



News Release

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Oncor Requests Incidental Take Permit for 11 Federally Listed Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced today in the *Federal Register* the notice of availability of the draft Environmental Impact Statement (dEIS), and an incidental take permit application for Oncor Electric Delivery Company, LLC (Oncor), that includes a draft Habitat Conservation Plan (dHCP). This announcement begins a 90-day public comment period.

Oncor has developed a draft habitat conservation plan describing the measures they agree to undertake to minimize and mitigate the effects of incidental take of federally listed species that would result from activities associated with maintenance and repair of existing electric facilities and installation and operation of new facilities. The dHCP would include general activities associated with new construction, maintenance, and emergency response and restoration, including stormwater discharges from construction sites, equipment access, and surveying. Oncor's proposed incidental take would occur in 100 counties, excluding Williamson and Travis counties, with the addition of Runnels County.

The purpose of the requested permit is to allow Oncor to maintain the efficiency of its operations, while preserving protected species and their habitat. If the permit is approved, the Service would authorize incidental take of the following 11 federally listed species: large-fruited sand-verbena (*Abronia macrocarpa*), Texas poppy-mallow (*Callirhoe scabriuscula*), Navasota ladies'-tresses (*Spiranthes parksii*), Pecos sunflower (*Helianthus paradoxus*), American burying beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*), Houston toad (*Bufo houstonensis*), whooping crane (*Grus americana*), golden-cheeked warbler (*Dendroica chrysoparia*), black-capped vireo (*Vireo atricapilla*), red-cockaded woodpecker (*Picoides borealis*), and Louisiana black bear (*Ursus americanus luteolus*). The permit would be in effect for a period of 30 years.

The Service issued a draft Environmental Impact Statement that evaluates the impacts of, and alternatives to, possible issuance of an incidental take permit covering Oncor's 100-county service area.

The Service is requesting public comments on the application, dHCP, and dEIS. To ensure consideration, we must receive written comments on or before close of business (4:30 p.m. CST) on October 13, 2011. The Service will accept comments at nine public meetings that will be located

within Oncor's proposed 100-county permit area. The public meetings will be held between August 1, 2011 and September 28, 2011. The dates and locations of the meetings will be noticed in local newspapers, on Oncor's website (<http://www.oncor-eis-hcp.com/>), and on the Austin Ecological Services Office web site (<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/AustinTexas/>) at least 2 weeks prior to each event.

You may obtain copies of the dEIS and dHCP online at: <http://www.oncor-eis-hcp.com/>. For further information on how to obtain or review copies of these documents, or how to provide comments, see the *Federal Register* notice at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/index.html>.

America's fish, wildlife, and plant resources belong to all of us, and ensuring the health of imperiled species is a shared responsibility. We're working to actively engage conservation partners and the public in the search for improved and innovative ways to conserve and recover imperiled species.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov. Connect with our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/usfws, follow our tweets at www.twitter.com/usfwshq watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwshq>.

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