would have both aquatic (underwater) and terrestrial (and primarily underground) segments. The underwater portions of the transmission line would be buried in the beds of Lake Champlain and the Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers, and the terrestrial portions of the transmission line would be buried underground, principally in railroad rights-of-way (ROWs) and in roadway ROWs.

The transmission system would consist of one 1,000-MW, HVDC transmission line and ancillary aboveground facilities, including a DC-to-AC converter station and cooling stations at selected locations where required. The transmission line would be a bipole consisting of two transmission cables, one positively charged and the other negatively charged. A new HVDC converter station would be constructed in Queens, New York, to convert the electrical power from DC to AC and then connect to two points of interconnection (POIs) within the New York City electrical grid. Cooling stations would be installed along the terrestrial portions of the transmission line route in certain locations to disperse accumulated heat in long cable segments installed by horizontal directional drilling (HDD).

The entire length of the transmission system would be buried, with the majority of the route beneath Lake Champlain and the Hudson River, and the exceptions would be bridge attachments and ancillary aboveground facilities, such as at the converter station and cooling stations. For the purposes of understanding the various environmental settings associated with the proposed CHPE Project, and to facilitate the analysis in the EIS, the transmission line route was divided into four geographically logical segments:

- Lake Champlain Segment
- Overland Segment
- Hudson River Segment
- New York City Metropolitan Area Segment.

The four segments are shown on **Figures S-2** through **S-5**, respectively. From the U.S.-Canada border, the HVDC transmission line would be located in the bed of Lake Champlain for approximately 101 miles (163 km), from near Champlain, New York, to Dresden, New York. This portion of the route composes the *Lake Champlain Segment* (see **Figure S-2**).

The *Overland Segment* begins at the southern end of Lake Champlain in the Town of Dresden, where the HVDC transmission line would exit the water at milepost (MP) 101 and be installed underground in New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) ROW, Canadian Pacific (CP) railroad ROW, and the CSX Transportation (CSX) railroad ROW for 127 miles (204 km) until the transmission line would enter the Hudson River at the town of Catskill, New York (see **Figure S-3**).

The *Hudson River Segment* begins at MP 228 where the HVDC transmission line would be buried in the bottom of the Hudson River for approximately 67 miles (108 km) to Stony Point, New York, where the transmission line would be routed upland along the CSX railroad ROW and the U.S. Route 9W ROW between MPs 295 and 303 (see **Figure S-4**). The transmission line would be buried underground through this entire stretch before reentering the Hudson River. The transmission line would reenter the Hudson River at MP 303 for approximately 21 miles (34 km) until it reaches the end of the Hudson River Segment at Spuyten Duyvil Creek and the Harlem River in New York City at MP 324.

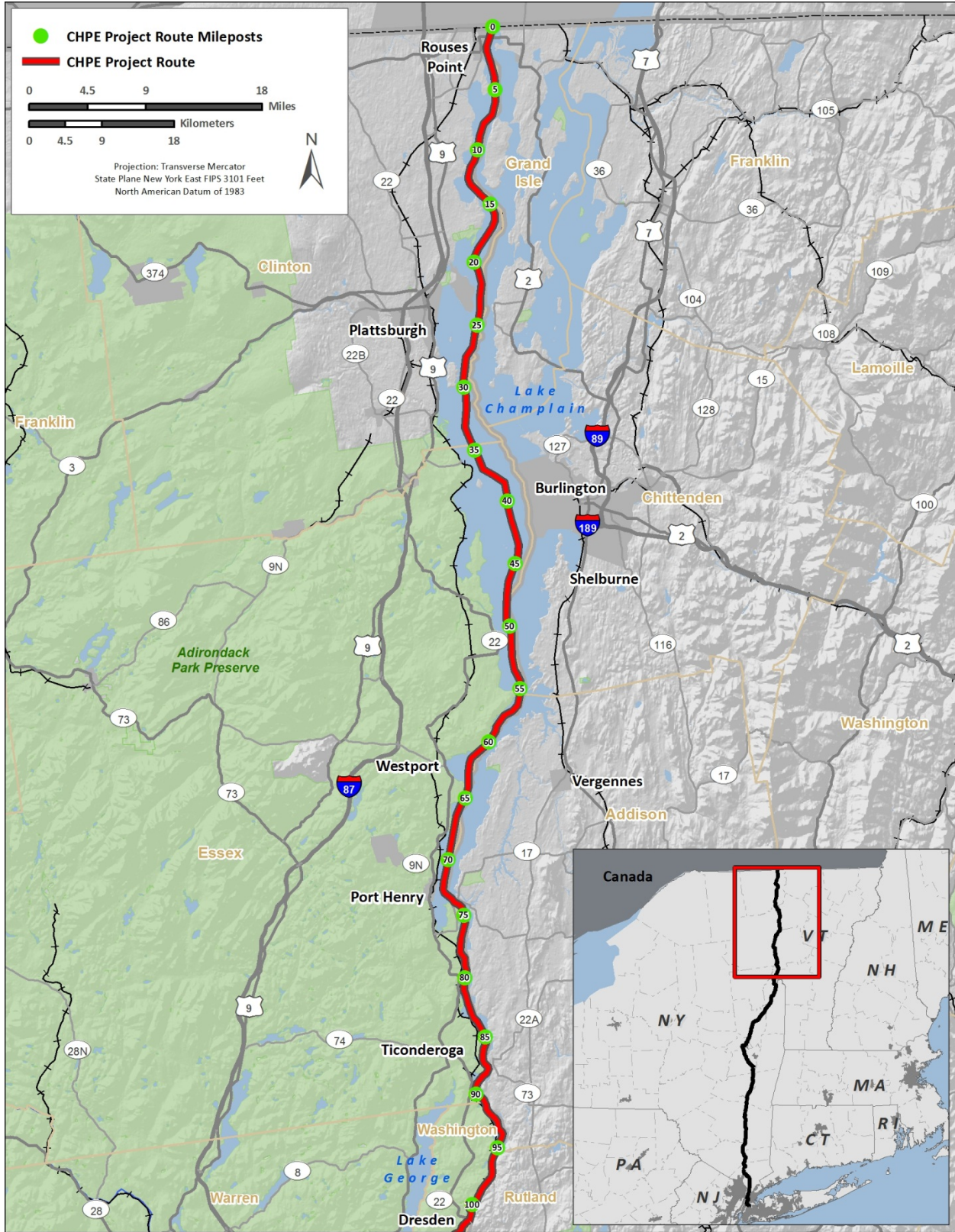


Figure S-2. Lake Champlain Segment

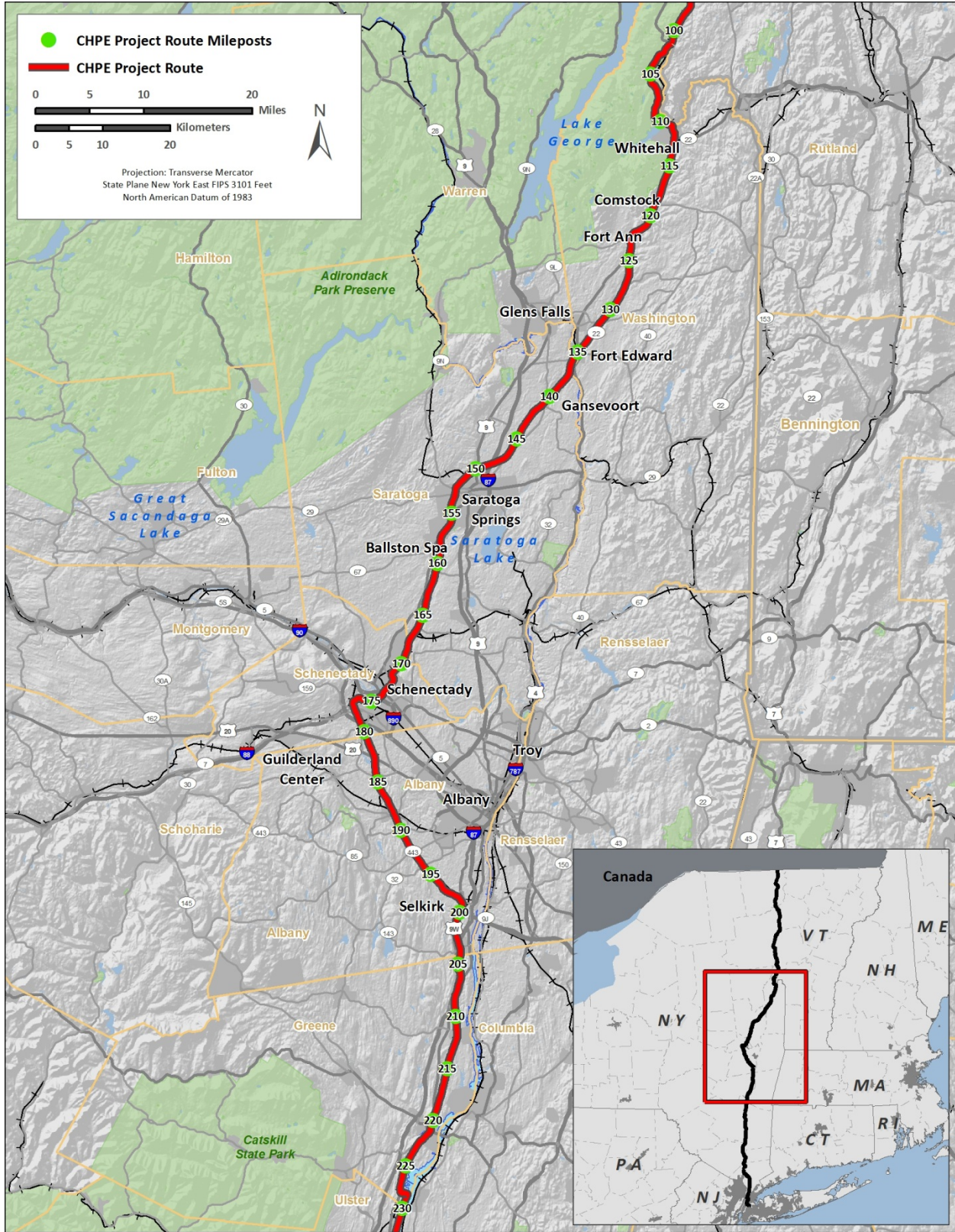


Figure S-3. Overland Segment

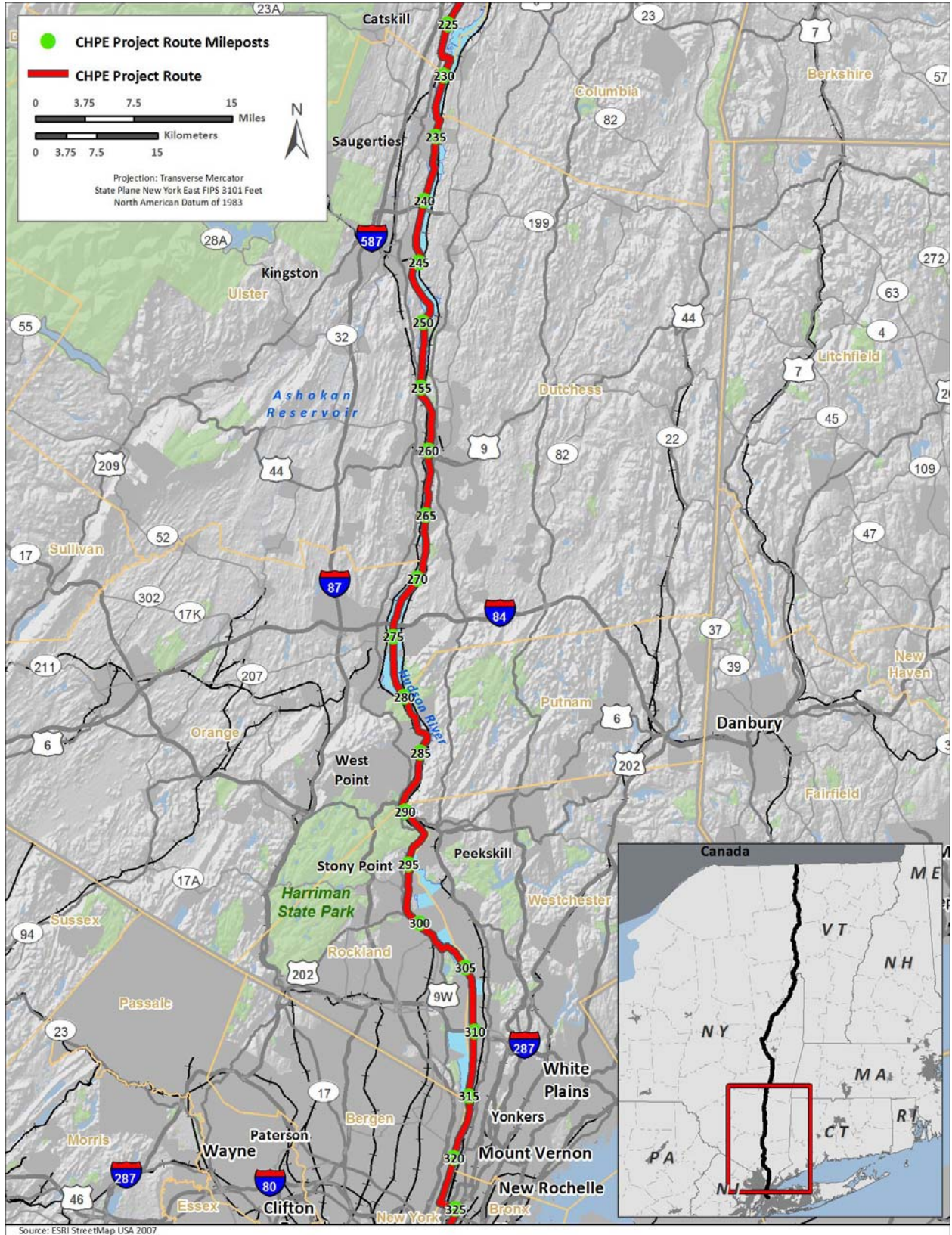


Figure S-4. Hudson River Segment

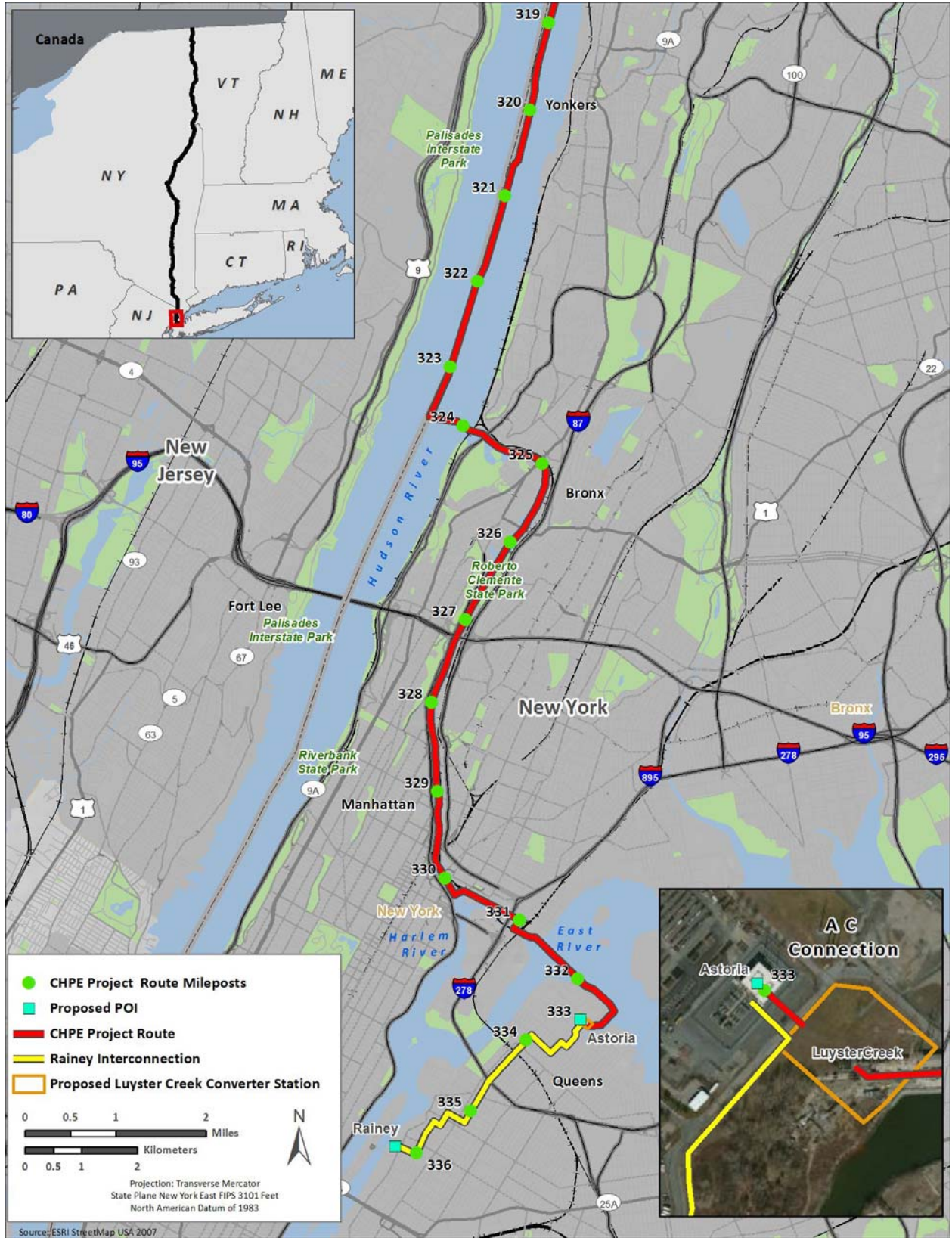


Figure S-5. New York City Metropolitan Area Segment

The *New York City Metropolitan Area Segment* begins at Spuyten Duyvil at MP 324, where the HVDC transmission line would enter the Harlem River and continue south in the river for a distance of approximately 6 miles (10 km) to a point north of the Willis Avenue Bridge in the borough of the Bronx at MP 330 (see **Figure S-5**). The line would exit the river and proceed east through the NYSDOT railroad corridor and rail yards along the northern side of the Bronx Kill to the East River at MP 331 and proceed to the southeast to land at the site of the ConEd Charles Poletti Power Plant complex in Astoria, Queens, New York, at MP 332.

