

ELECTRONIC CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

e-CFR data is current as of May 14, 2021

[Title 18](#) → [Chapter I](#) → [Subchapter B](#) → [Part 4](#) → [Subpart D](#) → §4.38

Title 18: Conservation of Power and Water Resources

[PART 4—LICENSES, PERMITS, EXEMPTIONS, AND DETERMINATION OF PROJECT COSTS](#)

[Subpart D—Application for Preliminary Permit, License or Exemption: General Provisions](#)

§4.38 Consultation requirements.

(a) Requirement to consult. (1) Before it files any application for an original license or an exemption from licensing that is described in paragraph (a)(6) of this section, a potential applicant must consult with the relevant Federal, State, and interstate resource agencies, including the National Marine Fisheries Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal agency administering any federal lands or facilities utilized or occupied by the project, the appropriate State fish and wildlife agencies, the appropriate State water resource management agencies, the certifying agency under section 401(a)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), 33 U.S.C. §1341(c)(1), and any Indian tribe that may be affected by the proposed project.

(2) Each requirement in this section to contact or consult with resource agencies or Indian tribes shall be construed to require as well that the potential applicant contact or consult with members of the public.

(3) If a potential applicant for an original license commences first stage pre-filing consultation on or after July 23, 2005 it shall file a notification of intent to file a license application pursuant to §5.5 and a pre-application document pursuant to the provisions of §5.6.

(4) The Director of the Office of Energy Projects will, upon request, provide a list of known appropriate Federal, state, and interstate resource agencies, Indian tribes, and local, regional, or national non-governmental organizations likely to be interested in any license application proceeding.

(5) An applicant for an exemption from licensing or an applicant for a license seeking benefits under section 210 of the Public Utility Regulatory Policies Act, as amended, for a project that would be located at a new dam or diversion must, in addition to meeting the requirements of this section, comply with the consultation requirements in §4.301.

(6) The pre-filing consultation requirements of this section apply only to an application for:

(i) Original license;

(ii) Exemption;

(iii) Amendment to an application for original license or exemption that materially amends the proposed plans of development as defined in §4.35(f)(1);

(iv) Amendment to an existing license that would increase the capacity of the project as defined in §4.201(b); or

(v) Amendment to an existing license that would not increase the capacity of the project as defined in §4.201(b), but that would involve:

(A) The construction of a new dam or diversion in a location where there is no existing dam or diversion;

(B) Any repair, modification, or reconstruction of an existing dam that would result in a significant change in the normal maximum surface area or elevation of an existing impoundment; or

(C) The addition of new water power turbines other than to replace existing turbines.

(7) Before it files a non-capacity related amendment as defined in §4.201(c), an applicant must consult with the resource agencies and Indian tribes listed in paragraph (a)(1) of this section to the extent that the proposed amendment would affect the interests of the agencies or tribes. When consultation is necessary, the applicant must, at a minimum, provide the resource agencies and Indian tribes with copies of the draft application and allow them at least 60 days to comment on the proposed amendment. The amendment as filed with the Commission must summarize the consultation with the resource agencies and Indian tribes on the proposed amendment, propose reasonable protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures to respond to impacts identified as being caused by the proposed amendment, and respond to any objections, recommendations, or conditions submitted by the agencies or Indian tribes. Copies of all written correspondence between the applicant, the agencies, and the tribes must be attached to the application.

(8) This section does not apply to any application for a new license, a nonpower license, a subsequent license, or surrender of a license subject to sections 14 and 15 of the Federal Power Act.

(9) If a potential applicant has any doubt as to whether a particular application or amendment would be subject to the pre-filing consultation requirements of this section or if a waiver of the pre-filing requirements would be appropriate, the applicant may file a written request for clarification or waiver with the Director, Office of Energy Projects.

(b) First stage of consultation. (1) A potential applicant for an original license that commences pre-filing consultation on or after July 23, 2005 must, at the time it files its notification of intent to seek a license pursuant to §5.5 of this chapter and a pre-application document pursuant to §5.6 of this chapter and, at the same time, provide a copy of the pre-application document to the entities specified in §5.6(a) of this chapter.

