Homer City Generation L.P.
HCPP Pipeline Project
Chapter 102 Individual NPDES Permit Application (PAD320011)

Response to Public Comments Submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Date: April 20, 2026

Introduction

Homer City Generation L.P. ("HCG") appreciates the opportunity to respond to public comments regarding the Chapter 102 Individual NPDES Permit Application for Discharges of Stormwater Associated with Construction Activities submitted for the HCPP Pipeline Project (the "Project") located in Black Lick Township, Burrell Township, and Center Township, Indiana County.

HCG has carefully reviewed all comments and provides the following responses to address questions and concerns. The Project has been designed in accordance with, but not limited to, the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Law, 25 Pa. Code Chapters 93, 102 and 105, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's (Department's) Erosion and Sediment Pollution Control (E&S) Program Manual, and the Department's Pennsylvania Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM) Manual with the objective of avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating potential impacts to waters of the Commonwealth.

1. Requests for Public Hearing

Several commenters requested that the Department hold a public hearing based on project scale, environmental sensitivity, and public interest.

Response:

While the Project has been developed in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements and proposes the implementation of comprehensive E&S Best Management Practices (BMPs) and PCSM Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs), HCG acknowledges the level of public interest in the Project, respects the request for a public hearing and defers to the Department as to whether a public hearing should take place.

2. Water Quality and Impaired Waters Concerns

Commenters expressed concern regarding potential impacts to the Blacklick Creek watershed, which is designated as a Cold-Water Fishery (CWF) and listed as impaired for siltation.

Response:

The Project proposes the installation of Anti-degradation Best Available Combination of Technologies (ABACT) E&S BMPs per the E&S Manual and consistent with Chapter 93 requirements for siltation impaired watersheds to maintain and protect the existing quality of the receiving waters. Through the use of the ABACT E&S BMPs, as well as construction practices, site restoration practices, and PCSM SCMs described further in responses to Comments 5 and 6 below, the Project is not expected to result in measurable degradation of water quality or impairment of existing uses.

3. Project Scale and Stream/Wetland Crossings

Commenters cited the overall disturbance area and number of crossings as justification for public hearing.

Response:

The Project limit of disturbance reflects the limits necessary to safely construct the pipeline. During restoration, temporary impacts to streams and wetlands will be restored to pre-construction conditions and riparian areas will restored in a manner to promote reestablishment of forested buffers, where applicable, while allowing for long-term operation and maintenance of the pipeline, as described further in response to Comment 5 below.

Temporary impacts to streams and wetlands have been designed and permitted in accordance with the requirements of Chapter 105. The pipeline alignment has been designed to: (i) avoid impacts where practicable; (ii) minimize impacts where possible by minimizing disturbance widths; and (iii) restore crossings to pre-construction contours and cover conditions.

The proposed construction methods and restoration practices are anticipated to maintain natural drainage patterns and stream functions.

4. Backfill Materials at Stream and Wetland Crossings

Commenters raised concerns regarding the use of cement-modified backfill and potential impacts to permeability and water resources.

Response:

As discussed in the Naturally Occurring Geologic Condition Assessment (Geohazard) Report and noted on the E&S drawings, cement-modified backfill is proposed in limited, site-specific locations to improve soil strength in trench backfill and restored temporary laybacks on slopes 2-foot horizontal to 1-foot vertical (2H:1V) and steeper or where existing geotechnical instability (e.g., soil creep) was visually observed.

Pursuant to Details G7 and G8, portland cement will be applied at a ratio of 6-percent of the backfill material, by weight, to achieve a minimum unconfined compressive strength of 50 pounds per square inch (psi) and a minimum Factor of Safety (FOS) of 1.5 in the backfill zone. The use of a relatively small proportion of cement as a soil modifier is intended to improve the engineering properties of the soil, not make a hardened mass (e.g., soil cement). In addition, 18 inches of native material and 6 inches of topsoil are proposed over the top of the cement modified soils. As such, creation of impervious surfaces as a result of improving soil strength with cement is not anticipated.

Cement-modified backfill will not be utilized within streams or within the associated streambanks. The use of cement to strengthen soil will be limited to the areas noted on the plans, which are upgradient of streams/streambanks. Where the cement-modified backfill is proposed with floodways, the contractor will blend the soil with the portland cement outside of the floodway and then haul the blended modified soil back into the floodway for reclamation.

Based on the above, HCG anticipates the use of cement-modified soil as a geohazard mitigation measure in the limited, site-specific locations which it is proposed will not negatively impact soil permeability or water quality of nearby streams.

5. Thermal Impacts from Vegetation Clearing

Commenters asserted that vegetation clearing could result in increased stream temperatures affecting Cold Water Fishery uses.

Response:

A majority of the Project will not have permanent changes in land cover; therefore, the principal source of potential thermal impacts is related to proposed temporary vegetation disturbance. Measures to limit the extent and duration of disturbance, namely through phased construction sequencing, application of temporary vegetative practices, and application of permanent vegetation as soon as practicable, will minimize thermal impacts

resulting from temporary vegetation disturbance. Furthermore, after being controlled/managed by ABACT E&S BMPs, runoff will, in general, discharge to vegetated surfaces prior to reaching surface waters.