Onshore, the HVDC transmission cables would wrap around the eastern portion of the power plant complex for approximately 1 mile (1.6 km) and would terminate in a proposed HVDC converter station occupying an approximately 4.5-acre (1.8-hectare) site along Luyster Creek. The Luyster Creek HVDC Converter Station would convert the DC electrical power to AC, and underground double-circuit 345-kilovolt (kV) AC cables would connect the converter station with the adjacent NYPA Astoria Annex 345-kV substation. An approximately 3-mile (5-km) buried 345-kV HVAC cable circuit would be constructed by CHPEI from the Astoria Annex Substation to ConEd's 345-kV Rainey Substation.

S.6.2 Proposed CHPE Project Details

The following subsections describe the specific engineering details of the transmission system: the aquatic DC transmission cables; HDD methods; terrestrial DC transmission cables; cooling stations to be used in certain locations along the transmission line; the proposed HVDC converter station and substation interconnection in Astoria, New York; and the proposed Astoria Annex to Rainey substation HVAC interconnection. The proposed CHPE Project was approved by the New York State Public Service Commission (NYSPSC) per the Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need (Certificate) issued in April 2013 to the Applicant (see **Appendix C**) (NYSPSC 2013). The following subsections also discuss how the Applicant proposes to install and operate the transmission line and aboveground facilities of the proposed CHPE Project.

Aquatic Direct Current Transmission Cable. The transmission cables proposed for installation in the Lake Champlain and Hudson River segments would be cross-linked polyethylene (XLPE) HVDC cables rated at 300 to 320 kV. An armored layer of galvanized steel wires embedded in bitumen provides additional protection for the aquatic transmission cables. The transmission cables would be buried beneath the beds of Lake Champlain, and the Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers at a depth of at least 3 to 6 feet (0.9 to 1.8 meters) to prevent disturbance to the cables from unrelated marine operations in the waterways. The depth of burial that can be achieved would depend on available marine construction equipment, soil types and depth to bedrock, existing utilities, and the types of marine activities occurring and their potential threat to cable integrity.

Where the transmission cables cross bedrock or an existing utility such as a pipeline or another cable, they would be laid over the rock or existing utility and protective coverings, such as articulated concrete mats, would be installed over the cable crossing. Underwater cable installation activities would be limited to certain times of the year to avoid life-cycle or migratory impacts on aquatic species in the project area.

Horizontal Directional Drilling. HDD would be used to install the transmission cables in transition areas between aquatic and terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project route at the transitions from water to land and at environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands or streams, or under roadway or railway crossings where trenching is not possible.

The HDD operation at a water-to-land transition would include an HDD drilling rig system, a drilling fluid collection and recirculation system, and associated support equipment. For each proposed HDD location, two separate drill holes would be required, one for each cable. During installation, a drill rig

would be placed onshore behind a temporary fluid return pit and a 40-foot (12-meter) drill pipe with a cutting head would be set in place to begin the drilling process. As the initial pilot borehole is drilled, a slurry composed of water and bentonite (i.e., a shrink-swell clay) would then be pumped into the hole to transport the drill cuttings to the surface, to aid in keeping the borehole stable, and to lubricate the drill. After the final drill length has been achieved, high-density polyethylene (HDPE) conduits would be pulled into the drilled hole from the exit point in the waterbody. Once the HDPE conduits are in place, the transmission cables would be pulled through these pipes and into a transition splice vault, which would remain in place to protect the transmission cable.

A visual and operational monitoring program would be developed and conducted during HDD operations to detect any losses of drilling fluid. Visual observations of drilling fluid in the water, or excessive loss of volume or pressure in the borehole would trigger response actions by the HDD operator, including halting drilling activities and initiating cleanup of released bentonite. A sheet pile cofferdam would be constructed around the exit pit in the waterbody to contain drilling fluids from the HDD operation. A barge with a pumping system would be positioned at the cofferdam to collect any released drilling fluids.

HDD would also be used to install the transmission cables beneath other environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, streams, and existing infrastructure along the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project route, and in special circumstances to avoid obstacles along the CHPE Project route, such as road or railroad crossings where open trenching would not be possible. It is expected that at least three different sized HDD rigs would be employed on the project, requiring varying staging area sizes depending on the length of the drill at the particular location, proximity to sensitive areas such as wetlands, access limits, and other constraints.

Terrestrial Direct Current Transmission Cable. Approximately 42 percent of the proposed CHPE Project route would be composed of underground (terrestrial) portions. For the underground portions of the transmission line route, the two cables within the bipole system would typically be laid side-by-side in a trench. After the cables are laid in the trench, the trenches would be backfilled with low thermal resistivity material, such as well-graded sand to fine gravel, stone dust, or crushed stone. A protective cover of HDPE, concrete, or polymer blocks would be placed directly above the low thermal resistive backfill material.

A combination of HDD and trenching techniques would be used to install the transmission line underground along upland portions of the route. Trenchless technologies would be used where roadways and railroad beds would be crossed by the transmission line. Trenchless technologies could include HDD, horizontal boring, or pipe jacking. Following completion of the transmission cable installation, the excavated area would be backfilled and regraded, and the disturbed area would be returned to its previous condition as much as possible.

The proposed CHPE Project would be in the existing ROW of both the CP and CSX railway systems between MPs 112 and 228, MPs 295 and 301, and MPs 330 and 331. The Applicant has stated that drafts of Occupancy Agreements for easements along the railroad corridor have been exchanged with both CP and CSX and are currently under negotiation. The final agreements would establish the terms of occupancy of the ROWs and refine required offsets of the transmission cables from the track centerline.

Cooling Stations. In certain situations where there is a long segment of cable installed by HDD, heat can accumulate in the HDPE conduit and reduce the performance of the transmission system. The Applicant has identified 16 sections of underground cabling where the potential for heat accumulation could require that a cooling equipment station be installed at each section. Each of the 16 cooling station would consist of a chiller unit and pumping system within a building and this equipment would circulate chilled water through tubing in a closed-loop system alongside the HVDC cable to cool the cables. The building

footprint would occupy 128 square feet (12 square meters) of land area and the power to the cooling station would be provided by a local electrical utility. The heat emitted from the cables within the buried conduit would then be transferred by the coolant back to the cooling station and then to the outside atmosphere above ground. It is anticipated that the cooling systems would be operated primarily during peak electric load conditions.

Luyster Creek HVDC Converter Station. An HVDC converter station would be constructed near Luyster Creek in Astoria, New York, to convert the electrical power from DC to AC (see **Figure S-5**). The converter station site would be approximately 4.5 acres (1.8 hectares) in size. The HVDC converter station building would be approximately 165 feet by 325 feet (50 meters by 99 meters) with a building footprint of 1.2 acres (0.5 hectares) and a height of approximately 70 feet (21 meters), with transformers, cooling equipment, and power line carrier filters being installed outside of the building. The converter station would be powered by electricity taken directly from the proposed CHPE Project transmission line and would not require onsite personnel during normal operations.

Astoria Annex Substation Interconnection. The Luyster Creek Converter Station would deliver its energy by underground cable to the Astoria 345-kV, SF6 gas-insulated substation that serves as the primary point of interconnection to the grid. The Applicant has proposed to modify the electrical configuration of the Astoria Annex Substation by adding a four-breaker gas-insulated switch ring bus to connect both the cable from the Luyster Creek Converter Station and the Astoria-Rainey Cable to the one remaining empty bus at the Astoria Annex Substation. This new ring bus would be constructed in a new building approximately 72 feet (22 meters) long, 58 feet (18 meters) wide, and 40 feet (12 meters) high. The new ring bus building would be 4,176 square feet (388 square meters) in size and would be located on the same parcel of land as the Luyster Creek Converter Station. The new ring bus would be connected to both the converter station and the Astoria Annex Substation by gas-insulated switch cables in underground pipes.

Astoria to Rainey Interconnection. CHPEI would also construct a 345-kV HVAC cable circuit from the ring bus to ConEd's Rainey Substation in Queens to deliver power reliably into ConEd's 345-kV system. This interconnection would consist of HVAC cables buried beneath city streets for approximately 3 miles (5 km) (see **Figure S-5**). The XLPE HVAC cables would be buried in a trench to a depth of more than 4 feet (1.2 meters) with a separation distance of 9 inches (23 centimeters [cm]) between the cables in the trench.

Additional Engineering Details – Heat. XLPE transmission cables operate at about 176 to 194 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) (80 to 90 degrees Celsius [°C]) with an emergency operating temperature of about 266 °F (130 °C). Heat must be carried away from the conductors for them to operate efficiently, and soils in and around a trench perform this for underground cables. Where required, a low thermal resistive backfill material would be used instead of native soil in the trench around the cables to ensure sufficient standard heat transfer to the surrounding soils and groundwater.

Additional Engineering Details – Electric and Magnetic Fields. Operation of the proposed CHPE Project transmission line would produce electric and magnetic fields. Transmission lines, like all electric devices, produce electric and magnetic fields, or electromagnetic field (EMF). Voltage, the force that drives the current, is the source of the electric field. Current, the flow of electric charge in a wire, produces the magnetic field. The strength of the EMF depends on the design of the electrical line and the distance from it. EMF is found around any electrical wiring, including household wiring, and electrical appliances and equipment.

Electric fields are measured in volts per meter (V/m) or kilovolts per meter (kV/m). Electric field strength is reduced by shielding or by intervening objects such as structures and vegetation. The

proposed CHPE Project transmission line would be shielded and buried, which would effectively eliminate any exposure to the electric field.

Magnetic fields are measured in units of gauss (G) or milligauss (mG). The average magnetic field strength in most homes (away from electrical appliances and wiring) is typically less than 2 mG. Outdoor magnetic fields in publicly accessible places can range from less than a few mG to 300 mG or more, depending on proximity to power lines and the voltage of the power line. The magnetic field produced by the proposed CHPE Project transmission line would be less than 162 mG in the area directly over the buried transmission line.

Like electric fields, magnetic fields fall off with distance from the source. Unlike electric fields, however, intervening objects, such as structures, or being buried, do not reduce magnetic field strength. Consequently, while electrical appliances can produce the highest localized magnetic fields, power lines serving neighborhoods and distribution lines and transformers serving individual homes or businesses are a common source of longer-term magnetic field exposure.

S.6.3 Construction and Schedule

The Applicant anticipates that the initial permitting phase of the proposed CHPE Project would continue through early 2014, with major construction commencing later in 2014. Installation of the transmission cables is proposed to be completed in three phases between 2014 and 2017. The Applicant anticipates that the commercial operation date for the proposed CHPE Project would be 2017.

The NYSPSC Certificate issued for the proposed CHPE Project established construction work schedule windows identifying times of the year when work associated with the underwater portion of the transmission line could take place (NYSPSC 2013).

Aquatic Construction Sequence. The transmission cables would be installed by either a jet plow or a shear plow. The plowing process would be conducted using either a dynamically positioned cable ship or a positioned cable barge and towed plow device that simultaneously lays and embeds the aquatic transmission cables in a trench. The transmission cables composing the bipole would be deployed from the vessel to a funnel device on the plow. The plow is lowered to the lake or river floor, and the plow blade cuts into the lake or riverbed while it is towed along the pre-cleared route to carry out a simultaneous lay-and-burial operation. The plow would bury both cables of the bipole in the same trench at the same time.

It is anticipated that the majority of the aquatic cable route would be installed and buried using water-jetting techniques. The jet plow is fitted with hydraulic pressure nozzles that create a downward and backward flow to fluidize the sediment within the trench, allowing the transmission cables to settle to the bottom of the trench under their own weight before the sediments settle back into the trench.

Terrestrial Cable Installation. The general sequence for installing the terrestrial DC transmission cables along the road and railroad ROWs would be conducted in steps as follows:

- Initial clearing operations (where necessary) and storm water- and erosion-control installation
- Trench excavation
- Cable installation
- Backfilling
- Restoration and revegetation.

The typical trench would be up to 9 feet (2.7 meters) wide at the top and approximately 3 feet (0.9 meters) deep to allow for proper depth and a 1-foot (0.3-meter) separation required between the two transmission cables to allow for heat dissipation. If shallow bedrock is encountered, the rock would be removed by the most suitable technique given the relative hardness, fracture susceptibility, and expected volume of material. The operation of the transmission cables would result in the generation of heat, which would reduce the electrical conductivity of the cables; therefore, prior to laying the cables, the trenches would be backfilled with low thermal resistivity material such as sand to prevent heat from one cable affecting a nearby cable. There would be a protective concrete cover, or layer of weak concrete directly above the low thermal resistive backfill material. The whole assembly would have a marker tape placed 1 to 2 feet (0.3 to 0.6 meters) above the cables.

For crossings of waterbodies such as Catskill Creek and numerous small streams, five dry-ditch crossing methods would be used for installation of the transmission line. These methods are as follows:

- *Attachment to a Bridge.* Where available and feasible, the transmission line would be affixed directly to an existing railroad bridge as it spans the waterbody.
- *Flume Crossing Method.* This method involves installing a flume pipe to carry the stream water around the work area, allowing the trenching to be done in a dry condition, and limiting the amount of sediment that can enter the waterbody.
- *Dam and Pump Crossing Method.* For this method, the stream is dammed upstream of the work area and a pump and hose are used to transport the stream flow through the trenching area to a point downstream where it would be discharged back to the streambed.
- *HDD.* Under this method, cable conduits would be installed under the streambed using HDD and avoiding any disturbance to the streambed, and the cables would then be pulled through the conduits.
- *Open Cut.* The open cut method of construction involves digging an open trench across the streambed, laying the cable, and backfilling the trenched area without diverting the stream around the work area.

The waterbody crossing methods would be determined based on the NYSDPS stream width classification, NYSDEC stream type classification, and conditions present during the time of construction in accordance with NYSDPS's *Environmental Management and Construction Standards and Practices for Underground Transmission and Distribution Facilities in New York State* (NYSDPS 2003).

In wetland areas, the cables would generally be installed by trenching. The typical sequence of activities would include vegetation clearing, installation of erosion controls, trenching, cable installation, backfilling, and ground surface restoration. Equipment mats or low-ground-pressure tracked vehicles would be used to minimize compaction and rutting impacts on wetland soils. To expedite revegetation of wetlands, the top 1 foot (0.3 meters) of wetland soil would be stripped from over the trench, retained, and subsequently spread back over and across the backfilled trench area to facilitate wetland regrowth by maintaining physical and chemical characteristics of the surface soil and preserving the native seed bank. Trench plugs or other methods would be used to prevent draining of wetlands or surface waters down into the trench.

The permanent ROW required for maintenance and operation of the transmission line along the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project route would be approximately 20 feet (6 meters) wide for both railroad and roadway ROWs. The permanent ROW would provide protection of the transmission cables against third-party damage and would facilitate any required maintenance or repair.

Measures to Minimize Environmental Impacts. As part of its application development process, the Applicant detailed a number of industry-accepted best management practices (BMPs) that it would undertake to avoid or reduce environmental impacts during construction and operations of the proposed CHPE Project. The Applicant would develop a final Environmental Management and Construction Plan (EM&CP), which documents environmental and construction management procedures and plans to be implemented during the proposed CHPE Project construction activities and during facility operation. These impact reduction measures, collectively referred to as BMPs, have been proposed by the Applicant for use during construction and operation to protect environmental, agricultural, cultural, and other potentially sensitive resources along the proposed CHPE Project route. These BMPs have been incorporated into the NYSPSC Certificate to the Applicant and are therefore requirements that must be followed. The Applicant-proposed measures have been taken into account in the environmental analyses conducted for the EIS. These measures include development of a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plan, time-of-year work restrictions, water quality monitoring, biological studies, work site restoration, and inspection and reporting.

S.6.4 Operations and Maintenance

The proposed CHPE Project has an expected life span of 40 years or more. During this period, it is expected that the transmission system would maintain an energy availability factor of 95 percent, meaning that the transmission system would be delivering electricity 95 percent of the time, with the remaining 5 percent allocated for scheduled and unscheduled maintenance.

The HVDC and HVAC transmission cables would be designed to be relatively maintenance-free and operate within the specified working conditions. However, selected portions or aspects of the transmission system would be inspected to ensure equipment integrity is maintained.

ROW Maintenance. During operation of the proposed CHPE Project, vegetation clearing in the transmission line ROW would be performed on an as-needed basis. Vegetation management would include mowing, selective cutting to prevent the establishment of large trees (i.e., greater than 20 feet [6 meters] tall) directly over the transmission line, and vegetation clearing on an as-needed basis to conduct repairs.