(2) A potential applicant for an original license that commences pre-filing consultation under this part prior to July 23, 2005 or for an exemption must promptly contact each of the appropriate resource agencies, affected Indian tribes, and members of the public likely to be interested in the proceeding; provide them with a description of the proposed project and supporting information; and confer with them on project design, the impact of the proposed project (including a description of any existing facilities, their operation, and any proposed changes), reasonable hydropower alternatives, and what studies the applicant should conduct. The potential applicant must provide to the resource agencies, Indian tribes and the Commission the following information:

- (i) Detailed maps showing project boundaries, if any, proper land descriptions of the entire project area by township, range, and section, as well as by state, county, river, river mile, and closest town, and also showing the specific location of all proposed project facilities, including roads, transmission lines, and any other appurtenant facilities;
- (ii) A general engineering design of the proposed project, with a description of any proposed diversion of a stream through a canal or penstock;
- (iii) A summary of the proposed operational mode of the project;
- (iv) Identification of the environment to be affected, the significant resources present, and the applicant's proposed environmental protection, mitigation, and enhancement plans, to the extent known at that time;
- (v) Streamflow and water regime information, including drainage area, natural flow periodicity, monthly flow rates and durations, mean flow figures illustrating the mean daily streamflow curve for each month of the year at the point of diversion or impoundment, with location of the stream gauging station, the method used to generate the streamflow data provided, and copies of all records used to derive the flow data used in the applicant's engineering calculations;
- (vi) (A) A statement (with a copy to the Commission) of whether or not the applicant will seek benefits under section 210 of PURPA by satisfying the requirements for qualifying hydroelectric small power production facilities in §292.203 of this chapter;

(B) If benefits under section 210 of PURPA are sought, a statement on whether or not the applicant believes diversion (as that term is defined in §292.202(p) of this chapter) and a request for the agencies' view on that belief, if any;

(vii) Detailed descriptions of any proposed studies and the proposed methodologies to be employed; and

(viii) Any statement required by §4.301(a) of this part.

(3) (i) A potential exemption applicant and a potential applicant for an original license that commences pre-filing consultation;

(A) On or after July 23, 2005 pursuant to part 5 of this chapter and receives approval from the Commission to use the license application procedures of part 4 of this chapter; or

(B) Elects to commence pre-filing consultation under part 4 of this chapter prior to July 23, 2005; must:

(1) Hold a joint meeting at a convenient place and time, including an opportunity for a site visit, with all pertinent agencies, Indian tribes, and members of the public to explain the applicant's proposal and its potential environmental impact, to review the information provided, and to discuss the data to be obtained and studies to be conducted by the potential applicant as part of the consultation process;

(2) Consult with the resource agencies, Indian tribes and members of the public on the scheduling and agenda of the joint meeting; and

(3) No later than 15 days in advance of the joint meeting, provide the Commission with written notice of the time and place of the meeting and a written agenda of the issues to be discussed at the meeting.

(ii) The joint meeting must be held no earlier than 30 days, but no later than 60 days, from, as applicable;

(A) The date of the Commission's approval of the potential applicant's request to use the license application procedures of this part pursuant to the provisions of part 5 of this chapter; or

(B) The date of the potential applicant's letter transmitting the information required by paragraph (b)(2) of this section, in the case of a potential exemption applicant or a potential license applicant that commences pre-filing consultation under this part prior to July 23, 2005.

(4) Members of the public must be informed of and invited to attend the joint meeting held pursuant to paragraph (b)(3) of this section by means of the public notice provision published in accordance with paragraph (g) of this section. Members of the public attending the meeting are entitled to participate in the meeting and to express their views regarding resource issues that should be addressed in any application for license or exemption that may be filed by the potential applicant. Attendance of the public at any site visit held pursuant to

paragraph (b)(3) of this section will be at the discretion of the potential applicant. The potential applicant must make either audio recordings or written transcripts of the joint meeting, and must promptly provide copies of these recordings or transcripts to the Commission and, upon request, to any resource agency, Indian tribe, or member of the public.

(5) Not later than 60 days after the joint meeting held under paragraph (b)(3) of this Section (unless extended within this time period by a resource agency, Indian tribe, or members of the public for an additional 60 days by sending written notice to the applicant and the Director of the Office of Energy Projects within the first 60 day period, with an explanation of the basis for the extension), each interested resource agency and Indian tribe must provide a potential applicant with written comments:

- (i) Identifying its determination of necessary studies to be performed or the information to be provided by the potential applicant;
- (ii) Identifying the basis for its determination;
- (iii) Discussing its understanding of the resource issues and its goals and objectives for these resources;
- (iv) Explaining why each study methodology recommended by it is more appropriate than any other available methodology alternatives, including those identified by the potential applicant pursuant to paragraph (b)(2)(vii) of this section;
- (v) Documenting that the use of each study methodology recommended by it is a generally accepted practice; and
- (vi) Explaining how the studies and information requested will be useful to the agency, Indian tribe, or member of the public in furthering its resource goals and objectives that are affected by the proposed project.

