

EPA puts out draft permit on 225-MW Texas project

This is a quick-start, gas-fired project

09/17/2014 by Barry Cassell

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is out for public comment until Oct. 17 on a draft air permit for the Red Gate power plant project of **South Texas Electric Cooperative (STEC)**.

The cooperative in January 2013 applied at EPA's Region 6 office for a greenhouse gas permit under the prevention of significant deterioration (PSD) program for the Red Gate Power Plant project. The proposed plant construction will occur in Hidalgo County at 3428 West FM 490, at Edinburg, Texas. The site is located on undeveloped land in Edinburg, approximately 2.5 miles west of Texas State Highway 281, with Farm-to-Market Road 490 forming the northern border.

In connection with the same proposed project, STEC submitted a PSD permit application for non-GHG pollutants to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) in October 2012, which was issued in December 2013.

STEC proposes to construct a new 225 MW (nominal) electric power plant, consisting of twelve **Wartsila** natural gas-fired engines (Model 18V50SG) and associated equipment including a firewater pump engine, circuit breakers and a diesel-fired emergency generator.

"STEC's application explains that its system experienced strong growth in 2011 as a result of extreme weather conditions in both the summer and winter months, such that sales to member cooperatives increased 11.78% to 5,014,032 megawatt (MW) hours," EPA noted. "STEC asserts that system peak load was 1242 MW, up over 10% from the 1127 MW peak load realized in 2010 and that strong system growth is expected to continue with a projected 219 MW capacity additions required to serve the STEC member load by 2017."

To respond to this growth, STEC has proposed the Red Gate Power Plant. The Wartsila 18V50SG is a nominal 18.76 MW, four-stroke, spark-ignition, lean burn reciprocating internal combustion engine (SI RICE).

"The engines will be used to provide renewable support, transmission grid support, energy and ancillary services to meet its eight member distribution cooperatives' energy and capacity needs as well as to support the **Energy Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT)** grid," EPA said.

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