Chapter 13. Glossary

13 GLOSSARY

100-year floodplain	Land that becomes or will become submerged by a flood that has a chance to occur every 100 years.
A-weighted sound level, dBA	Assigns a weight to sound frequencies relative to how sensitive the human ear is to each sound frequency. Frequencies that are less sensitive to the human ear are weighted less than those for which the ear is more sensitive. A-weighted measurements indicate the potential damage a noise might cause to hearing.
Adsorbed	Taken up or transformed into a different form.
Aesthetic	The perception of appearance of features in relation to one's sense of beauty.
Air quality	The cleanliness of the air as measured by the levels of pollutants relative to standards or guideline levels established to protect human health and welfare. Air quality is often expressed in terms of the pollutant for which concentrations are the highest percentage of a standard (e.g., air quality may be unacceptable if the level of one pollutant is 150 percent of its standard, even if levels of other pollutants are well below their respective standards).
Alluvial	Relating to clay, silt, sand, gravel, or similar detrital material deposited by running water.
Ambient noise level	Background noise associated with a given environment. Ambient noise is typically formed as a composite of sounds from many near and far sources, with no particular dominant sound.
Aquatic	Characteristics of or pertaining to water.
Aquifer	Body of rock or sediment that is capable of transmitting ground water and yielding usable quantities of water to wells or springs.
Archaeological resources	Material remains of past activity.
Area of potential effect	The geographic region that may be affected as a result of the construction and operation of the proposed project or alternatives.
Arterial (highway)	A highway generally characterized by its ability to quickly move a relatively large volume of traffic, but often with restricted capacities to serve abutting properties. The arterial system typically provides for high travel. The rural and urban arterial highway systems are connected to provide continuous through movements.
Artesian	Ground water conditions in which water in wells rises above the water level in the aquifer, including conditions in which ground water rises to or above the ground surface.
Attainment	Those areas of the U.S. that meet NAAQS as determined by measurements of air pollutant levels.
Attenuate	To lessen the amount of force, magnitude, or value of something.
Base-load electric power	The amount of power required to meet minimum demands based on reasonable expectations of customer requirements.
Bedrock	The rock of the Earth's crust that is below the soil and largely unweathered.
Biocide	A substance (e.g., chlorine) that is toxic or lethal to many organisms and is used to treat water.
Black water	A liquid mixture from the gasification process that consists of granulated slag, quench water, and unreacted char.
	Portion of circulating cooling tower water (or steam or water removed from a boiler) removed to

Boiler	A pressurized system in which water is vaporized to steam, the desired end product, by heat transferred from a source of higher temperature, usually the products of combustion from burning fuels.
Brackish	Water that is saltier than fresh water, but less than sea water. Salt content of brackish water i between 0.5 and 30 parts per thousand.
Brine	Water saturated with salt.
CO ₂	A colorless, odorless, nonpoisonous, GHG created by combustion and emitted primarily fron human activities, such as the burning of fossil fuels to generate electricity and operate moto vehicles.
со	A colorless, odorless, poisonous gas produced by incomplete fossil fuel combustion.
Carcinogenic	Capable of producing or inducing cancer.
Catalyst	A substance that enables a chemical reaction to proceed at a usually faster rate or unde different conditions (as at a lower temperature) than otherwise possible.
Class I area	Under the Clean Air Act, a Class I area is one in which visibility is protected more stringently than under the NAAQS, with only a small increase in pollution allowed. Class I areas include nationa parks, wilderness areas, monuments, and other areas of special national and cultura significance. Only very slight deterioration of air quality is allowed in Class I areas.
Class I railroad	Railroad with operating revenues exceeding \$277.5 million.
Class II area	Most of the country not designated as Class I is designated as Class II. Class II areas are generally cleaner than air quality standards, and moderate increases in new pollution are allowed after a regulatory mandated impacts review.
Class II railroads	Railroad with operating revenues greater than \$20.5 million but less than \$277.5 million for a least three consecutive years.
Class III railroads	Railroad with less than \$10 million in operating revenue; typically short in length.
Clean Water Act	Primary federal law governing water pollution. The Clean Water Act's goals include eliminating toxic substance releases to water, eliminating additional water pollution, and ensuring tha surface waters meet standards necessary for human sports and recreation (see Nationa Pollutant Discharge Elimination System).
Coagulation	Becoming viscous or thickened into a coherent mass.
Coal combustion products	Incombustible by-products generated in coal-burning industrial facilities. The by-products are generated in various steps of the process. Coal combustion products generated in the boilers o furnaces are ash and slag. Other by-products such as fly ash and synthetic gypsum are collected in the emission control systems.
Coal gasification	A process that converts coal into a gaseous product, which involves crushing coal into a powde and heating the powder in the presence of steam and O_2 in a reducing or substoichimetric atmosphere. After impurities (e.g., sulfur) are removed, the gas can be used as a fuel or furthe processed and concentrated into a chemical or liquid fuel.
Collector road	Low- or moderate-capacity road that does not provide a highway or arterial road LOS. A collecto route often leads traffic to arterial roads or directly to highways. Occasionally a collector road will fill gaps in a grid system between arterial roads. Traffic volumes and speeds are typically lower than those of arterial highways.
Combined-cycle electric power plant	A power plant that uses both a steam turbine-generator and a gas turbine -generator at one location to produce electricity.
Gas turbine	A gas turbine that burns natural gas, fuel oil, or other similar fuels, drives a turbine and generato to produce electricity, and is typically used as the primary generator of electricity in a combined cycle installation.