Transmission Cable Repairs. While not anticipated, it is possible that over the expected 40-year lifespan of the proposed CHPE Project, the transmission cables could be damaged, either by human activity or natural processes. Before operation of the proposed CHPE Project begins, an Emergency Repair and Response Plan (ERRP) would be prepared to identify procedures and contractors necessary to perform maintenance and emergency repairs. The typical procedure for repair of a failure within the aquatic and terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project route is described as follows:

- **Aquatic Transmission Cable Repair.** In the event of aquatic cable repair, the location of the problem would be identified and crews of qualified repair personnel would be dispatched to the work location. A portion of the transmission cable would be raised to the surface, the damaged portion of the cable cut, and a new cable section would be spliced in place by specialized jointing personnel. Once repairs were completed, the transmission cable would be reburied using a remotely operated vehicle (ROV) jetting device.
- **Terrestrial Transmission Cable Repair.** In the event of terrestrial transmission cable repair, contractors would excavate around the location of the problem and along the transmission cable for the extent of cable to be repaired or replaced. Specialized jointing personnel would remove the damaged cable and install new cable. Once complete, the transmission cable trench would be

backfilled and the work area restored using the same methods as described for the original installation.

Transmission Service. The maximum electrical power delivery capability for the proposed CHPE Project under normal conditions would be 1,000 MW. The ultimate maximum capacity would be determined during final design of the proposed CHPE Project. The estimated short-time (i.e., 2-hour) emergency overload capability would be approximately 1,150 MW for the transmission system.

The NYISO would be the controlling authority for the proposed CHPE Project and the operator of the system where the energy would originate, Hydro-Québec, would coordinate with the NYISO.

S.7 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Detailed Analysis

Several technology, alignment, and construction alternatives were considered but eliminated for various reasons from further detailed study. Alternatives considered but dismissed are discussed in the following paragraphs, along with the reasons for dismissal.

S.7.1 Alternative Upland Transmission Line Routes

The Applicant considered a range of terrestrial routes for the transmission line. These alternatives included consideration of transmission line alternatives that would have been installed either on overhead structures or buried within a new or existing terrestrial ROW, rather than in Lake Champlain or the Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers. An alternatives analysis report documenting the evaluation of alternative routes was submitted by the Applicant to the USACE in July 2013 as part of the Applicant's Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit application. This report is included in the EIS as **Appendix B**. DOE determined that these alternative transmission routes were not reasonable due to engineering feasibility, cost, and logistical considerations (e.g., legal limitations), and, therefore, they have been eliminated from further consideration in the EIS.

Alternatives considered included the following:

- Constructing the transmission line in and along existing electrical transmission line ROWs from the U.S.-Canada border to New York City
- Constructing the transmission line in and along existing highway and roadway ROWs
- Constructing the transmission line within existing railroad ROWs beyond those identified as part of the proposed CHPE Project
- Using combinations of railroad, electrical, and roadway ROWs
- Development of a new electrical transmission line ROW.

S.7.2 Conservation and Demand Reduction Measures

NYISO has projected that New York State's annual energy demand, without efficiency measures, would increase by 14 percent from approximately 163,000 GWh in 2011 to approximately 186,000 GWh in 2022, an increase of 23,000 GWh. Including implementation of the energy-efficiency measures identified in the 2009 State Energy Plan, NYISO forecasts that energy demand would increase to approximately 173,500 GWh, an increase of 10,500 GWh (7 percent). For the New York City location zone, NYISO forecasts that energy demand will increase more rapidly than statewide, rising by 9 percent between 2011 and 2022 (NYISO 2012). Consequently, NYISO has demonstrated energy-efficiency and conservation

measures alone would not address southeastern New York's increasing demand for electricity and that a mix of energy efficiency, demand reduction, and new generation would be required to meet future energy demand. Therefore, DOE determined that the conservation and demand-reduction measures alternative alone is not a reasonable alternative and is therefore not addressed further in the EIS.

S.7.3 Use of HVAC Versus HVDC Technology

Two types of transmission technologies could be used to transport electricity from Canada to the New York City metropolitan area, namely HVAC or HVDC technology. The transmission technology selection greatly influences the system design and construction and the resulting potential environmental impacts.

AC Transmission Technology. An overhead HVAC transmission system is the traditional method of expanding transmission capacity within and between utility service territories. HVAC transmission by overhead lines is efficient for distances up to 400 miles (644 km). Construction of new overhead HVAC transmission cables would also require a new or expanded ROW for utility corridors, and in metropolitan and suburban areas, land costs are high and public concern regarding aesthetics and potential environmental and health effects (e.g., EMF) from an overhead HVAC transmission line result in few such projects proceeding beyond the planning stage.

DC Transmission Technology. The primary advantage of long-distance HVDC transmission technology lies in its efficiency. Because there is no need to charge the capacitance (i.e., measure of energy potential) of a transmission cable as is required for an AC transmission line, transmission losses are significantly reduced. In addition, HVDC only requires two conductors instead of three and allows for reduced separation between conductors. As a result, the need for an expansive new ROW is reduced and construction costs are lowered.

The Applicant has proposed an HVDC transmission system for the following reasons:

- **Greater Flexibility.** Long-distance HVDC transmission lines can be buried underwater and underground, and installed overhead, thus providing more flexibility with ROW planning.
- **Reduced ROW Requirements.** The proposed HVDC technology would require less ROW than comparably sized overhead HVAC transmission lines. The transmission cables would be buried, and the total corridor requirements typically would be approximately 15 feet (5 meters) wide in terrestrial sections and 30 feet (9 meters) wide in aquatic sections. An overhead HVAC transmission line of similar capacity would require a terrestrial ROW of up to 150 feet (46 meters).
- **Minimized Exposure to Electric Fields When Buried.** Independent studies have shown that buried cables, such as those proposed for the CHPE Project, would have no electric fields at the ground surface (WHO 2012). The burial of the transmission line at the anticipated depths reduces the electric field exposure compared to an overhead transmission system.
- **Greater Reliability.** Underwater and underground armored HVDC transmission cables have a higher reliability than overhead HVAC transmission cables, primarily because they are less likely to be subject to damage from weather, collision, or vandalism. They also operate within a constant temperature regime; therefore, they are not subject to thermal derating at high ambient temperatures.
- **Enhanced Security.** Since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, energy infrastructure security has become a national priority. The physical separation of transmission infrastructure in

multiple corridors is one means of enhancing security, as is the installation of such facilities underwater and underground.

- *Reactive Power Requirements.* HVAC transmission is limited by the amount of reactive power required to deliver active power through transmission lines, so that long-distance power transmission by HVAC lines is restricted due to limitations on how far reactive power will travel.
- *Greater Control to Improve System Stability.* HVDC interconnections to AC transmission systems have the advantage of being able to enhance the controllability and stability of the AC transmission system by allowing the operation to regulate active power flow in the receiving transmission line.

For these reasons, the Applicant determined that only HVDC transmission technology would meet the objectives of the proposed CHPE Project; therefore, the use of HVDC technology is a component of the Applicant's preferred project proposal evaluated in the EIS. In light of this, DOE determined that the alternative of using HVAC transmission lines to deliver power into the New York City metropolitan area was not reasonable as an alternative from the Applicant, and therefore was eliminated from further consideration in the EIS.

S.7.4 Interconnection and Converter Station Alternatives

As part of its initial system planning evaluations, the Applicant considered a number of different locations for interconnecting the proposed CHPE Project transmission system into the grid and for siting the DC to AC converter station that would be required for this interconnection.

The Applicant conducted an Interconnection Feasibility Study to evaluate potential alternative POIs relating to the reliability of the New York State transmission system (CHPEI 2010). The feasibility study evaluated possible POIs for the HVAC transmission interconnection at four locations in the NYC metropolitan area. The feasibility study determined that the NYPA Astoria Annex substation was the preferred location for the interconnection. The feasibility study indicated that the following locations were not feasible because of the reasons stated:

- The West 49th Street 345-kV Substation was not a practical POI location due to insufficient space for the interconnection equipment and excessive costs that would have rendered the proposed CHPE Project economically infeasible.
- The Sherman Creek POI would have required construction of a new step-down transformer station at a location where space is limited, and because ConEd indicated its preference that the Sherman Creek substation not be used as the POI.
- Engineering and environmental constraints associated with installing the HVAC transmission cables at the Gowanus 345-kV Substation rendered the site as an unreasonable POI location for the proposed CHPE Project.

Due to the reasons identified in the foregoing paragraphs, DOE determined that the West 49th Street, Sherman Creek, and Gowanus POIs were not reasonable alternatives and, therefore, were eliminated from further consideration in the EIS.

S.7.5 Alternatives to the Luyster Creek Converter Station

In conjunction with the identification of feasible POIs in the New York City metropolitan area, the Applicant identified possible sites for construction of the converter station in proximity to the POIs. Sites that were identified and evaluated are discussed as follows.

Gowanus POI Converter Station Location Alternatives. The Applicant identified the following three potential converter station sites near the existing Gowanus 345-kV Substation for evaluation:

- 611 Smith Street in Brooklyn, New York
- 688 Court Street in Brooklyn, New York
- Property within the Sunset Industrial Park in Brooklyn, New York.

However, due to concerns over environmental contamination along potential transmission cable routes and at the converter station sites, the presence of existing infrastructure and heavy vessel traffic could prohibit or further complicate the installation of the HVDC transmission cables. Therefore, locating the converter station near the Gowanus Substation was deemed to be unreasonable, and eliminated from further consideration.

Yonkers HVDC Converter Station Alternative. The Applicant identified and evaluated two potential locations in Yonkers for the 1,000-MW converter station. The first property is on Wells Avenue in Yonkers, between Alexander Street and Woodworth Avenue. The Wells Avenue site in Yonkers was included as part of the August 2010 proposal for the CHPE Project because it met the minimum size requirements, allowed for an interconnection to a number of the potential POIs under consideration, and was available to the Applicant. This previously proposed converter station site was dismissed from further consideration during the NYSPSC review process and is not included in the NYSPSC Certificate issued to the Applicant; therefore, this site is not considered further by DOE in this EIS.

A second Yonkers converter station site considered by the Applicant was at the former Yonkers (otherwise known as Glenwood) Power Station on Ravine Avenue. However, the size of the parcel (2.0 acres [0.8 hectares]) does not meet the minimum requirements for the converter station, and, therefore, this site was not considered a reasonable alternative by DOE and was eliminated from further consideration in the EIS.

Harlem River Rail Yard. An alternative converter station site was identified at a site in the Bronx along the terrestrial transmission system route at approximate MP 330.8 at a site owned by NYSDOT. However, NYSDOT declined to make that site available to the Applicant as a converter station, and consequently the Harlem River Rail Yard site was not considered a reasonable alternative by DOE and was eliminated from further consideration in the EIS.

S.8 Summary of Potential Impacts Associated with the Proposed CHPE Project

A summary of potential impacts from the construction, operation, maintenance, and emergency repairs associated with the proposed CHPE Project and the No Action Alternative are presented in the following resource area discussions and summarized in **Table S-1**. The full impact analysis, along with Applicant-proposed measures and BMPs to avoid or minimize potential impacts, is presented in **Chapter 5** (Environmental Consequences) and **Chapter 6** (Cumulative Impacts) of the EIS.

While no specific alternative power generation sources have been identified under the No Action Alternative, it is assumed that future demand growth for electric power would be met by some mix of other power generation sources. A full discussion of the No Action Alternative is provided in **Chapter 4** of the EIS.

Table S-1. Summary of Potential Impacts Associated with the Proposed CHPE Project

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
General Overview					
State	New York	New York	New York	New York	New York
Counties	Clinton Essex Washington	Albany Greene Saratoga Schenectady Washington	Dutchess Greene Orange Putnam Rockland Ulster Westchester	Bronx New York Queens	N/A
Milepost Range	0–101	101–228	228–324	324–336	N/A
Corridor Type	Aquatic	Terrestrial	Aquatic/Terrestrial	Aquatic/Terrestrial	N/A
Construction Method(s)	Jet Plow, Shear Plow	Trenching, HDD	Jet Plow, Trenching, HDD	Jet Plow, Trenching, HDD	N/A
Construction Period(s)	Cable Installation: 7 months	Cable Installation: 3 years	Cable Installation: 5 months	Cable Installation: 7 months Converter Station: 1 year	N/A
Impacts on Resource Areas from Construction and Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs of the Proposed CHPE Project					
Land Use	Construction: Temporary, non-significant increase in limitations on water-based uses. Operations: * Potential for future limitations on water-based uses or access during inspection activities; use limitations from maintenance and emergency repairs would be shorter-term and more localized than for construction.	Construction: Temporary, non-significant disruption of normal routines due to access limitations from presence of construction activities. Operations: Potential for future land use restrictions for operations and maintenance. Emergency repair impacts similar to construction, but shorter-term and with more localized disturbance.	Construction/Operations: Same temporary use and access limitations or disruptions and potential future land use restrictions as Lake Champlain and Overland segments.	Construction/Operations: Same temporary use limitations or disruptions as Lake Champlain and Overland segments.	None expected. No new land use impacts would occur.

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Transportation and Traffic	<p>Construction: Non-significant, temporary, and localized use limitations or disruptions on navigation, ferries, and other commercial and recreational transportation uses in Lake Champlain and in the Champlain Canal.</p> <p>Operations: Potential for future limitations on vessel anchoring.</p>	<p>Construction: Non-significant disruptions on railroad operations, traffic flow on New York State Route 22, and city streets in Schenectady and street crossings.</p> <p>Operations: Potential for future temporary access limitations on roadways and railways.</p>	<p>Construction: Non-significant, temporary, and localized use limitations or disruptions affecting navigation, ferries, and other commercial and recreational transportation uses in the Hudson River. Non-significant disruptions affecting railroad operations and traffic flow on U.S. Route 9W in Stony Point, Haverstraw, and Clarkstown.</p> <p>Operations: Same use limitations as Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	<p>Construction: Non-significant, temporary, and localized use limitations or disruptions affecting navigation, ferries, and other commercial and recreational transportation uses in the Harlem and East rivers. Non-significant disruptions affecting railroad operations in the Bronx and city traffic flow in Astoria.</p> <p>Operations: Same use limitations as Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	None expected. No new transportation, navigation, or traffic impacts would occur.
Water Resources and Quality	<p>Construction/Operations: Non-significant, localized increases in turbidity and downstream sedimentation and resuspension of contaminated sediments in surface water by water jetting. Water quality impacts would be within regulatory standards.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Localized and non-significant increases in turbidity, suspension of sediments in surface waters, nearby groundwater wells, and wetland areas during construction.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment for the aquatic portion of the transmission line route and the Overland Segment for the terrestrial portion.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment for the aquatic portion of the transmission line route and the Overland Segment for the terrestrial portion.</p>	None expected. No new water resources and quality impacts would occur.

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Aquatic Habitats and Species	<p>Construction: Localized non-significant disturbance to 550 acres (223 hectares) of lake bottom resulting in habitat degradation, avoidance, or loss; noise, and vibration; impacts on benthic communities; potential for accidental exposure to hazardous materials. Potential non-significant mortalities of individuals among non-mobile species could occur from inability to adapt to new sediment conditions.</p> <p>Operations: Non-significant generation of magnetic fields detectable, and potentially avoided, by some fish and shellfish species, sediment temperature increase above the cables during operations that might lead to localized habitat avoidance of benthic infauna. Emergency repair effects expected to be less than construction because they would be shorter-term and more localized.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Disturbance of streambeds would be the same as the for Lake Champlain Segment with temporary, localized, non-significant stream habitat degradation or loss from increased turbidity and downstream sedimentation and resuspension of contaminated sediments in surface water during the streambed restoration process.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Riverbed disturbance of 485 acres (196 hectares) would involve the same impacts as indicated for Lake Champlain Segment. Impacts on streams in terrestrial portions of the route would be the same as indicated for the Overland Segment.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Riverbed disturbance of 35 acres (15 hectares) would involve the same impacts as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segments.</p>	<p>None expected. No new impacts on aquatic habitats and species would occur.</p>

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Aquatic Protected and Sensitive Species	<p>Construction: No effects on federally listed species. Localized non-significant effects on individuals among state-listed fish and shellfish species similar to those for non-listed species.</p> <p>Operations: Same effects as for non-listed aquatic species; detection and potential avoidance of magnetic fields and sediment temperature resulting in habitat avoidance of infauna during operations. Emergency repair effects would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: No effects on federally listed or state-listed aquatic species expected.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Localized non-significant effects on individuals among federally listed and state-listed sturgeon species, including habitat degradation or loss, noise, and vibration; potential vessel collisions with shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon; increased turbidity and sedimentation and redeposition of sediments; potential for accidental exposure to hazardous materials that could affect abilities to forage, breathe, and reproduce.</p> <p>Operations: Same effects as for non-listed aquatic species; detection and potential avoidance of magnetic fields and sediment temperature resulting in habitat avoidance of infauna during operations. Emergency repair effects would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same non-significant effects on federally listed and state-listed sturgeon species as indicated for the Hudson River Segment.</p>	<p>None expected. No new effects on aquatic protected and sensitive species would occur.</p>