(6)(i) If a potential applicant and a resource agency or Indian tribe disagree as to any matter arising during the first stage of consultation or as to the need to conduct a study or gather information referenced in paragraph (c)(2) of this section, the potential applicant or resource agency or Indian tribe may refer the dispute in writing to the Director of the Office of Energy Projects (Director) for resolution.

(ii) At the same time as the request for dispute resolution is submitted to the Director, the entity referring the dispute must serve a copy of its written request for resolution on the disagreeing party and any affected resource agency or Indian tribe, which may submit to the Director a written response to the referral within 15 days of the referral's submittal to the Director.

(iii) Written referrals to the Director and written responses thereto pursuant to paragraphs (b)(6)(i) or (b)(6)(ii) of this section must be filed with the Commission in accordance with

the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, and must indicate that they are for the attention of the Director pursuant to §4.38(b)(6).

(iv) The Director will resolve the disputes by letter provided to the potential applicant and all affected resource agencies and Indian tribes.

(v) If a potential applicant does not refer a dispute regarding a request for a potential applicant to obtain information or conduct studies (other than a dispute regarding the information specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section), or a study to the Director under paragraph (b)(6) of this section, or if a potential applicant disagrees with the Director's resolution of a dispute regarding a request for information (other than a dispute regarding the information specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section) or a study, and if the potential applicant does not provide the requested information or conduct the requested study, the potential applicant must fully explain the basis for its disagreement in its application.

(vi) Filing and acceptance of an application will not be delayed, and an application will not be considered deficient or patently deficient pursuant to §4.32(e) (1) or (e)(2) of this part, merely because the application does not include a particular study or particular information if the Director had previously found, under paragraph (b)(6)(iv) of this section, that each study or information is unreasonable or unnecessary for an informed decision by the Commission on the merits of the application or use of the study methodology requested is not a generally accepted practice.

(7) The first stage of consultation ends when all participating agencies and Indian tribes provide the written comments required under paragraph (b)(5) of this section or 60 days after the joint meeting held under paragraph (b)(3) of this section, whichever occurs first, unless a resource agency or Indian tribe timely notifies the applicant and the Director of Energy Projects of its need for more time to provide written comments under paragraph (b)(5) of this section, in which case the first stage of consultation ends when all participating agencies and Indian tribes provide the written comments required under paragraph (b)(5) of this section or 120 days after the joint meeting held under paragraph (b)(5) of this section, whichever occurs first.

(c) Second stage of consultation. (1) Unless determined to be unnecessary by the Director pursuant to paragraph (b)(6) of this section, a potential applicant must diligently conduct all reasonable studies and obtain all reasonable information requested by resource agencies and Indian tribes under paragraph (b) of this section that are necessary for the Commission to make an informed decision regarding the merits of the application. These studies must be completed and the information obtained:

(i) Prior to filing the application, if the results:

(A) Would influence the financial (e.g., instream flow study) or technical feasibility of the project (e.g., study of potential mass soil movement); or

(B) Are needed to determine the design or location of project features, reasonable alternatives to the project, the impact of the project on important natural or cultural resources (e.g., resource surveys), or suitable mitigation or enhancement measures, or to minimize impact on significant resources (e.g., wild and scenic river, anadromous fish, endangered species, caribou migration routes);

(ii) After filing the application but before issuance of a license or exemption, if the applicant otherwise complied with the provisions of paragraph (b)(2) of this section and the study or information gathering would take longer to conduct and evaluate than the time between the conclusion of the first stage of consultation and the expiration of the applicant's preliminary permit or the application filing deadline set by the Commission;

(iii) After a new license or exemption is issued, if the studies can be conducted or the information obtained only after construction or operation of proposed facilities, would determine the success of protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures (e.g., post-construction monitoring studies), or would be used to refine project operation or modify project facilities.

