



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Post Office Box 1306
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

In Reply Refer To:
FWS/R2/ES-TE/052594

OCT 02 2012

Robert Weatherford, President
Save Our Scenic Hill Country Environment, Inc.
10212 Ranch Road 965
Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

Dear Mr. Weatherford:

I would like to thank you and your organization for the letter concerning our responses to your comments in our Final Environmental Impact Statement on the Final Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) Transmission Services Corporation Competitive Renewable Energy Zone Transmission Lines. This Final HCP supports the issuance of the section 10(a)(1)(B) incidental take permit for golden-cheeked warbler and black-capped vireo. At my request, staff reviewed the public comments and our responses to those comments as published in Appendix A of the Final HCP.

While our responses are technically correct, as noted in your letter, we can expand on our responses in the future and more adequately address comments received and, where appropriate, incorporate any necessary changes into our supporting documents. As you know, issuance of an incidental take permit is based upon the applicant and the applicant's HCP meeting both statutory and regulatory issuance criteria. I assure you that the Public Utility Commission timeline did not influence our decision as to whether the HCP met issuance criteria or my decision to issue the permit.

Should you have any further questions, please contact Michelle Shaughnessy, Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, at 505-248-6920.

Sincerely,

Jay E. Nikolopoulos
ACTING Regional Director

Robert Weatherford, President

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cc: Assistant Regional Director, Ecological Services, Albuquerque, NM
Section 10 Coordinator, Ecological Services, Albuquerque, NM
Field Supervisor, Austin Ecological Services Field Office, Austin, TX
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