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Terrestrial Habitats and Species	<p>Construction/Operations: No significant impacts would be expected because the proposed CHPE Project route is installed underwater in this segment.</p>	<p>Construction: Permanent conversion of approximately 60 acres (24 hectares) of fringe forest habitat to scrub/shrub habitat. Non-significant, localized noise, dust, soil compaction, and habitat fragmentation impacts including removal of vegetation, habitat avoidance, and changes in species composition. Permanently reduced abundance would not be expected; known responses to narrow corridors do not involve permanent avoidance or population displacement; species could traverse the corridor post-construction.</p> <p>Operations: Some wildlife species would detect magnetic fields and heat generated by the transmission line during operations, but these conditions are unlikely to reduce health or productivity. Periodic vegetation maintenance in transmission line ROW would compact vegetation and soils and produce temporary fugitive dust impacts. Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same conversion of some fringe forest habitat to scrub/shrub habitat during construction, as described for the Overland Segment. Same non-significant, localized habitat alterations and resulting impacts as indicated for construction in the Overland Segment. Same non-significant, localized impacts from operations, maintenance and emergency repairs as indicated for the Overland Segment.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: No significant construction impacts on terrestrial vegetation and habitats expected because installation would occur in the Hudson River and within developed urban land with little natural vegetation and habitat. Non-significant, localized disturbance of birds and bats that could display habitat or feeding avoidance during construction. Same non-significant, localized impacts from operations, maintenance and emergency repairs as indicated for the Overland Segment.</p>	<p>None expected. No new impacts on terrestrial habitats and species would occur.</p>

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Terrestrial Protected and Sensitive Species	<p>Construction: Non-significant, localized noise or vessel lighting disturbances of federally and state-listed Indiana bat.</p> <p>Operations: Operations are not expected to result in reduced health or productivity of the Indiana bat. No effects anticipated during maintenance. Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction: Conversion and disturbance of fringe forest habitat along the ROWs may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, federally listed and state-listed species, including the Karner blue butterfly and migratory birds, potentially present during construction. Non-significant, localized noise disturbances during foraging and roosting could temporarily displace listed species and migratory birds.</p> <p>Operations: Vegetation maintenance could disturb Karner blue butterfly habitat, but avoidance measures are expected to be effective in preventing impacts. Operations and maintenance are not expected to adversely affect other terrestrial protected and sensitive species. Effects from emergency repairs would be similar to construction but for a shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction: Same non-significant effects on federally listed and state-listed species and migratory birds as indicated for Lake Champlain and Overland segments. Similar non-significant construction effects on bald eagles that might be encountered when activities are underway.</p> <p>Operations: Operations and maintenance are not expected to adversely affect terrestrial protected and sensitive species.</p>	<p>Construction: No effects on federally listed species because there is no suitable habitat for them where construction would occur. Non-significant noise disturbance effects on state-listed and migratory bird species are possible.</p> <p>Operations: Operations and maintenance are not expected to adversely affect terrestrial protected and sensitive species.</p>	<p>None expected. No new effects on terrestrial protected and sensitive species would occur.</p>

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Wetlands	<p>Construction/Operations: None expected.</p>	<p>Construction: Localized potential for non-significant impacts on 67.4 acres (27.3 hectares) of wetlands; potential habitat disturbance; Significant, permanent change from wetland forest to scrub-shrub habitat in some areas resulting in habitat degradation and loss.</p> <p>Operations: Non-significant impacts from operations because heat would dissipate well below the water surface. Periodic vegetation maintenance in transmission line ROW would compact vegetation and soils and result in temporary fugitive dust impacts. Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction: Localized potential for non-significant impacts on 0.8 acres (0.3 hectares) of wetlands including one brook under which the transmission line would be installed, potentially resulting in habitat disturbance.</p> <p>Operations: Same non-significant, localized impacts from maintenance and emergency repairs as described for the Overland Segment.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: None expected.</p>	<p>None expected. No new wetlands impacts would occur.</p>

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Geology and Soils	<p>Construction: Temporary disturbance of 127,000 cubic yards (97,000 cubic meters) of sediment.</p> <p>Operations: Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction: Temporary disturbance of approximately 585 acres (237 hectares) of upland area. Non-significant impacts from bedrock blasting and removal, increased erosion and sedimentation, and soil compaction on land and sediment disturbance in waterways and wetlands.</p> <p>Operations: Negligible increase in soil erosion and sedimentation from periodic vegetation maintenance. Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction: Temporary disturbance of 229,000 cubic yards (175,000 cubic meters) of sediment. Temporary disturbance of approximately 47 acres (19 hectares) of upland area. Upland bedrock blasting and removal possible; erosion, sedimentation, and soil compaction over land.</p> <p>Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Temporary disturbance of 11,000 cubic yards (8,400 cubic meters) of sediment. Temporary disturbance of approximately 14 acres (6 hectares) of upland area. Otherwise, same impacts as indicated for the Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	<p>None expected. No new geology and soils impacts would occur.</p>
Cultural Resources	<p>Construction: Potential adverse effects on 5 underwater archaeological sites, 2 terrestrial sites extending into Lake Champlain, and 2 National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-listed sites.</p> <p>Operations: No adverse effects are expected.</p>	<p>Construction: Potential adverse effects on 34 terrestrial archaeological sites, 16 NRHP-listed or -eligible sites, and 1 cemetery.</p> <p>Operations: No adverse effects are expected.</p>	<p>Construction: Potential adverse effects on 8 terrestrial archaeological sites, 6 underwater archaeological sites, 7 NRHP-listed or -eligible sites, and 1 cemetery.</p> <p>Operations: Potential visual impacts on 1 NRHP-listed site.</p>	<p>Construction: Potential adverse effects on 7 terrestrial archaeological sites and 10 NRHP-listed or -eligible sites.</p> <p>Operations: None expected.</p>	<p>None expected. No new cultural resources effects would occur.</p>

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Visual Resources	<p>Construction: Non-significant impacts on visual resources from temporary presence of construction vessels and activities.</p> <p>Operations: Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction: Non-significant impacts on visual resources from temporary presence of construction equipment and activities.</p> <p>Operations: Non-significant impacts from operation and maintenance of cooling stations consisting of a 128-square foot (12-square meter) building. Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment for the aquatic portion of the transmission line route and the Overland Segment for the terrestrial portion.</p>	<p>Construction: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment for the aquatic portion of the transmission line route and the Overland Segment for the terrestrial portion.</p>	None expected. No new impacts on visual resources would occur.
Infrastructure	<p>Construction: Non-significant impacts include intersecting utility lines, potential service disruption, increased fuel use, and generation of solid waste.</p> <p>Operations: Increased reliability and capacity of electricity provision. Increased fuel use during maintenance or emergency repairs.</p>	<p>Construction: Non-significant impacts include intersecting utility lines, potential service disruption of public water supply, increased fuel use, storm water management, and solid waste management.</p> <p>Operations: Increased reliability and capacity of electricity provision. Increased fuel use during maintenance or emergency repairs.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment for the aquatic portion of the transmission line route and the Overland Segment for the terrestrial portion.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment for the aquatic portion of the transmission line route and the Overland Segment for the terrestrial portion.</p>	None expected. No new infrastructure impacts would occur.

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Recreation	<p>Construction: Temporarily limited access to water area in active construction zone. Non-significant impacts on recreational resources from temporary presence of construction vessels and activities.</p> <p>Operations: Non-significant impacts during operations and maintenance. Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction: Potential lane restrictions on roads near recreational facilities. Non-significant impacts on recreational resources from temporary presence of construction equipment and activities.</p> <p>Operations: Emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment for the aquatic portion of the transmission line route and the Overland Segment for the terrestrial portion.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment for the aquatic portion of the transmission line route and the Overland Segment for the terrestrial portion.</p>	None expected. No new impacts on recreational resources would occur.
Public Health and Safety	<p>Construction: Potential health and safety impacts on construction workers; no impacts are expected on general public health and safety.</p> <p>Operations: Potential health and safety impacts on contractors during operations; emergency repair impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Impacts would not be expected from magnetic fields because magnetic field levels from the proposed CHPE Project would be within NYSPSC guidelines. Otherwise impacts expected to be same as indicated for Lake Champlain Segment.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	None expected. No new public health and safety impacts would occur.

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Hazardous Materials and Wastes	<p>Construction: Storage of hazardous materials presents potential for spill contamination of water or land (staging areas); generation of waste and debris during installation.</p> <p>Operations: Limited amounts of oils, solvents, antifreeze, and other hazardous materials generated from routine maintenance and inspections; less than construction for emergency repair.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment.</p>	None expected. No new hazardous materials and wastes impacts would occur.
Air Quality	<p>Construction: Localized impacts from equipment and vessel exhaust. GHG emissions from use of vehicles and equipment with diesel fuel-powered internal combustion engines.</p> <p>Operations: GHG emissions from electricity sources used to power the converter station and cooling stations. Emergency repair impacts less than construction.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Localized, intermittent impacts from use of construction equipment, particularly from vehicle exhaust, fugitive dust, and GHG emissions.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain and Overland segments. In addition, upon operation of the proposed CHPE Project, New York State power generation emissions would be reduced by an estimated by 1.5 million tons of CO₂, 751 tons of SO₂, and 641 tons of NO_x while meeting its existing annual electric power demand.</p>	None expected. No new air quality impacts would occur; however, there would be no project-related GHG emissions reductions.

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Noise	<p>Construction: Localized temporary noise level increases on the water and at land staging areas.</p> <p>Operations: No significant impacts are expected.</p>	<p>Construction: Localized temporary noise level increases in residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Temporary, localized construction noise impacts indicated for terrestrial and aquatic habitats and species.</p> <p>Operations: Short-term noise level changes during inspections and maintenance of the transmission line ROW. Emergency repair noise impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction. Noise levels would be within state thresholds for operation of cooling stations and would not be significant.</p>	<p>Construction: Localized temporary noise level increases in residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Temporary, localized construction noise impacts indicated for terrestrial and aquatic habitats and species.</p> <p>Operations: Short-term noise level changes during inspections and maintenance of the transmission line ROW. Emergency repair noise impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction. Noise levels would be within state thresholds for operation of cooling stations and would not be significant.</p>	<p>Construction: Localized temporary noise level increases in residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Temporary, localized construction noise impacts indicated for terrestrial and aquatic habitats and species.</p> <p>Operations: Short-term noise level changes during inspections and maintenance of the transmission line ROW. Emergency repair noise impacts would be shorter-term and more localized than those from construction. Noise levels would be within state thresholds for operation of cooling stations and would not be significant.</p>	<p>None expected. No new noise impacts would occur.</p>
Socioeconomics	<p>Construction: Negligible increase in local employment and demand for local purchases. Temporary housing required for a small number of construction workers to the area.</p> <p>Operations: Potential electricity cost savings to some end users.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Real property tax revenue benefits; otherwise same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	<p>Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain and Overland segments.</p>	<p>None expected. No new impacts on socioeconomics would occur.</p>

Comparison Factor/ Resource Area	Proposed CHPE Project				No Action Alternative
	Lake Champlain Segment	Overland Segment	Hudson River Segment	New York City Metropolitan Area Segment	
Environmental Justice	Construction/Operations: No disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations.	Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment.	Construction/Operations: Same as indicated for the Lake Champlain Segment.	Construction/Operations: Although populations in this segment have higher percentages of minority and low-income populations than New York State, no disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects are expected.	None expected. No new effects on environmental justice would occur.

Note: * In this table, “Operations:” refers to operational, maintenance, and potential emergency repair activities during the operational phase of the proposed CHPE Project.

S.8.1 Land Use

Construction and operation of the proposed CHPE Project would be consistent with relevant land uses plans and policies, including the New York State Coastal Management Program (CMP). New York State Department of State conditionally concurred with the consistency certification of the proposed CHPE Project under the enforceable policies of the New York State CMP subject to the implementation of certain conditions. These conditions, along with other measures to minimize impacts, have been incorporated into the proposed CHPE Project design by the Applicant and reflected in the NYSPSC Certificate for the proposed CHPE Project (NYSPSC 2013).

Impacts from Construction

Construction activities associated with the installation of the aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project would result in additional vessel traffic and an area immediately surrounding the work site that would be off-limits to other vessels. However, aquatic installation activities would not prohibit any water-dependent commercial and recreational uses of adjacent areas during the few hours that construction vessels would be present or during the approximate 2-week period when HDD operations would be occurring. Because the aquatic transmission line would be installed along state-owned submerged lands in Lake Champlain and the Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers, the Applicant would be required to obtain an easement from the New York State Office of General Services and pay associated fees.

Construction activities associated with the installation of the terrestrial portion of the transmission line, which would be within roadway and railroad ROWs, would generally be compatible with existing road and railroad operations, but could result in temporary disturbances that disrupt these operations, such as roadway lane closures or reduced shoulders, and presence of heavy equipment and construction personnel. Construction activities on land would introduce temporary disturbances to normal routines (e.g., limitations to property access and the presence of construction activities or equipment). The Applicant would be required to obtain leases, easements, construction permits, revocable permits/consent, highway work permits, use and occupancy agreements/permits, or other agreements from private and public landowners authorizing use of land for the terrestrial construction activities or additional workspace to support the construction activities (e.g., at HDD locations or for construction staging area facilities).

Temporary storage and staging activities to support transmission line installation would be within existing commercial or industrial areas. These activities would be compatible with surrounding land uses.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

The proposed CHPE Project transmission line would generally be underwater or underground and, therefore, it would not be visible and would not interfere with surrounding land uses.

Vessel anchorage would be prohibited in the transmission line ROW for the lifespan of the CHPE Project and enforced by local authorities to prevent the possibility of anchor damage. Periodic inspection of aquatic portions of the transmission line using ship-mounted instruments would result in a negligible amount of additional vessel traffic; however, no impacts on water-dependent commercial and recreational uses would occur. Emergency repair activities, if necessary, along the aquatic portion of the transmission line could result in temporary impacts on existing commercial and recreational uses in the immediate vicinity of the work site due to the presence of cable repair vessels at the site of the fault.

Impacts on land use would result from operation of the proposed CHPE Project because future use of the land within the transmission line ROW would be limited for the lifespan of the transmission line. The Applicant would be granted either exclusive control of (via fee or easement for private property), or other appropriate interest or rights to use (via revocable consent or use and occupancy permit for public ROWs such as roadways or state land or lease for the railroad ROWs) a 20-foot (6-meter)-wide transmission line ROW. Property owners granting the use of portions of their lands as the transmission line ROW would be prohibited from taking any action on that land that would damage or interfere with the Applicant's maintenance, inspection, and emergency repair activities with the ROW. It is anticipated that easements negotiated with private landowners would be bilateral easements in which the Applicant and landowner mutually agree to the easement provisions. While use of eminent domain would be avoided to the maximum extent practicable, limited easements or leases for the transmission line ROW in areas outside of the roadway and railroad ROWs might need to be obtained via eminent domain as part of the NYSPSC Article VII approval process. However, property owners would receive just compensation for this loss of use.

Periodic inspection of the terrestrial portions of the transmission line ROW and the cooling stations and converter station, and maintenance of the cooling stations and converter station, would generally be non-intrusive and would not disrupt (i.e., disturb, interrupt, or otherwise change) adjacent land uses. Emergency repairs of the transmission line, cooling stations, or converter station could result in temporary disturbances (e.g., limitations to or temporary changes to property access from the presence of emergency repair activities or equipment).

S.8.2 Transportation and Traffic

Construction and operation of the proposed CHPE Project would not have significant impacts, occurring intermittently for short durations, to the existing aquatic- and terrestrial-based transportation and traffic network within the proposed construction corridor. Applicant-proposed measures to avoid or minimize impacts have been incorporated into the proposed CHPE Project.

Impacts from Construction

Impacts on aquatic navigational operations along the proposed CHPE Project route would occur from the installation of the aquatic transmission cables. Impacts would occur on commercial and recreational transportation uses in Lake Champlain, the Champlain Canal, the Hudson River, the Harlem and East rivers, and Spuyten Duyvil Creek. Construction activities associated with the installation of aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project would include the generation of additional vessel traffic, which on a small scale could inconvenience and create navigational obstacles for commercial and recreational water-dependent uses. Transmission cable installation would not prohibit water-dependent recreational or commercial activities because vessels could either transit around the work site or use a different area of the waterway. The guidance cables for the cable ferry crossing in Lake Champlain would be temporarily removed from the lakebed prior to the installation of the transmission cables, which may put the ferry temporarily out of service. Installation of the cables would be coordinated with the ferry operator to minimize impacts on ferry operations. Disturbance to recreational and commercial uses would be temporary and localized at the work site. Construction would be coordinated with the USACE and USCG to avoid impacts on aquatic navigation, including avoidance of Federal-, state-, and private-owned navigation aids such as buoys and signs for boaters. For areas where the proposed aquatic transmission cables pass beneath bridges, construction would be coordinated with the owner of the bridge regarding clearances, distance from abutments and existing infrastructure, cable burial, and installation methods.

Impacts on railroad operations and traffic on roadways along the terrestrial portion of the proposed CHPE Project route would occur from the installation of the transmission cables. Impacts would occur on New

York State Route 22 in Dresden and U.S. Route 9W in Haverstraw and Clarkstown, city streets in Schenectady and Queens, at ports used for land-based support, street crossings, and associated railroad corridors along the proposed CHPE Project route. Construction activities associated with the installation of the terrestrial transmission cables would generally be compatible with existing road and railroad operations, but could result in temporary minor disruptions (i.e., delays, temporary cancellations, or other changes) to these operations. Impacts would be limited to those impacting the flow of traffic which would occur when there is construction along the roadways or when roadways are crossed using trenching methods. Traffic levels of service would likely decrease due to slightly slower speeds through construction zones but traffic flow would be maintained; therefore, impacts on traffic levels would not be significant. A Maintenance and Protection of Traffic Plan would be prepared to identify measures to minimize impacts on state highways. The Applicant would be required to obtain permissions in the form of easements, encroachment permits, highway work permits, or other agreements from private and public landowners for use of private property and road and railroad ROWs for terrestrial construction activities or additional workspace (e.g., at HDD locations or for support facilities).