(2) If, after the end of the first stage of consultation as defined in paragraph (b) (7) of this section, a resource agency or Indian tribe requests that the potential applicant conduct a study or gather information not previously identified and specifies the basis and reasoning for its request, under paragraphs (b)(5) (i)-(vi) of this section, the potential applicant must promptly initiate the study or gather the information, unless the study or information is unreasonable or unnecessary for an informed decision by the Commission on the merits of the application or use of the methodology requested by a resource agency or Indian tribe for conducting the study is not a generally accepted practice. The applicant may refer any such request to the Director of the Office of Energy Projects for dispute resolution under the procedures set forth in paragraph (b)(6) of this section and need not conduct prior to filing any study determined by the Director to be unreasonable or unnecessary or to employ a methodology that is not generally accepted.

(3)(i) The results of studies and information-gathering referenced in paragraphs (c)(1) (ii) and (c)(2) of this section will be treated as additional information; and

(ii) Filing and acceptance of an application will not be delayed and an application will not be considered deficient or patently deficient pursuant to §4.32 (e) (1) or (e)(2) merely because the study or information gathering is not complete before the application is filed.

(4) A potential applicant must provide each resource agency and Indian tribe with:

(i) A copy of its draft application that:

(A) Indicates the type of application the potential applicant expects to file with the Commission; and

(B) Responds to any comments and recommendations made by any resource agency and Indian tribe either during the first stage of consultation or under paragraph (c)(2) of this section;

(ii) The results of all studies and information-gathering either requested by that resource agency or Indian tribe in the first stage of consultation (or under paragraph (c)(2) of this section if available) or which pertain to resources of interest to that resource agency or Indian tribe and which were identified by the potential applicant pursuant to paragraph (b)(2)(vii) of this section, including a discussion of the results and any proposed protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures; and

(iii) A written request for review and comment.

(5) A resource agency or Indian tribe will have 90 days from the date of the potential applicant's letter transmitting the paragraph (c)(4) information to it to provide written comments on the information submitted by a potential applicant under paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(6) If the written comments provided under paragraph (c)(5) of this section indicate that a resource agency or Indian tribe has a substantive disagreement with a potential applicant's conclusions regarding resource impacts or its proposed protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures, the potential applicant will:

(i) Hold a joint meeting with the disagreeing resource agency or Indian tribe and other agencies with similar or related areas of interest, expertise, or responsibility not later than 60 days from the date of the written comments of the disagreeing agency or Indian tribe to discuss and to attempt to reach agreement on its plan for environmental protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures;

(ii) Consult with the disagreeing agency or Indian tribe and other agencies with similar or related areas of interest, expertise, or responsibility on the scheduling of the joint meeting; and

(iii) At least 15 days in advance of the meeting, provide the Commission with written notice of the time and place of the meeting and a written agenda of the issues to be discussed at the meeting.

(7) The potential applicant and any disagreeing resource agency or Indian tribe may conclude a joint meeting with a document embodying any agreement among them regarding environmental protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures and any issues that are unresolved.

(8) The potential applicant must describe all disagreements with a resource agency or Indian tribe on technical or environmental protection, mitigation, or enhancement measures in its application, including an explanation of the basis for the applicant's disagreement with

the resource agency or Indian tribe, and must include in its application any document developed pursuant to paragraph (c)(7) of this section.

(9) A potential applicant may file an application with the Commission if:

- (i) It has complied with paragraph (c)(4) of this section and no resource agency or Indian tribe has responded with substantive disagreements by the deadline specified in paragraph (c)(5) of this section; or
- (ii) It has complied with paragraph (c)(6) of this section and a resource agency or Indian tribe has responded with substantive disagreements.

(10) The second stage of consultation ends:

- (i) Ninety days after the submittal of information pursuant to paragraph (c)(4) of this section in cases where no resource agency or Indian tribe has responded with substantive disagreements; or
- (ii) At the conclusion of the last joint meeting held pursuant to paragraph (c)(6) of this section in cases where a resource agency or Indian tribe has responded with substantive disagreements.

(d) Third stage of consultation. (1) The third stage of consultation is initiated by the filing of an application for a license or exemption, accompanied by a transmittal letter certifying that at the same time copies of the application are being mailed to the resource agencies, Indian tribes, other government offices, and consulted members of the public specified in paragraph (d)(2) of this section.

(2) As soon as an applicant files such application documents with the Commission, or promptly after receipt in the case of documents described in

paragraph (d)(2)(iii) of this section, as the Commission may direct the applicant must serve on every resource agency, Indian tribes, and member of the public consulted, and on other government offices copies of:

- (i) Its application for a license or an exemption from licensing;
- (ii) Any deficiency correction, revision, supplement, response to additional information request, or amendment to the application; and
- (iii) Any written correspondence from the Commission requesting the correction of deficiencies or the submittal of additional information.