In addition to limiting the extent and duration of disturbance, existing tree canopies and riparian buffers will be maintained to the extent practicable, minimizing surface exposure to direct sunlight in these areas. Disturbed riparian areas will be revegetated with a riparian seed mixture, as well as replanted with trees and shrubs outside the permanently maintained right-of-way, which will provide long-term shading of the ground surface.

PCSM SCMs, designed in accordance with the applicable sections of the Pa. Code, are proposed to be installed to manage runoff in areas where permanent land cover will be altered by the project. The PCSM SCMs are designed to promote infiltration of collected runoff to the extent practicable, and discharge runoff that does not infiltrate to well vegetated surfaces prior to reaching surface waters.

By implementing the measures noted above, the Project is not expected to result in measurable or sustained thermal impacts to receiving waters.

6. Post-Construction Stormwater Management (PCSM)

Commenters raised concerns regarding reliance on point-of-analysis (POA) evaluations and absence of watershed-scale modeling.

Response:

The Project has been designed in accordance with 25 Pa. Code § 102.8 to manage stormwater runoff and maintain post-construction hydrologic conditions. The majority of the Project will be restored to proximate pre-construction contour and cover condition or meadow-good condition. Portions of the Project that will not be restored to pre-construction or meadow-good cover condition will be managed by PCSM SCMs. The SCMs have been designed to manage the volume, rate, and quality of runoff in accordance with the regulatory requirements, as demonstrated in the analyses provided in HCG's Project Application.

7. Climate and Precipitation Considerations

Commenters questioned the use of NOAA Atlas 14 precipitation data.

Response:

The Department's PCSM Manual and associated PCSM Spreadsheet recommend use of NOAA Atlas 14 precipitation data for use in volume management and rate control design,

and the PCSM design for the Project was developed in accordance with the recommendation. Therefore, the Project complies with current regulatory requirements.

8. Acid-Producing Rock (APR) Management and Monitoring

Commenters raised concerns regarding the management of acid-producing materials and monitoring provisions.

Response:

As part of HCG's due diligence, sampling and testing have already been performed within or near previously strip-mined locations along the proposed pipeline alignment. The sampling and testing resulted in the identification of one (1) trenching/excavation location (TP-9) as having potential acid producing rock (APR) material.

Based on these findings, HCG has developed an APR Management Plan in accordance with the Department's Fact Sheet on encountering APR during construction activities. The measures noted therein for management of APR include: identification and segregation of potential APR materials; mixing potential APR with neutralizing materials, such as lime; placement of neutralized APR material back into the pipeline trench to create a buffer from other potential APR materials; and placement of a 2-foot thick minimum cap of non-APR material on top of the neutralized APR material. These APR management measures are proposed in the vicinity of TP-9 (between approximate Stations 141+00 and 147+00) and will be implemented during construction.

Given the proposed neutralization and capping of encountered potential APR material, HCG does not anticipate the Project will generate AMD or AMD related impacts.

9. Groundwater, Trenching, and Hydrologic Considerations

Commenters suggested that trenching and drainage systems could alter groundwater flow and downstream hydrology.

Response:

The proposed pipeline construction will incorporate the use of trench plugs designed in accordance with the Department's E&S Manual.

Trench drainage is proposed as a geohazard mitigation measure to convey potential water from the trench alongside slopes, in sags, on steep slopes and/or in landslide prone soil areas to the surface. The implementation of trench drainage within these areas is intended to promote long-term slope stability by removing water that would potentially collect within the trench and seep out at low points/sags (on side slopes) and at trench plugs on steeper slopes. Though minimal flow is anticipated, each drain outlet is designed with a

slope of approximately 1- to 2-percent and will discharge through an embedded riprap outlet for energy dissipation and erosion protection.

During construction, native trench backfill material and compaction methods will be utilized, and surface conditions restored to proximate pre-construction contour and cover condition. Further, the trench drainage for geohazard mitigation purposes is fitted with drain outlets spaced to distribute subsurface drainage within the same general watershed. As such, natural drainage patterns are proposed to be maintained to the extent practicable and impacts to groundwater flow or downstream hydrology are not anticipated.

10. Anti-Degradation and Cumulative Impacts

Commenters asserted that the application lacks sufficient cumulative impact analysis.

Response:

The application includes an anti-degradation analysis consistent with Chapter 93 requirements.

As described elsewhere herein, construction impacts are temporary and localized, and implementation of E&S BMPs and PCSM SCMs are anticipated to maintain water quality. As such, the Project is not expected to result in cumulative impacts that would impair existing uses of receiving waters.

Conclusion

HCG appreciates the Department's review of the application and the public comments submitted. The Project has been designed in accordance with applicable regulatory requirements and incorporates measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate environmental impacts.

HCG remains committed to working collaboratively with the Department throughout the review process and will provide any additional information necessary to support permit evaluation.

Respectfully submitted,

Homer City Generation LP

Joel Heiser, General Counsel