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

During operations, the transmission line would be underwater or underground and, therefore, it would not interfere with the aquatic- and land-based transportation and traffic network.

Activities impacting aquatic navigational operations along the aquatic portion of the proposed CHPE Project route would include those associated with operation, regular inspection, and possible emergency repairs of the transmission line. Vessel anchorage would be prohibited in the transmission line ROW for the lifespan of the CHPE Project to prevent the possibility of anchors hooking or damaging the transmission line. Regular non-intrusive inspection of aquatic portions of the transmission line using ship-mounted instruments would result in negligible additional vessel traffic. If necessary, emergency repair activities along the aquatic transmission line would be expected to result in temporary navigational obstacles for commercial and recreational vessels in the immediate vicinity of the repair site.

Activities impacting transportation and traffic operations along the terrestrial portion of the proposed CHPE Project route would include those associated with operation, regular inspection, maintenance, and possible emergency repairs of the transmission line. Regular inspection of the terrestrial portions of the transmission line and aboveground infrastructure (i.e., cooling stations and converter station), and routine preventive maintenance of the aboveground infrastructure would generally be non-intrusive and not disrupt (i.e., delay, temporarily cancel, or otherwise change) transportation operations or traffic. If necessary, emergency repairs of the transmission line or aboveground infrastructure would be expected to result in temporary construction-related disturbances (e.g., temporary lane rerouting or closures from the presence of emergency repair activities) that would impact transportation uses along the proposed CHPE Project route. However, vehicular traffic flow would be maintained through emergency repair work zones.

S.8.3 Water Resources and Quality

Construction within Lake Champlain, the Hudson River, and the other surface waters and wetlands along the proposed CHPE Project would require a CWA Section 404 permit from the USACE. The initial permit application and supporting information was submitted to the USACE in 2010 with supplemental information provided in February 2012. The Applicant received their State Section 401 Water Quality Certification from the NYSDPS in January 2013.

Impacts from Construction

Construction activities within the aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project would include the installation of transmission cables in the lakebed and river bottom using water-jetting and shear plow techniques. Impacts on water quality would occur from localized increases in turbidity (a measurement of the cloudiness or amount of total suspended solids in the water) and resuspension of sediments resulting from trenching and disturbance within the waterbody. Increased turbidity has the potential to reduce light levels in aquatic habitats and could result in temporary changes to water chemistry, including impacts on pH and reduced dissolved oxygen.

Construction activities associated with installation in the terrestrial portions of proposed CHPE Project route would primarily include the transmission cables being buried beneath the ground within roadway and railroad ROWs. Ground disturbance would result in increased erosion and sedimentation in runoff. Runoff on construction sites would be managed on site using BMPs incorporated into the proposed CHPE Project as Applicant-proposed measures. In addition, the proposed CHPE Project route would cross several streams and rivers. Installation methods proposed for stream crossings include trenching, HDD, and attaching to existing infrastructure such as bridges and railroad trestles. Trenching would result in impacts on water quality from increased turbidity and potential downstream sedimentation. HDD, which would also be used in transitions from water to land, has the potential for frac-out (i.e., leaks of HDD drilling fluid) that could cause drilling fluid to become suspended or dispersed and could impact water quality. However, the Applicant would develop and implement an SPCC Plan that would also address potential releases of drilling fluid, which would be contained in the cofferdam area or the land-based HDD staging area during construction if such releases occur.

Portions of the proposed CHPE Project route would cross floodplains and coastal flood zones associated with surface waters. Temporary clearing, ground disturbance, and construction activity would occur within these floodplains. The converter station is proposed to be constructed in a coastal flood hazard area, and could be subject to flooding or storm surges. To minimize the potential for damage, the construction of the converter station would involve raising the structure above the 100-year base flow elevation.

In some locations, the blasting of bedrock could be required to trench the terrestrial transmission cable. Bedrock blasting is likely to increase bedrock fracturing near the blasting zone and could temporarily increase turbidity in groundwater wells near the blast zone. Therefore, impacts on groundwater quality could occur if blasting of bedrock is required.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

During operation, heat loss from the transmission line would result in negligible temperature increase of the water in its immediate vicinity. If required, emergency repairs of the aquatic transmission line where the cables would have to be unburied would result in localized increases in turbidity and resuspension of sediments that would temporarily impact water quality. The impacts from repairs would be similar to those expected during original installation, but would be for a shorter duration and would disturb a smaller area. Operation of the transmission line in terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project route, would not impact water quality, water availability, or floodplains. Emergency repair activities would require ground disturbance as the damaged lines must be uncovered. Although these actions would result in increased potential for erosion and sedimentation to nearby surface waters, these impacts would be managed on site. Therefore, significant impacts would not be expected.

S.8.4 Aquatic Habitats and Species

Construction activities within Lake Champlain, the Hudson River, and the other surface waters along the proposed CHPE Project route would result in temporary impacts on aquatic habitat and species due to sediment disturbance, habitat alteration, and noise and vibration. Impacts from operation of the proposed CHPE Project would include permanent habitat changes (e.g., reductions in substrate suitable for vegetation growth) at areas where concrete mats would be installed over soft bottom and temperature increases in sediments. A review of available scientific literature yielded inconclusive evidence that the magnetic fields produced or potentially altered by the proposed CHPE Project would impact aquatic species or habitats. Some fish species would be able to detect these magnetic fields, but the magnetic fields would not impact species' reproduction or capacity to forage or survive.

Impacts from Construction

Construction activities within the aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project would include the installation of transmission cables in the lakebed and river bottoms using water-jetting and shear plow techniques. Impacts on aquatic habitats and species would be caused by localized increases in turbidity and associated water quality degradation, sediment redeposition, temporary noise and vibration, and potential accidental releases of hazardous materials. The impacts of sedimentation on benthic organisms could include smothering, reduction of filtering rates, toxicity from exposure to anaerobic sediments, reduced light intensity, and physical abrasion. Additionally, mortalities among sessile species could occur if individuals are unable to adapt to the new sediment conditions. Increased turbidity could reduce light levels in aquatic habitats and temporarily impact water pH and reduced dissolved oxygen levels. The aquatic habitats directly affected by cable installation would primarily be confined to the footprint of the jet and shear plows. The total benthic habitat area of Lake Champlain and Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers affected by cable installation would be small, and the impacts would be temporary and non-significant.

Overland portions of the proposed CHPE Project route would cross surface water bodies. The transmission lines would be installed over these water bodies by bridge attachment, or beneath the water bodies via HDD or dry ditch crossing methods. Crossings by bridge attachment and HDD would avoid impacts on aquatic habitats and species. HDD would also be used in transitions from water to land and could result in frac-out (i.e., leaks of HDD drilling fluid into the surrounding sediment and water column) that could impact aquatic species and habitat. However, an SPCC Plan would be adopted, and releases of drilling fluid would be remediated during construction.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Impacts from operation of the proposed CHPE transmission system on aquatic habitats and species would include non-significant temperature increases in the sediment, changes in habitat from use of concrete mats, and production or alteration of magnetic and electric fields. During operation of the transmission line, heat loss from the cables could be expected, and would result in increased temperatures in the sediments around the cables. The estimated temperature rise at 8 inches (20.3 cm) below the surface of the sediments would range between 1.6 to 5.8 °F (0.9 to 3.1 °C) depending on the sediment. Low and high estimates were calculated for gravel, sand, and clay/silt sediments, and this range represents the lowest and highest of those estimates. Heat from the cables would dissipate in the sediments, just below the sediment and water interface, which is the biologically productive zone in the sediments. Therefore, impacts on benthic resources from temperature during operation of the transmission line would be anticipated to be negligible.

The magnetic field produced by the transmission line would be less than 162 mG directly over the buried transmission line in Lake Champlain and the Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers. According to studies, the survival and reproduction of benthic organisms are not thought to be affected by long-term exposure to static magnetic fields. Experiments that exposed fathead minnows, juvenile sunfish, juvenile channel catfish, and striped bass to 360,000 mG showed no evidence in changes in activity. Evidence indicates that electrosensitive organisms such as sturgeon can detect induced electric fields. However, electric fields used in these studies were orders of magnitude higher than the expected induced electric fields at the sediment bed for the proposed CHPE Project transmission line. As such, significant impacts on demersal and electrosensitive species such as Atlantic and shortnose sturgeon that occur in the Hudson River Segment are not expected.

Pre- and post-energizing sediment temperature and magnetic field surveys, and a hydrophone study to determine the movements of adult Atlantic sturgeon in the Hudson Estuary would be developed and implemented as required by the proposed CHPE Project's NYS PSC Certificate (NYS PSC 2013).

Areas where concrete mats or rip-rap (i.e., rock or concrete protective armoring) would be installed to help protect the transmission lines where an appropriate level of cable burial cannot be achieved, for example where there is exposed bedrock or existing submerged utility lines, would cause a change in benthic habitat type equal to the area of their footprint, and would also result in impacts on submerged aquatic vegetation (if present), shellfish, and benthic communities. However, the concrete mats would eventually provide additional new hard-bottom habitat for benthic organisms to colonize, essentially functioning as small patch reefs.

Since the installed transmission cables would not require maintenance, no impacts from maintenance activities are anticipated on aquatic habitats or species. However, impacts could result from localized increases in turbidity and redeposition of sediments resulting from disturbance within the waterbody if the transmission line fails or becomes damaged during operation and requires emergency repair. The cables would have to be dug out of the sediment, repaired, and then reburied. Impacts from repair activities would be similar to the original installation, but would have a smaller area of disturbance and would occur over a shorter duration.

S.8.5 Aquatic Protected and Sensitive Species

Installation, operation, and emergency repairs of the proposed aquatic transmission cable may affect, but are not likely to adversely affect, the federally listed shortnose sturgeon and Atlantic sturgeon (includes the New York Bight distinct population segment [DPS], Gulf of Maine DPS, and Chesapeake Bay DPS of the Atlantic sturgeon). No effects on federally listed sea turtles and marine mammals or non-threatened/non-endangered marine mammals would be expected from the proposed CHPE Project as occurrences of these species are rare in the Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers. Applicant-proposed measures developed in coordination with Federal and state natural resources agencies would avoid or minimize impacts on aquatic species during construction and operational activities. A Biological Assessment (BA) is currently being prepared to assist in determining the impacts of the proposed CHPE Project and to facilitate ESA Section 7 consultation and will be included in the Final EIS.

Impacts from Construction

Sediment disturbance, temporary increases in turbidity and associated water quality degradation, sediment redeposition, installation of rip-rap or concrete mats, noise and vibration, vessel strikes, and accidental release of hazardous materials could affect federally listed shortnose sturgeon and Atlantic sturgeon in the Hudson, Harlem, and East rivers during cable installation. The sensitivity of fish to localized and temporary increases in turbidity, suspended sediment, and downstream sedimentation is species- and

life-stage-specific, and associated impacts might include impairment of feeding, impaired ability to locate predators, and reduced breeding activity. The Applicant would restrict construction activities to specific timing windows to protect ESA-listed and candidate fish species during spawning migrations, which are the most vital and sensitive portions of their lifecycle.

Installation of rip-rap or concrete mats would be a permanent alteration of habitat and could affect shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon, where the concrete mats or rip-rap replaces some soft sediment (forage habitat) with hard-bottom habitat. The affected area would be very small relative to the overall area of available habitat, adjacent habitat would still be available, and new communities of benthic organisms that are prey for shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon would be expected to recolonize over time. Noise generated by cable-laying vessels would elicit temporary behavioral responses by ESA-listed fish species. Most of these effects would be either temporary or intermittent, and it is expected that only a few individuals would be affected relative to the populations and that they would react by moving away from noise sources.

Vessel collisions could impact shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon. However, Applicant-proposed measures, such as operation of vessels at decreased speeds in shallow waters, would reduce noise levels and provide shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon species an opportunity to move out of the way of moving vessels, thereby making it unlikely that a collision would occur.

Any state-listed lake sturgeon or state-listed mooneye present in Lake Champlain during proposed construction activities could be affected by sediment disturbance, temporary increases in turbidity and associated water quality degradation, sediment redeposition, installation of rip-rap or concrete mats, temporary noise and vibration, and potential accidental releases of hazardous materials. The installation of the proposed aquatic transmission line would cause a temporary disturbance on benthic habitat, which supports benthic prey items for state-listed lake sturgeon, but would remain usable as potential foraging habitat for these species. Impacts on the state-listed lake sturgeon could occur from the installation of concrete mats or rip-rap; however, the placement would result in a very small area of overall affected habitat, and sturgeon would be able to utilize adjacent areas for foraging and other activities. Effects on the state-listed giant floater and state-listed pink heelsplitter in Lake Champlain could occur because individuals of these mussel species could be lost during installation due to increases in turbidity and associated water quality degradation, sediment redeposition, installation of rip-rap or concrete mats, and accidental releases of hazardous materials.

As specified in the proposed CHPE Project's Certificate issued by NYSPSC, the Applicant would conduct a series of pre- and post-energizing studies, including benthic macroinvertebrate and sediment sampling and bathymetry surveys, for use in post-installation compliance monitoring (NYSPSC 2013). All studies would be developed in consultation with appropriate resource agencies. The Applicant also would establish the Hudson River and Lake Champlain Habitat Enhancement, Restoration, and Research/Habitat Improvement Project Trust to support items such as such as habitat restoration, enhancement, or protection; habitat research; fish and wildlife species restoration, enhancement, or protection; and water quality improvement.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Increased temperature, magnetic fields, and weak induced electric fields during operation of the proposed transmission line could impact the protected species identified. During operation, the buried aquatic transmission cables would emit a magnetic field of less than 160 mG measured at the sediment surface, and induced electric fields could be created by water currents or the movement of an animal through the magnetic field. Evidence indicates that electrosensitive organisms (including all sturgeon species) can detect induced electric fields and respond by attraction or avoidance. In some cases, freshwater sturgeon

exposed to electromagnetic fields in laboratory studies exhibited temporarily altered swimming behaviors; however, these exposures were at greater magnitudes than those modeled for the proposed aquatic transmission cable. Fish migration would not be affected because migratory species use multiple stimuli for migration, not magnetic detection alone, and species are also exposed to other natural alterations in the Earth's geomagnetic field such as magnetic anomalies in sediments.

Increases in temperature associated with operation of the transmission line at the sediment-water interface would not be expected to affect pelagic fish, but could have the potential to affect demersal fish that would be closer to the bottom. A measurable amount of local heat generation would not pose a physical barrier to ESA- or state-listed fish passage, and would allow benthic organisms to colonize and demersal fish species (including demersal eggs and larvae) to use surface sediments without being affected. Therefore, effects on reproduction or feeding would not be significant. The potential increase in temperature of the riverbed surface would be within the normal temperature range of all life stages of shortnose and Atlantic sturgeon. Heat could be released from exposed gaps in the concrete mats and rip-rap placed over the aquatic transmission line where it cannot be buried. It is probable that there would be more heat dispersed near the concrete mats (subject to a temperature increase of approximately 9 °F [5 °C]) than where the cable is buried under sediment (increase of approximately 1.8 °F [1 °C] at the surface). The cooling effect of moving water should quickly dissipate this heat. Therefore, significant effects from operation of the proposed CHPE Project transmission line on protected species would not be expected.

No effects would be anticipated from maintenance because the transmission cable itself would be maintenance-free. Emergency repairs, if necessary, would result in sediment disturbance resulting in temporarily increased turbidity and decreased water quality, and noise could impact protected species. These impacts would be similar to those described for construction but on a smaller scale and over a shorter duration.

As specified in the proposed CHPE Project's Certificate issued by NYSPSC, the Applicant would conduct a series of pre- and post-energizing studies, including sediment temperature and magnetic field surveys and Atlantic sturgeon hydrophone surveys, for use in post-installation compliance monitoring (NYSPSC 2013). The Atlantic sturgeon study would document the species' movements in relation to transmission line operation.

S.8.6 Terrestrial Habitats and Species

Construction and operation of the proposed CHPE Project would generally include the permanent removal and crushing of vegetation, soil compaction, and dust generation. Noise would temporarily increase during construction and maintenance and emergency repair activities, which could result in impacts on wildlife through reduced communications ranges, interference with predator/prey detection, or habitat avoidance. The direct displacement of species would occur during vegetation removal; however, habitat fragmentation and permanent displacement of entire breeding populations would not occur because construction activities would be in fringe habitat within or along existing ROWs.