(e) Waiver of compliance with consultation requirements. (1) If a resource agency or Indian tribe waives in writing compliance with any requirement of this section, a potential applicant does not have to comply with that requirement as to that agency or tribe.

(2) If a resource agency or Indian tribe fails to timely comply with a provision regarding a requirement of this section, a potential applicant may proceed to the next sequential requirement of this section without waiting for the resource agency or Indian tribe to comply.

(3) The failure of a resource agency or Indian tribe to timely comply with a provision regarding a requirement of this section does not preclude its participation in subsequent stages of the consultation process.

(4) Following October 23, 2003, a potential license applicant engaged in pre-filing consultation under part 4 may during first stage consultation request to incorporate into pre-filing consultation any element of the integrated license application process provided for in part 5 of this chapter. Any such request must be accompanied by a:

- (i) Specific description of how the element of the part 5 license application would fit into the pre-filing consultation process under this part; and
- (ii) Demonstration that the potential license applicant has made every reasonable effort to contact all resource agencies, Indian tribes, non-governmental organizations, and others affected by the applicant's proposal, and that a consensus exists in favor of incorporating the specific element of the part 5 process into the pre-filing consultation under this part.

(f) Application requirements documenting consultation and any disagreements with resource agencies. An applicant must show in Exhibit E of its application that it has met the requirements of paragraphs (b) through (d) and paragraphs (g) and (h) of this section, and must include a summary of the consultation process and:

- (1) Any resource agency's or Indian tribe's letters containing comments, recommendations, and proposed terms and conditions;

- (2) Any letters from the public containing comments and recommendations;
- (3) Notice of any remaining disagreement with a resource agency or Indian tribe on:
 - (i) The need for a study or the manner in which a study should be conducted and the applicant's reasons for disagreement, and
 - (ii) Information on any environmental protection, mitigation, or enhancement measure, including the basis for the applicant's disagreement with the resource agency or Indian tribe;
- (4) Evidence of any waivers under paragraph (e) of this section;
- (5) Evidence of all attempts to consult with a resource agency or Indian tribe, copies of related documents showing the attempts, and documents showing the conclusion of the second stage of consultation;
- (6) An explanation of how and why the project would, would not, or should not, comply with any relevant comprehensive plan as defined in §2.19 of this chapter and a description of any relevant resource agency or Indian tribe determination regarding the consistency of the project with any such comprehensive plan;
- (7) A description of how the applicant's proposal addresses the significant resource issues raised at the joint meeting held pursuant to paragraph (b)(3) of this section; and
- (8) A list containing the name and address of every federal, state, and interstate resource agency and Indian tribe with which the applicant consulted pursuant to paragraph (a)(1) of this section.

(g) Public participation. (1) At least 14 days in advance of the joint meeting held pursuant to paragraph (b)(3) of this section, the potential applicant must publish notice, at least once, of the purpose, location, and timing of the joint meeting, in a daily or weekly newspaper published in each county in which the proposed project or any part thereof is situated. The notice shall include a summary of the major issues to be discussed at the joint meeting.

(2)(i) A potential applicant must make available to the public for inspection and reproduction the information specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section from the date on which the notice required by paragraph (g)(1) of this section is first published until a final order is issued on any license application.

(ii) The provisions of §4.32(b) will govern the form and manner in which the information is to be made available for public inspection and reproduction.

(iii) A potential applicant must make available to the public for inspection at the joint meeting required by paragraph (b)(3) of this section at least two copies of the information specified in paragraph (b)(2) of this section.

(h) Critical Energy Infrastructure Information. If this section requires an applicant to reveal Critical Energy Infrastructure Information (CEII), as defined by §388.113(c) of this chapter, to any person, the applicant shall follow the procedures set out in §4.32(k).

[Order 533, 56 FR 23153, May 20, 1991, as amended at 56 FR 61155, Dec. 2, 1991; Order 2002, 68 FR 51117, Aug. 25, 2003; Order 643, 68 FR 52094, Sept. 2, 2003; 68 FR 61742, Oct. 30, 2003; Order 756, 77 FR 4894, Feb. 1, 2012; Order 800, 79 FR 59110, Oct. 1, 2014]

[Need assistance?](#)