Impacts from Construction

Impacts on vegetation and habitat could occur from permanent removal of vegetation, root damage associated with excavation, vegetation crushing, soil compaction, potential spread of invasive species, and the generation of dust. In total, approximately 236 acres (96 hectares) of existing forest cover could be temporarily disturbed and 60 acres (24 hectares) changed permanently to managed grasses or shrub habitat to accommodate proposed construction corridors and any necessary additional workspace. However, the habitat along the proposed CHPE Project route would be removed primarily along existing

roadway and railroad ROWs, where most vegetation is disturbed. Some fringe forest habitat within and immediately adjacent to these ROWs would be converted to shrub habitat as a result of transmission line installation. In areas where the ROW cannot support installation of the transmission line, deviation areas would be constructed. Typically, deviation areas identified along the proposed CHPE Project route in this segment would be located immediately adjacent to existing ROWs and would extend to an outer boundary ranging up to approximately 200 feet (61 meters) away from the ROW. Like the existing ROWs, deviation areas would primarily be comprised of forest fringe (i.e., at the edge of the forest) habitat, and would also include some interior forested areas, rivers, residential areas, urban developed areas, and highways or roadways with maintained vegetation. Forested habitat in deviation areas could be more suitable to wildlife because it extends away from the ROWs. Therefore, construction in these areas could result in habitat fragmentation impacts greater than those incurred from construction within the ROWs. Applicant-proposed measures, including clearly marking areas to avoid, using appropriate vegetation-removal and dust-control methods, and developing and implementing an Invasive Species Management Plan, would be implemented to reduce further impacts on vegetation and habitat.

Noise created during construction could result in reduced communication ranges, interference with predator/prey detection, or habitat avoidance. Prior exposure to noise is the most important factor in the response of wildlife to noise because wildlife can become accustomed (or habituated) to the noise. The proposed construction activities would primarily occur along road and railroad ROWs where there is a high level of ambient noise.

Temporary direct displacement of wildlife species during vegetation removal and habitat reduction could occur; however, habitat fragmentation resulting in permanent or significant displacement of entire breeding populations would not occur because construction activities would be in fringe habitat within or along existing ROWs. Wildlife that could be displaced include birds, burrowing animals, and other species that use forests for foraging, breeding, and nesting. However, studies on forest habitat fragmentation indicated that displacement impacts associated with 26-foot (8-meter)-wide corridors were not significant. Interior-forest dwelling species did not avoid inhabitation along the corridor's edges; however, species composition was altered as an edge-preferring species abundances in these areas increased. Additionally, presence of the transmission line corridor, which would primarily be a mixture of grasses and shrubs, would not preclude wildlife from crossing the corridor to reach habitat on the other side. Construction of the 20-foot (6-meter)-wide corridor for the proposed CHPE Project would be expected to result in similar localized and temporary changes in community composition (e.g., tree removal and displacement of wildlife). However, construction would occur in habitat previously disturbed by noise, emissions from railroads and cars, and human activity. Since only a small percentage of habitat available for wildlife would be impacted, and mobile species that currently inhabit and prefer these areas likely would relocate to seek out similar habitat, construction of the proposed CHPE Project corridor and installation of the transmission line would not be expected to impact the habitats in these areas significantly. Additionally, Applicant-proposed measures, including constructing outside of the breeding season, avoiding sensitive habitat, and using HDD would be implemented to reduce further impacts on wildlife.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Magnetic and electric fields have the potential to enhance growth response in certain plant species; however, the effects of such on plants are inconclusive. Operation of the transmission line would increase the ambient soil temperature, which could alter biodiversity of terrestrial vegetation and habitat; however, temperature would quickly dissipate as distance from the transmission line increases.

The transmission line ROW would be maintained (i.e., vegetation would be trimmed or removed) to protect the buried transmission line and cooling stations from damage caused by tree roots, to maintain

the function of permanent storm water management or access control features, and to replace location and identification markers as necessary. Vegetation management along the ROW would establish stable low-growing vegetation with shallow root systems that would not interfere with the transmission line and would allow adequate access to cooling stations. Vegetation clearing and selective cutting of trees would occur as needed. Such activities would be short-term in duration, but would occur periodically over the operating life of the proposed CHPE Project.

Impacts on vegetation and habitat from maintenance or emergency repair activities could occur from removal of vegetation, root damage associated with excavation, soil compaction, and the generation of dust, but such activities would only occur as necessary, be of short duration, and have a small area of disturbance.

Although there is evidence that wildlife can detect magnetic and electric fields associated with transmission lines, previous studies have shown that behaviors would not be affected by relatively small changes in magnetic and electric fields and such fields do not cause any adverse health, behavioral, or productivity effects in animals, including both wildlife and livestock. Operation of the transmission line would increase the ambient soil temperature, which could alter biodiversity of terrestrial vegetation and habitat thereby affecting foraging, nesting, and avoidance behavior in wildlife that use that habitat; however, temperature would quickly dissipate within increasing distance from the transmission line and would be restricted to the maintained transmission line ROW.

Impacts from maintenance and emergency repair activities on wildlife would occur because the permanent ROWs would be permanently maintained as scrub-shrub habitat with woody vegetation less than 20 feet (6 meters) tall. The proposed maintenance could also displace adult or breeding birds, burrowing animals, and other species that use forest edge habitats for foraging, breeding, and nesting. Wildlife species could be displaced permanently if such activities cause a long-term disturbance of breeding habitats, but this would be unlikely as the ROW is fringe habitat or in a previously disturbed area and vegetation in the ROW would be regularly maintained.

S.8.7 Terrestrial Protected and Sensitive Species

Federally listed species that could occur in the proposed CHPE Project transmission line construction corridor include Karner blue butterfly and Indiana bat. The proposed CHPE Project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, the federally listed Indiana bat and Karner blue butterfly. Indiana bats roosting or foraging within or adjacent to the construction corridor could be disturbed. The proposed CHPE Project could affect the Karner blue butterfly from removal of wild blue lupine, which is the host plant for the butterfly larvae, or from direct loss of butterflies in all life stages. A BA is currently being prepared to assist in determining the impacts of the proposed CHPE Project and to facilitate ESA Section 7 consultation and will be included in the Final EIS.

The federally listed small whorled pogonia, northern wild monkshood, bog turtle, piping plover, roseate tern, and New England cottontail could, but are not likely to, be present in the proposed construction corridor; research to date indicates no recorded presence of these species or their suitable habitats along the transmission line route. Therefore, no impacts on these species would be expected.

Construction activities could result in non-significant disturbances (i.e., noise, dust, and lighting) to bald eagles, state-listed birds, and migratory birds. Such disturbances can cause habitat avoidance by birds in the immediate vicinity of construction. However, these activities would be temporary and localized. Additionally, birds (including protected species of birds) would be able to move away from the construction area; therefore, effects on foraging, productivity, and survival would not be significant. Effects from disturbance and habitat fragmentation on state-listed plant and insect species could occur as

a result of habitat loss from construction activities; these effects would be similar to those described for non-listed species. However, implementation of several Applicant-proposed measures to prevent direct take of protected and sensitive species during construction would avoid or minimize impacts.

Impacts from Construction

Non-significant effects on protected and sensitive species from construction would include disturbance to the foraging, resting, and nesting/breeding bats and birds. Bats and birds could encounter temporary, increased noise from underwater and underground cable installation and increased construction traffic. Noise associated with the construction vehicles and equipment would produce sound at varying frequencies and intensities that might influence the behavior of species. The effects would vary depending on the species, type of vessel or machinery, relative noise level, distance, frequency, and season. Most bats and birds along the underground routes are expected to move into similar adjacent habitats nearby during construction and return to the area once construction is completed, which would last less than 2 weeks in any given location along the transmission line route. The Luyster Creek HVDC Converter Station is proposed to be sited in an industrial area with no suitable habitat for protected and sensitive species; therefore, no effects would be expected from construction of this facility.

Effects on protected species and their habitats that result from vegetation clearing would be the same as described for non-listed species and habitats. These would include habitat loss or degradation via crushing, removal, or other disturbances, changes in community composition, and potential for displacement. However, in the immediate vicinity of the railroad ROW, where most of the clearing would occur, much of the habitat consists of disturbed open lands and secondary forest lacking suitable habitat for most protected and sensitive species. Since the corridor would be relatively narrow (i.e., 20 feet wide [6 meters wide]), interior-dwelling species would not likely avoid inhabitation along the edges of the proposed CHPE Project corridor. Also, presence of the transmission line corridor, which would primarily be a mixture of covered with grasses and shrubs, would not preclude wildlife from crossing the corridor to reach habitat on the other side. Several Applicant-proposed measures, including use of HDD under sensitive habitat and marking all known locations of protected and sensitive species on construction drawings and in the field, would be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts on protected and sensitive species. Construction personnel would be trained to identify known and potential rare, threatened, and endangered species and the identification and protection measures that are included in the EM&CP.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

During the operational phase of the transmission line, vegetation management would be conducted within the transmission line ROW to prevent the growth of large woody vegetation to avoid damage to the transmission cables, or to provide access to the ROW in the event that emergency repairs or other maintenance of the cables are required. Potential non-significant effects from vegetation management include habitat degradation via removal, crushing, or other disturbances to protected species and their habitat. A vegetation management plan for the operational phase would be developed and included in the EM&CP. No herbicides or pesticides would be used within occupied Karner blue butterfly and frosted elfin butterfly habitats, except as approved by the USFWS and NYSDEC. Any vegetation management, emergency repairs, or other operational maintenance activities required within Karner blue butterfly or frosted elfin butterfly habitats would be implemented in accordance with a mitigation plan for these species being developed by the Applicant in consultation with USFWS and NYSDEC.

No significant effects from the magnetic fields generated by the transmission line would be anticipated. There is no evidence to suggest that magnetic and electric fields associated with transmission lines result in any adverse effects on the health, behavior, or productivity of animals. The research indicates that

some species of animals, including birds, are able to detect magnetic fields at levels that could be associated with transmission lines; however, detection is not a conclusive indicator of adverse effects.

S.8.8 Wetlands

Wetlands can provide a variety of functions, including wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge or discharge, sediment and shoreline stabilization, flood storage, nutrient removal, sediment and toxicant retention and production export, and, in some cases, aesthetic and recreational value. Construction activities within the construction corridor along the proposed CHPE Project route would result in impacts on wetland areas due to soil disturbance, changes in surface runoff patterns, and vegetation clearing. Long-term impacts from operation of the proposed CHPE Project would include permanent habitat changes to forested wetlands.

Impacts from Construction

Construction activities within Lake Champlain, the Hudson River, and the Harlem and East rivers would include the installation of the transmission line in the lakebed and river bottom. While these water bodies are considered open water, not wetlands, there are freshwater and tidal wetlands along the shores of these features. Impacts on wetlands adjacent to the underwater transmission line in Lake Champlain, the Hudson River, and the Harlem and East rivers are not anticipated as the installation activities would occur more than 100 feet (30 meters) from wetlands, construction would take place over a short period of time, and construction-related sediment releases into the water column would comply with water quality standards. The proposed cooling stations and the Luyster Creek Converter Station would not be located in wetlands.

Transmission line construction in the Overland Segment would directly impact approximately 67 acres (27 hectares) of wetlands within the construction corridor. The Hudson River Segment of the proposed CHPE Project would have an 8-mile (13-km) terrestrial segment that would cross three additional wetland areas in Stony Point and Haverstraw totaling 0.8 acres (0.3 hectares). The transmission line would cross a 0.03-acre (0.01-hectare) wetland in Haverstraw; the other two crossings would be by HDD. No delineated wetlands are present in the construction corridor of the New York City Metropolitan Area Segment.

The construction sequence within wetlands along the proposed Overland Segment would typically consist of vegetation clearing within the construction corridor (tree stumps would only be removed from the trench line or where necessary), removal and stockpiling of the upper 18 inches (46 cm) of hydric soils, followed by excavation of a trench approximately 3.5 feet (1.1 meters) deep and up to 9 feet (2.7 meters) wide at the surface, or the use of HDD technology. The cables would then be placed in the trench, and then the trench would be backfilled. Land restoration would include placing the removed wetland soils back onto the excavated trench area to facilitate wetlands restoration, and the disturbed area would be mulched or hydro seeded. Restoration of wetlands would be completed within 24 hours after backfilling is completed.

Temporary impacts would occur on 16.2 acres (6.6 hectares) of forested wetlands and 51.2 acres (20.7 hectares) of non-forested wetlands. Following completion of construction activities and surface restoration, these 67.4 acres (27.3 hectares) of wetlands would be expected to re-establish themselves naturally. Emergent wetland vegetation would re-establish quickly following construction, and woody species would follow. Forested wetlands would be expected to go through several stages of successional vegetation before returning to the pre-construction vegetation cover type. Wetland functions and values, including wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge or discharge, sediment and shoreline stabilization, flood

storage, nutrient removal, sediment and toxicant retention, and production export would be expected to be restored to these disturbed wetlands.

Permanent, significant impacts would occur on 2.0 acres (0.8 hectares) of forested wetlands that would be converted to emergent or scrub-shrub wetlands. This conversion would alter the wetland vegetation from trees greater than 20 feet (6 meters) to woody vegetation less than 20 feet (6 meters), including true shrubs and young trees. Impacts on forest-dwelling wetland species would be expected once the wetland has been converted from a forested wetland to a shrub-scrub wetland. As part of its Section 404 permit application, the Applicant has submitted a conceptual wetland mitigation plan to the USACE to address this permanent change in habitat type. To mitigate for permanent impacts on wetlands, per the mitigation plan, the Applicant would establish 1 acre (0.4 hectares) of new wetland and preservation and enhancement of 10 acres (4 hectares) of wetlands for each 1 acre (0.4 hectares) of permanently impacted wetlands.

HDD would be used in some locations to reduce the level of impacts on wetlands when compared to trenching. A total of 0.5 miles (0.8 km) of wetlands would be crossed by use of HDD. Where used, the HDD borehole would be drilled underneath the wetland, a conduit would be pulled into the bore hole, and then the transmission cables would be pulled into the conduit. The HDD drilling equipment and drill entry point would be located outside the wetland, and the drill would exit beyond the other boundary of the wetland, avoiding direct impacts on wetlands. As required in the EM&CP, an SPCC Plan would be in place to respond to any frac-outs of bentonite.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Significant impacts on wetlands from operation of the proposed CHPE Project would not be expected because the installed transmission line would not require maintenance. Thus, maintenance activities would be confined to routine ROW vegetation management in the Overland Segment as established in the EM&CP Vegetation Management Plan. These activities would consist of cutting woody vegetation by hand or by mechanical means every few years. Approximately 10 acres (4 hectares) of wetland area would be subject to routine vegetation management activities. These activities would not be expected to alter wetland hydrology, compact wetland soils, or otherwise change the physical characteristics or functions and values of the wetlands in the transmission line ROW.

Although the transmission line is designed to be maintenance free, trenching or excavation could be required to conduct emergency repairs of defective cable segments under wetlands. These activities would be infrequent and would occur in accordance with applicable Federal, state, and local permits. Impacts from these emergency repairs would be similar to the initial construction as the defective section would be dug up, a new section spliced in, and the cable reburied.

Where the cables would be installed by HDD, impacts on wetland areas from emergency repairs would be avoided because the transmission cables would be cut and pulled out of the installed conduit and the new cable pulled into it without affecting the wetland.

Additionally, significant impacts would not be expected on nearby wetlands from emergency repair activities on aquatic transmission line segments. Localized increases in turbidity and redeposition of sediments from disturbance within the water body would result from emergency repair actions; however, these repair actions would occur over a short period of time and in a more limited area than initial installation, and, therefore, impacts on nearby freshwater or tidal wetlands would not be anticipated.

S.8.9 Geology and Soils

Impacts from Construction

Construction activities associated with the installation of the aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project would result in localized modification of lakebed and river microtopography; and suspension, transport, and resettlement of riverine and lacustrine sediments. Pre-existing conditions would likely be reacquired over time and impacts minimized through the use of Applicant-proposed measures, such as the use of a shear plow in the southern portion of Lake Champlain.

Impacts from construction activities associated with the installation of the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project would include short-term increases in soil erosion, soil compaction, and bedrock blasting. Applicant-proposed measures, such as silt fences, would minimize impacts and, once installation is completed and trenches have been filled, local drainage characteristics and soils would be returned to previous conditions.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

No impacts would be expected from the operation of the aquatic portion of the transmission line because there would be no thermal or magnetic or electric field impacts on geology and soils. Maintenance for the transmission line itself is not anticipated to be necessary as it is designed to be maintenance-free. No impacts would be expected on physiography, topography, geology, or seismicity, apart from intermittent emergency repair activities, as required.

For the terrestrial portion of the transmission line, periodic mowing or tree-clearing maintenance activities of the terrestrial ROW could result in soil erosion or sedimentation, but impacts would not be significant, and soils would be retained on site with the use of Applicant-proposed measures (i.e., BMPs). Maintenance for the transmission line itself is not anticipated to be necessary as it is designed to be maintenance-free. Maintenance of the cooling stations and converter station would occur but would not result in any impacts on geology and soils. Emergency repairs of the terrestrial portion of the transmission line would result in impacts on soils similar to, but less than, those described for construction activities because a smaller area would be disturbed for a shorter duration. The impacts of such activities also would be minimized through the use of Applicant-proposed measures.

S.8.10 Cultural Resources

Ground-disturbing activities associated with the installation of the transmission cables could result in adverse effects on historic properties in the proposed CHPE Project Area of Potential Effects (APE). Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis indicates that there are 51 terrestrial archaeological sites, 2 terrestrial sites that extend into Lake Champlain, 11 underwater sites, 36 NRHP-listed or -eligible architectural properties, and 2 historic cemeteries in the APE.

Impacts from Construction

Ground-disturbing activities associated with construction could damage archaeological features and would disturb the context of artifacts of terrestrial archaeological sites, underwater sites, and historic cemeteries. In the case of terrestrial and underwater archaeological sites that are listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP, this could constitute an adverse effect under 36 CFR 800.5(a)(1) and, therefore, require mitigation. Because the transmission line would be underground or underwater and would avoid any standing structures, the adverse effects from construction on the NRHP-listed and -eligible architectural properties in the APE would be limited to exposure to temporary noise, dust, and vibrations

and short-term visual effects from the proximity of construction activities and equipment. The effects would not require mitigation. HDD would be used to install the transmission line under Stony Point Battlefield Historic Park.

As specified in the conditions of the NYSPSC Certificate for the proposed CHPE Project (“Certificate Conditions”), Part Q, Conditions 107–112 (available at http://www.chpexpresseis.org/docs/NYSPSC_Order.pdf or see **Appendix C** of this EIS), the Applicant shall develop a Cultural Resources Management Plan (CRMP) that would include an outline of “the processes for resolving adverse effects on historic properties within the APE and determining the appropriate treatment, avoidance, or mitigation of any effects of the [CHPE Project] on these resources.” Applicant-proposed measures would be implemented to mitigate the CHPE Project’s adverse effects on known terrestrial and underwater archaeological sites found to extend into the APE. Mitigation measures may include minor rerouting to avoid the sites, Phase III data recoveries of terrestrial and underwater archaeological sites that are listed or eligible for listing in the NRHP and cannot be avoided, and documentation following Section 106 of the NHPA for NRHP-listed or -eligible architectural properties that cannot be avoided by project activities. Circumventing known underwater sites or anomalies would avoid potential damage to the integrity of the site. Development of a Programmatic Agreement (PA) pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800.14(b) is underway and additional formal surveys and evaluations must be conducted before it can be fully determined in detail what cultural resources require mitigation measures under Section 106 of the NHPA. Measures identified at this time, including development of a CRMP by the Applicant and addressing unanticipated cultural resources discoveries, are discussed in detail in **Appendix G**.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

The operation of the proposed CHPE Project would have no effects on terrestrial and underwater archaeological sites in the APE. Because the proposed CHPE Project would involve an underground transmission line, operations would have no adverse effects on 33 of the 36 architectural properties in the APE. The operation of the proposed cooling station at MP 112 could have noise and visual impacts on the McMore Residence (National Register Eligible [NRE] 15) and the Main Street Historic Bridge (National Register Listed [NRL] 19). Operation of the proposed cooling station at MP 296 could have noise and visual impacts on Stony Point Battlefield Historic Park. Depending on the exact location of the cooling station, these impacts could constitute an adverse effect under 36 CFR 800.5(a)(1) and, therefore, require mitigation implemented by the Applicant to avoid or minimize effects, such as using architectural treatments and maintaining and planting vegetative buffers in and around the cooling stations as part of cooling station design. Consultation regarding measures to avoid or mitigate adverse effects is ongoing through the Section 106 process. Vegetation maintenance activities and emergency repairs, if necessary, would occur in areas previously disturbed by construction of the transmission line and, in some cases, in areas purposefully selected to avoid cultural resources sites; therefore, effects would not be expected from such activities.

S.8.11 Visual Resources

Construction operation of the proposed CHPE Project would generally be consistent with the existing visual environment. Impacts would be anticipated during construction from the presence of construction equipment and activities along the project route. Constructed facilities, such as cooling stations and the converter station, would be visible during operations, but would only result in minimal changes to the existing visual landscape.

Impacts from Construction

Construction equipment and materials would be visible along the proposed CHPE Project route during the

construction period. Along the aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project route, the transmission cables would be buried beneath the beds of existing waterways and a cable-laying vessel, support vessels, and barges would be visible on the water surface. Minimal land-based support would be required. Land-based support facilities would be constructed within existing ports with existing heavy lift facilities and would be within the existing industrial context of the viewsheds. Additionally, construction materials on the water surface would only be visible in one place for a short duration as construction progresses through the waterway, thereby minimizing impacts on visual and aesthetic resources.

Along the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project route, construction equipment would temporarily be visible in the locations of active construction on land along existing road and railroad ROWs. Equipment necessary for clearing, trench excavation, cable installation, backfilling, and restoration would be located briefly at each construction site. Temporary support facilities would also be established along the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project route. These facilities would be sited within the road or railroad ROWs and use the minimum space required to facilitate safe installation. Following construction, impacted areas within terrestrial portion of the proposed CHPE Project route would be seeded and allowed to revegetate naturally. Depending on the type of vegetation involved, natural conditions could return in a matter of months to a few years.

Where the proposed CHPE Project route would cross aesthetic resources such as Stony Point Battlefield State Park and Rockland Lake State Park, the Applicant would use HDD techniques, which would allow installation of the transmission line without disturbing the surface features of the parks. This would eliminate any potential impacts on these aesthetic resources from construction activities. Construction equipment would be visible during construction at the HDD staging area sites.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

No visual impacts or impacts on aesthetic resources would be anticipated along the aquatic portion of the proposed CHPE Project route during operations, because no permanent facilities would be present. Minimal visual impacts during inspection and emergency repair activities along the aquatic portion of the route would be anticipated from the temporary presence of vessels and repair activities that would be visible along the proposed CHPE Project route.

Along the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project transmission line, visual impacts during maintenance and emergency repair activities would be anticipated from the temporary presence of ROW vegetation maintenance and repair activities and equipment along the proposed CHPE Project route.

Cooling stations would be present along the proposed CHPE Project route within aesthetic resources, such as Saratoga Spa State Park and Spensieri Park. However, the cooling stations would not result in significant visual impacts or would have impacts on aesthetic resources because the cooling stations would be small and only minimally change the character of the existing viewshed.

Operation of the Luyster Creek Converter Station would not be expected to result in any impacts on sensitive aesthetic resources because no sensitive aesthetic resources are present in the immediate vicinity of the converter station site. Additionally, operation would not be anticipated to result in visual impacts because the converter station would be in character with the existing industrial nature of the visual environment, and would be comparable in scale to its surroundings and not break the existing established horizontal skyline.

S.8.12 Infrastructure

Impacts from Construction

Construction of the aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project would require crossing existing electrical, water supply, communications, natural gas, sanitary sewer, and other utility lines in waterways. Temporary disruptions in utility services would be avoided to the extent practicable and coordinated with utility owners. Installation of the aquatic portion of the transmission line would potentially disturb and suspend sediment, some of which might be contaminated, that could temporarily adversely impact water supply systems along the proposed CHPE Project route. Model results indicate that, in conjunction with Applicant-proposed measures, acute toxicity-based water quality standards likely would not be exceeded under the proposed CHPE Project. Impacts on solid waste management facilities would occur due to the generation and management of soils and debris during construction and HDD activities, but contributions to area landfills (which have capacity) would be not be significant.

Construction of the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project would also require crossing utility lines that intersect road and railroad ROWs. Construction would be coordinated with local utilities to eliminate or minimize disruption to utility service. Capacities of solid waste management facilities would be reduced due to the disposal of construction-related debris and appropriate disposal of contaminated soils. Clean excavated soils would be reused as fill, and waste would be recycled to the maximum extent practicable, thus minimizing the proposed CHPE Project's contributions to regional landfill capacities.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Electrical infrastructure in New York State would benefit over the long term because the proposed CHPE Project would increase reliability, efficiency, and capacity and reduce congestion in the New York Control Area.

Since the transmission line would be maintenance-free and inspections would be non-intrusive, impacts on other electrical infrastructure, storm water management systems, communications lines, natural gas supply lines, or sanitary sewer systems in the aquatic operational portions of the proposed CHPE Project corridor would not be expected. Any emergency repair activities that could impact utilities would be coordinated with the utility providers. Operation of the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project would not result in impacts on other electrical infrastructure, communications, natural gas supply, or sanitary sewer systems in the proposed CHPE Project corridor.

S.8.13 Recreation

Construction and operation of the proposed CHPE Project would result in limited, temporary impacts, but would not permanently impact any recreational resources along the proposed CHPE Project route.

Impacts from Construction

Construction activities associated with the installation of aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project would include the generation of additional vessel traffic, which could inconvenience recreational water-dependent uses and possibly create temporary navigational obstacles. During underwater cable installation, there would be construction vessel activity along the proposed route. Access to shoreline recreational areas (i.e., boat launches and piers) would be maintained, as feasible, but could be partially limited during construction for safety reasons.

Construction activities associated with the installation of the terrestrial portion of the proposed CHPE Project, which would be buried underground along existing railroad and roadway ROWs, could reduce the number of traffic lanes in local roadways accessing recreational resources along the proposed route. Access to recreational areas would be maintained at all times during construction activities using traffic flaggers or other traffic management methods in coordination with park operators. Following construction, the Applicant would reseed the construction area and allow it to revegetate naturally, thereby returning any recreational areas and adjacent areas to their natural conditions. Use of HDD would avoid adverse impacts on recreational users by allowing installation of the transmission line without disturbing the surface features or uses of park lands. Staging areas for HDD would be outside of park boundaries, though equipment could be visible during construction; however, no permanent impacts on recreational resources would be anticipated. No cooling stations would be constructed on park lands or in recreational areas, and access to recreational areas would be maintained during construction.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

During operations, the proposed CHPE Project transmission line would generally be underwater or underground and, therefore, it would not be visible or interfere with recreational resources. Maintenance activities, including inspection and preventive maintenance of the cooling stations and converter station, would be expected to occur throughout the life of the transmission line; however, these activities would occur on an intermittent basis.

Periodic non-intrusive inspection of aquatic portions of the transmission line using ship-mounted instruments would result in negligible additional vessel traffic, and would not impact recreational water-dependent uses. If necessary, emergency repair activities along the aquatic transmission line would result in temporary inconveniences and navigational obstacles for recreational vessels in the immediate vicinity of the repair site for up to approximately 2 weeks.

Periodic inspections of the terrestrial portions of the transmission line and aboveground infrastructure (i.e., cooling stations and converter station), and routine preventive maintenance or emergency repairs of the aboveground infrastructure, would generally be non-intrusive and would not disrupt (i.e., disturb, interrupt, or otherwise change) adjacent recreational resources.

S.8.14 Public Health and Safety

Construction and operation of the proposed CHPE Project would be conducted in accordance with the activity-specific Health and Safety Plans (HASPs) and Emergency Contingency Plan to be developed by the Applicant. The HASPs would identify requirements for minimum construction and operational distances from residences or businesses, and requirements for temporary fencing around staging, excavation, and laydown areas during construction. The HASPs would identify measures to be employed during operations to limit public access to the proposed facilities (i.e., permanent fencing around the cooling stations and converter station). The HASPs would include provisions for worker protection, as required under the National Electrical Safety Code and by the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Impacts from Construction

Specialized equipment would be necessary for the installation of the proposed transmission cables in the aquatic environment. Construction personnel would be performing the work on a vessel designed solely for the purpose of installing transmission cables. Operation of the aquatic installation equipment and vessels would be performed by personnel specifically trained to use this equipment. An Aquatic Safety and Communications Plan detailing USCG regulations for safely operating vessels and requiring

coordination with the USCG Waterways Management and Vessel Traffic Services would be developed to meet regulatory permit conditions regarding working over or near water.

Construction activities pose an increased risk of construction-related accidents, but this level of risk would be managed by adherence to established Federal and state safety regulations. The activity-specific HASPs would contain hazard communications information, hazard identification, risk assessment, and the information necessary to perform the work safely (e.g., Safety Data Sheets and personal protective equipment to be used). Blasting activities and safety measures during such activities would be managed with a blasting plan. All construction sites in both aquatic and terrestrial environments would be managed to prevent harm to the general public. The public would be notified prior to commencement of construction activities and temporary fencing around staging, excavation, and laydown areas would be installed during construction activities.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

An ERRP would be prepared prior to the proposed CHPE transmission system being put into operation that would identify procedures necessary to perform maintenance and emergency repairs. The ERRP would detail the activities, methods, and equipment involved in repairs and maintenance of the transmission system. Contractors would follow all guidelines detailed in the ERRP when conducting maintenance or emergency repair activities.

All aquatic transmission cables would be accessible by either divers or ROVs, and periodic non-intrusive inspections would be performed in accordance with manufacturer's specifications to ensure equipment integrity and protection is maintained. Contractors would follow all guidelines detailed in the ERRP when conducting maintenance or emergency repair activities.

The aquatic transmission cables require no fluid for insulation and would be buried at depths or otherwise protected to prevent disturbance from unrelated operations in waterways. Before the proposed CHPE transmission system would be put into operation, the terrestrial portions of the route would be appropriately marked, and the final route and placement of the transmission cable and associated equipment would be provided to the NYSPSC for addition to the "Call Before You Dig" database. This would be expected to prevent any accidental damage of, or contact with, the cables once they are operational.

Magnetic and electric field levels associated with the proposed CHPE Project transmission line would be below established health effect levels and would comply with NYSPSC siting guidelines.

S.8.15 Hazardous Materials and Wastes

Impacts from Construction

The installation of the aquatic and terrestrial transmission cables would require the transport, handling, use, and onsite storage of hazardous materials and petroleum products, and small amounts of hazardous wastes would be generated as by-products of the transmission cable installation and burial process.

The installation of the aquatic transmission cables has the potential to suspend temporarily and transport sediment and any associated contaminants from water-jetting activities. However, a majority of the sediments would be redeposited in close proximity to its source. The transmission cables would enter the Hudson River approximately 45 miles (72 km) downstream of the southern end of the Hudson River Polychlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) Dredging Project; therefore, the proposed CHPE Project would not impact the Hudson River PCB Dredging Project.

The installation of the terrestrial transmission cables could disturb contaminants potentially deposited in the soil due to the extended use of portions of these areas as railroads and the current and former use of nearby areas for industrial and commercial operations.

Construction of the cooling stations along the route of the transmission line and the Luyster Creek HVDC Converter Station and would involve the transport, handling, use, and onsite storage of hazardous materials and petroleum products.

Construction of the converter station would not interfere with the ongoing Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) investigations and remedial activities occurring on the former Astoria Gas Works site to the west. Construction of cooling stations would be sited in consultation with the NYSDEC to ensure that they do not conflict with ongoing remedial investigation activities, as applicable.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Minimal amounts of hazardous materials and petroleum products would be needed to operate the vessels, remote diving vehicles, trains, trucks, and other equipment needed to conduct terrestrial ROW maintenance activities, routine non-intrusive inspections, and potential emergency repairs of the aquatic and terrestrial transmission cables.

Should any sections of the transmission cables need to be unearthed for inspection or emergency repair, localized disturbances of soil and sediment potentially containing contaminants would be required. However, because the transmission cables themselves are designed to be maintenance-free and require infrequent inspections, any impacts from maintenance and emergency repairs on hazardous materials and waste would not be significant. The transmission cables do not contain any hazardous fluids, thereby eliminating any potential for sediment contamination from the cables themselves.

A type of refrigerant gas, presumably a non-halogenated hydrocarbon, would be used with the heat exchange process in the chiller system at the cooling stations. If released, this refrigerant would vaporize and not result in air, soil, or groundwater contamination at the cooling stations. Operation of these cooling stations would require limited amounts of hazardous materials and petroleum products for equipment lubrication, cleaning, routine maintenance, and emergency repairs. Minimal amounts of hazardous materials would also be required for standard operations, maintenance, and emergency repairs at the Luyster Creek HVDC Converter Station.

S.8.16 Air Quality

Temporary impacts on air quality would result from construction and maintenance equipment emissions, and no direct emissions would occur from operation of the proposed CHPE Project.

Impacts from Construction

Construction-related air pollutant and GHG emissions associated with the installation of aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project primarily would occur from diesel fuel-powered internal combustion engines. Heavy equipment, ships, barges, generators, and boats would emit pollutants such as carbon monoxide (CO), CO₂, sulfur oxide (SO_x), particulate matter (PM), NO_x, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), including aldehydes and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs). All emissions associated with aquatic cable installation would occur during a 1-year construction season. Emissions associated with construction of the aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project would not exceed the General Conformity Rule *de minimis* thresholds established in 40 CFR Part 93.153(b) for individual nonattainment pollutants.

Construction-related air and GHG emissions associated with the installation of the terrestrial portion of the transmission cable and the converter station would primarily be from diesel internal combustion engines and fugitive dust from earthmoving activities. Bulldozers, rock trenchers, bucket loaders, cranes, and other heavy equipment use diesel internal combustion engines, and would emit air pollutants. Fugitive dust emissions would result as the construction corridor is generally unpaved and most of the heavy equipment use would occur within the construction corridor. Applicant-proposed measures would be implemented to reduce impacts from emissions and minimize fugitive dust.

All emissions associated with construction would be temporary and spread over approximately 3 years of planned work activities. It is anticipated that construction emissions associated with the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project would not exceed the General Conformity Rule *de minimis* thresholds and, therefore, a General Conformity Determination is not required for any portion of the proposed CHPE Project.

The construction emissions are not expected to cause or contribute to a violation of any national or state ambient air quality standard, expose sensitive receptors to substantially increased pollutant concentrations, increase the frequency or severity of a violation of any ambient air quality standard, exceed any evaluation criteria established by the State Implementation Plan (SIP), or delay the attainment of any standard or other milestone contained in the SIP.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Air pollutant and GHG emissions associated with maintenance, inspection, and emergency repair activities would stem from vehicle and equipment engine use and the generation of fugitive dust. Fugitive dust would be created during earthmoving activities and traveling along unpaved roads. Although maintenance, inspection, and emergency repair activities would occur for the life of the proposed CHPE Project, there would not be significant impacts on the regional air quality due to the sporadic small-scale nature and likely short duration of these activities. The types of heavy equipment and vehicles used would be similar to those described for construction; however, their usage would be considerably less. The resulting increase in emissions would not be significant. In addition, maintenance and emergency repair activities associated with the proposed cooling stations and converter station would not have significant impacts on the regional air quality.

In addition, the proposed CHPE Project would introduce 7.65 terawatt hours (TWh) per year of low-carbon renewable energy from Canada into New York's power markets. Upon operation of the proposed CHPE Project, it has been estimated that annual New York State power generation emissions would be reduced by 1.5 million tons of CO₂, 751 tons of SO₂, and 641 tons of NO_x while meeting its annual electric power demand.

S.8.17 Noise

Construction and operation of the proposed CHPE Project would be in compliance with all applicable noise policies and codes.

Impacts from Construction

Construction of the aquatic portions of the transmission line would cause a temporary increase in noise levels in the construction area. Aquatic construction activities would generally occur at distances greater than 600 feet (183 meters) from noise-sensitive receptors. However, in some locations construction activities would occur at distances approximately 100 to 500 feet (30 to 152 meters) from shore. There would be noise impacts on residents along the shoreline when ships and heavy equipment are within

500 feet (152 meters) of the shoreline. At these distances, the noise level was conservatively estimated to range from 62 to 70 A-weighted decibels (dBA). Given the nature of the continuously progressing installation along the aquatic transmission line route, it is likely that nearby receptors on the shoreline would be subject to noticeable sound increases for no more than a few hours as the work would progress at a rate of approximately 1.5 miles (2.4 km) per day.

Construction of the terrestrial portion of the transmission line would cause a temporary increase in noise levels. Terrestrial transmission cable installation requires a wide range of site preparation and cable installation activities and equipment that generate noise. Terrestrial construction would generally occur approximately 100 to 500 feet (30 to 152 meters) from residences and users of recreational resources along the terrestrial portions of the project route. At this distance, the noise level was conservatively estimated to range from 66 to 86 dBA. However, in a few places along the transmission line route, including the Overland Segment, Stony Point, Haverstraw, and Queens, construction activities would occur within 100 feet (30 meters) of residences. Noise levels within this distance would be approximately 80 to 85 dBA, similar to those produced by a motorcycle at 50 feet (15 meters). Noise at these levels could result in speech or sleep interference in areas close to the operating construction equipment. Applicant-proposed measures such as equipping construction equipment with appropriate sound-muffling devices (i.e., Original Equipment Manufacturer [OEM] or better), maintaining equipment in good operating condition at all times, and limiting high-noise construction activities to daylight hours in areas with sensitive noise receptors would minimize impacts. The Applicant would notify residents ahead of time regarding construction activities in residential areas traversed by the transmission line.

HDD installation activities at the major water-to-land transitions would result in temporary noise level increases at nearby noise-sensitive receptors. Noise generated from the HDD operation would be relatively constant and, at a level of up to 89 dBA within 100 feet (30 meters) of the HDD equipment, slightly louder than typical construction noise levels. HDD operations at the major water-to-land transitions would be in place for up to approximately 2 weeks, and the Applicant has proposed to erect wooden sound barriers in addition to the above-cited noise minimization measures, or where warranted, offer temporary lodging for affected residents.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Noise impacts from the operation of cooling stations and the converter station and maintenance and emergency repair activities would be expected. The increase in sound levels resulting from periodic inspection and vegetation maintenance activities in the transmission line ROW would not be significant and primarily would be associated with noise generated from additional vessel and construction vehicle traffic. Such activities would be short-term in duration, but could occur multiple times over the operating life of the transmission line. Noise levels generated from emergency repair activities would be similar to those expected during construction but with less equipment, only in a discrete area where repair activities are required, and for a shorter duration.

The cooling stations would be designed by the Applicant to limit noise generated to levels of 50 dBA at 100 feet (30 meters) away. Residential areas are present along the proposed CHPE Project route, and some residences could be within 100 feet (30 meters) of the cooling stations. However, cooling station noise levels at nearby receptors would comply with the NYSDEC Noise Policy of 65 dBA for new noise sources. The operation of the Luyster Creek HVDC Converter Station would add to baseline environmental noise levels in the immediate area; however, operations would be compliant with the New York City zoning exterior standard for exterior uses bordering an M3 industrial zone; the New York City Noise Code, and the NYSDEC Noise Policy.

S.8.18 Socioeconomics

Construction and operation of the proposed CHPE Project would require relatively few specialized workers and laborers over the lifetime of the project. Project requirements for non-specialized construction workers and local housing units along the CHPE Project corridor should be adequate to meet labor demands associated with the project. Tax receipts and revenue associated with construction expenditures would increase for local municipalities and an annual reduction in wholesale electrical energy market prices would occur.

Impacts from Construction

Over the approximated 4-year construction period, the proposed CHPE Project would result in an estimated average 300 direct construction jobs. Additionally produced indirect and induced jobs would be associated with supplying materials and providing other services for construction of the proposed CHPE Project.

Relatively few (i.e., approximately 20) specialized workers would be required during construction activities and would be on site only for the duration of those activities (i.e., 2 weeks or less) in any given location. Non-specialized workers would be hired from the existing construction workforce along each segment of the proposed CHPE Project corridor. Therefore, it is unlikely that large numbers of workers would permanently migrate to the area to meet the labor demands of the project. The few specialized workers travelling to the area for construction of the proposed CHPE Project would likely be housed either in local hotels or other short-term boarding units. Given the low number of specialized workers required for construction, existing housing options along each segment of the proposed project corridor should be adequate to meet the temporary increase in demand.

Spending associated with construction (e.g., purchase of building materials, construction workers' wages, and purchases of goods and services) would temporarily increase tax receipts and revenue for local economies. Building materials required for the proposed CHPE Project would be purchased as needed from local sources. Construction activities within roadways could interfere with access to local businesses. However, construction zones would be established in a given location for 2 or less weeks at a time and a Maintenance and Protection of Traffic Plan would be developed to ensure continuous road access to businesses.

Easements would be acquired by the Applicant, where appropriate, along the proposed CHPE Project corridor and the Applicant would pay for any associated land restoration costs following construction activities in these areas. Since construction activities would be temporary and property would be returned to pre-construction conditions once completed, it is unlikely that property values would be impacted.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Approximately 26 direct, full-time employees would be hired to operate the proposed CHPE Project; of this total, 21 employees would be located in the New York City metropolitan area. A negligible number of indirect jobs could also be created for maintenance inspections and possible emergency repairs that, if needed, would be conducted by contractors. Considering the low number of jobs that would be created, the existing workforce within the project area would be able to meet the employment and housing demands of the proposed CHPE Project.

The Applicant would pay fees, as appropriate, to New York State agencies for use of state lands occupied by the proposed CHPE Project. Some elements of the proposed CHPE Project transmission system facilities would be taxable as real property. Local municipalities would impose a tax on the facilities, and

the Applicant would pay the tax. Tax receipts are estimated to be 2 percent of the annually assessed municipal property value; this percentage is calculated per New York State tax regulations and is subject to change.

Residents throughout the New York City metropolitan area are projected to receive approximately \$200 million in annual energy savings. The vast majority (i.e., 91 percent) of savings is expected for the New York City metropolitan area. Costs associated with operation of the transmission system would be borne (as a merchant project) by investors; they would not be directly passed on to ratepayers.

The transmission line would typically be buried primarily in road and railroad ROWs and would not be visible; therefore, its presence would not present a general detriment to private property values. Easement payments to landowners would compensate landowners for any access or use restrictions placed on private properties and would offset any potential impacts on property values. The Applicant would also pay for any land restoration costs associated with any emergency repairs to the system that might be required. Because maintenance and emergency repair activities would only occur in a given location for 2 weeks or less, no change in private property values would be expected.

S.8.19 Environmental Justice

Construction and operation of the proposed CHPE Project would not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations as compared to the general population because the transmission line would be underwater or underground, primarily in railroad or roadway ROWs.

Impacts from Construction

The census tracts along the proposed CHPE Project transmission line corridor have minority or low-income population levels that generally are lower than those for New York State, except for Census Tracts closest to New York City. Despite the larger number of minority and low-income populations near New York City, particularly in Queens, human health and environmental effects from increases in air emissions, noise, dust, and construction vehicle traffic would not be considered disproportionately high and adverse because effects would occur on the population as a whole on a transitory, temporary schedule. Portions of the transmission line would be constructed in aquatic environments, which would further reduce construction-related effects on minority and low-income populations because activities would occur farther from populations residing on land. Cooling stations would be constructed along the proposed CHPE Project route primarily in existing railroad ROWs, and the Luyster Creek HVDC Converter Station would be constructed in an industrial area with no permanent residents; therefore, no disproportionately high adverse effects on minority and low-income populations would occur from construction of these aboveground facilities.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

Operation of the transmission line would create magnetic fields; however, no adverse effects from magnetic fields on minority and low-income populations would be expected because the cables would be placed underground in the same trench, and no known human health effects from exposure to magnetic fields at the level to be emitted by the proposed CHPE Project have been identified. Human health and environmental effects would be limited to operation of the converter station and maintenance and emergency repairs of the transmission system. Effects from increases in air emissions, noise, and traffic would not be considered disproportionately high and adverse on minority and low-income populations because effects would occur on the population as a whole on an intermittent, temporary schedule in primarily aquatic environments and existing roadway and railroad ROWs at durations and frequencies less than that for construction. Portions of the transmission line in aquatic environments would have less

maintenance and emergency repair-related effects on minority and low-income populations because activities would occur farther from populations residing on land. Noise levels would be expected to increase as a result of cooling station and converter station operation; however, those levels would primarily occur in industrial areas or railroad or roadway ROWs.

S.8.20 Cumulative Impacts

Impacts from Construction

Construction activities along aquatic portions of the proposed CHPE Project route could result in temporarily increased water turbidity, disturbance and resuspension of sediments, disturbances to aquatic species, localized degradation of aquatic species habitat, increased vessel traffic, increased air emissions, and increased noise levels. Recolonization of impacted areas would begin to occur within months after activities have ceased. Cumulatively, other construction activities occurring in the same time and vicinity would have similar impacts on aquatic environments. Other projects identified along the aquatic segments of the proposed CHPE Project include the maintenance dredging of the Hudson River at the North Germantown Reach (though this should be complete prior to the proposed CHPE Project), the Tappan Zee Hudson River Crossing Project, and possibly the Grande Isle Intertie across Lake Champlain and the West Point Transmission Project in the Hudson River (though the timing of these projects are unknown). Multiple activities occurring at the same time and vicinity would have greater impacts than just one project. If construction activities overlap in this area, then the construction-related impacts, such as disturbed substrate, temporary water quality degradation, sediment redeposition, increased turbidity, increased noise and vibration, and the potential for spills could be greater than for just one project. However, construction of the proposed CHPE Project would not affect any one area for long (i.e., no more than 2 weeks), so the short temporal overlap would limit cumulative impacts.

Construction activities along terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project route could result in vegetation clearing, disturbances to wildlife, localized degradation of wildlife habitat, possible take of wildlife individuals, soil disturbance and erosion, storm water runoff into surface water, increased traffic, increased air emissions, and increased noise levels. In general, these would all be short-term in nature. Cumulatively, other construction activities occurring in the same time and vicinity would have similar impacts on terrestrial environments. Other projects identified along the terrestrial portions of the proposed CHPE Project include CSX Track Expansion between Ravenna and Haverstraw, the Haverstraw Water Supply Project, and the Luyster Creek Energy Project and ConEd Learning Center in Astoria. Multiple activities occurring at the same time and vicinity would have greater impacts than just one project. Construction of the proposed CHPE Project would not affect any one area for long (i.e., no more than several weeks), so the short temporal overlap would limit cumulative impacts for concurrent projects.

Impacts from Operations, Maintenance, and Emergency Repairs

The proposed CHPE Project individually would not be considered a strong source of magnetic fields. Other existing and proposed transmission lines that would be crossed by the proposed CHPE Project would be an additional source of magnetic fields at the location of the crossing. Individuals of a migrant aquatic species (e.g., shortnose sturgeon) might encounter crossing submerged cables emitting magnetic fields along an entire migratory route. A review of scientific literature yielded inconclusive evidence that magnetic field emissions associated with transmission lines result in adverse effects on the health, behavior, or productivity of animals. However, the cumulative impacts of magnetic fields on aquatic and terrestrial species over a lifetime are poorly understood.

In general, the strongest magnetic and electric fields around the outside of a substation, such as in the vicinity of the proposed Luyster Creek HVDC Converter Station, are from power lines entering and leaving the substation. Beyond the substation fence or wall, the magnetic field produced by the substation equipment is usually indistinguishable from background levels. Though the proposed CHPE Project would not generate magnetic fields above the 200 mG NYSPSC interim standard, the project could contribute to magnetic emissions greater than 200 mG in those areas where the proposed HVAC transmission line crosses other utility lines. Other sources of magnetic fields in outdoor urban areas include existing power lines and street lights. People are exposed to numerous sources of magnetic fields on a daily basis from sources like power lines, but also from electric devices in home and office environments. The research available on the health impacts of magnetic field exposure are not definitive, and no conclusions regarding the health impacts can be drawn based on what is presently known about the health impacts of magnetic fields.

Several factors could impact the energy generation market over the next few years. Energy policies are putting increasing emphasis on energy conservation and providing reliable, clean, and renewable sources of energy. Existing generating plants in the state that are not meeting air quality, water quality, or other safety standards could be forced either to upgrade equipment or to retire affected generating units earlier than planned. Proposed upgrades in the electrical transmission infrastructure along the proposed CHPE Project corridor would increase the viability of wind energy, including offshore wind energy, as an important source of clean, renewable energy in the long term; however, the upgrades necessary to make this happen would not likely occur within the next few years. Other proposed HVDC transmission projects, in addition to the proposed CHPE Project, would facilitate the importation of energy into New York City from interstate or Canadian sources. The proposed CHPE Project would be expected to contribute to cumulative increases in electrical capacity, efficiency, and reliability and decreases in transmission congestion in the New York Control Area.

The proposed CHPE Project is intended to reduce criteria pollutant and GHG emissions by alleviating the need to operate older, more emissive fossil-fueled power plants. New York State currently derives approximately 21 percent of its electricity generation needs from renewable resources, most of which comes from hydroelectric power, and the majority of the remaining generation is fossil-fuel based. The proposed CHPE Project would reduce annual emissions of CO₂, SO₂, and NO_x. As older, more emissive fossil-fueled sources of power generation are retired, the proposed CHPE Project would be expected to have long-term, beneficial, cumulative impacts on air quality, particularly in the New York City area where there are many fossil-fueled generating units and high energy demand.

Since the proposed CHPE Project transmission line would be designed to be maintenance-free, cumulative impacts from maintenance and emergency repair activities would be limited to a negligible increase in vessel and maintenance vehicle traffic in the transmission line ROW. Potential clearing of land adjacent to the transmission line ROW, along with management of vegetation growth in the transmission line ROW during operation of the proposed CHPE Project, would also cumulatively reduce the amount of forested areas and availability of wildlife habitat.

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S.10 Acronyms

AC	alternating current	mG	milligauss
APE	Area of Potential Effect	MP	milepost
BA	Biological Assessment	MW	megawatt
BMP	best management practice	NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
°C	degrees Celsius	NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	NOA	Notice of Availability
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	NO _x	nitrogen oxides
CHPE	Champlain Hudson Power Express	NOI	Notice of Intent
CHPEI	Champlain Hudson Power Express Inc.	NRE	National Register Eligible
cm	centimeter	NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
CMP	Coastal Management Program	NRL	National Register Listed
CO	carbon monoxide	NYISO	New York Independent System Operator
CO ₂	carbon dioxide	NYP&A	New York Power Authority
ConEd	Consolidated Edison Company of New York, Inc.	NYSDEC	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
CP	Canadian Pacific	NYSDOT	New York State Department of Transportation
CRMP	Cultural Resources Management Plan	NYSDPS	New York State Department of Public Service
CSX	CSX Transportation	NYSPSC	New York State Public Service Commission
CWA	Clean Water Act	OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
dBA	A-weighted decibel	PA	Programmatic Agreement
DC	direct current	PAH	polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon
DOE	U.S. Department of Energy	PCB	polychlorinated biphenyl
DPS	distinct population segment	PM	particulate matter
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement	POI	point of interconnection
EM&CP	Environmental Management and Construction Plan	RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
EMF	electromagnetic field	ROV	remotely operated vehicle
EO	Executive Order	ROW	right-of-way
ERRP	Emergency Repair and Response Plan	SIP	State Implementation Plan
ESA	Endangered Species Act	SO ₂	sulfur dioxide
°F	degrees Fahrenheit	SO _x	sulfur oxide
FR	Federal Register	SPCC	Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures
G	gauss	TWh	terawatt hours
GHG	greenhouse gas	USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
GIS	Geographic Information System	USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
GWh	gigawatt hours	USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
HASP	Health and Safety Plan	U.S.C.	United States Code
HDD	horizontal directional drilling	USCG	U. S. Coast Guard
HDPE	high-density polyethylene	VOC	volatile organic compound
HVAC	high-voltage alternating current	V/m	volts per meter
HVDC	high-voltage direct current	XLPE	cross-linked polyethylene
ISO	Independent System Operator		
km	kilometer		
kV	kilovolt		
kV/m	kilovolts per meter		
LMP	location marginal price		

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