Condensate	A liquid obtained by the conversion of a gas or vapor to another state.
Conveyor system	Method used to transport material in a continuous fashion, consisting of a drive, belt, pulleys, and conveyor stands. Material is placed on the belt and is moved by rotating the belt over pulleys.
Cooling tower	A structure that cools heated condenser water by circulating the water along a series of louvers and baffles through which cool, outside air convects naturally or is forced by large fans.
Cooling water	Water that is heated as a result of being used to cool steam and condense it to water.
Corona noise	Noise caused by partial discharges on insulators and in air surrounding electrical conductors of overhead power lines. Corona noise level is dependent on weather conditions.
Cultural resources	Archaeological sites, historical sites (e.g., standing structures), Native American resources, and paleontological resources.
Cumulative effects	The impact to the environment that results from the incremental effect of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.
Day-night noise level, Ldn	The average A-weighted noise level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 decibels to levels measured in the night between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
Decibel, dB	Unit used to convey intensity of sound.
Density	Ratio of a substance's weight relative to its volume.
Diversion (water)	The amount of water taken from a stream, spring, or well by channel, embankment, or other man-made structure constructed for the purpose of diverting water from one area to another.
Drawdown	The process by which the water table adjacent to a well is lowered after active pumping from an aquifer.
Ecosystem	A community and its environment treated together as a functional system of complementary relationships involving the transfer and circulation of energy and matter.
Effluent	Waste stream flowing into the atmosphere, surface water, ground water, or soil.
Emergent	Erect, rooted herbaceous plants, such as cattails and bulrush, which dominate wetlands.
Emission	A material discharged into the atmosphere from a source operation or activity.
Endangered species	Plants or animals that are in danger of extinction. A federal list of endangered species can be found in 50 C.F.R. § 17.11 (wildlife), 50 C.F.R. § 17.12 (plants), and 50 C.F.R. § 222.23(a) (marine organisms). Texas maintains its list of endangered species with the TPWD.
Environmental justice	The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no group of people, including racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic groups, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies. Executive Order 12898 directs federal agencies to make achieving environmental justice part of their missions by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse effects of agency programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations.
Equivalent sound level, Leq	Weighting imposed on the equivalent sound levels occurring during nighttime.
Erosion	The process by which particles of soils or other material are removed and transported by water, wind, and/or gravity to some other area.
Evaporation	A physical process by which a liquid is transformed into a gaseous state.

Flocculation	A process by which microscopic substances suspended in a liquid come out of suspension in the form of floc or flakes.
Floodplain	Flat or nearly flat land adjacent to a stream or river that experiences occasional or periodic flooding.
Flue gas	Residual gases after combustion that are vented to the atmosphere through a flue or chimney.
Formation	The primary unit associated with formal geological mapping of an area. Formations possess distinctive geological features and can be combined into "groups" or subdivided into "members."
Fossil fuel	Coal, oil, or natural gas, formed from vegetation and animals under high pressure and temperatures during a past geological age.
Frequency	The number of cycles of completed occurrences per unit of time of a sound wave, most often measured in Hertz.
Fresh water	Water with a low concentration of salts (typically less than 1,000 ppm of dissolved solids).
Fugitive dust	PM composed of soil; can include emissions from haul roads, wind erosion of exposed surfaces, and other activities in which soil is removed and redistributed.
Gasification	Conversion process to gas or a gas-like phase.
Geologic CO_2 sequestration	CO_2 capture and storage in deep underground geologic formations.
Global warming	The theory that certain gases such as CO_2 , methane, and chlorofluorocarbon in the Earth's atmosphere effectively restrict radiation cooling, thus elevating the Earth's ambient temperatures or creating a greenhouse effect.
Gray water	Waste water that does not contain serious contaminants.
GHG	Gas that contributes to the greenhouse effect by absorbing infrared radiation and ultimately warming the atmosphere. GHGs include water vapor, nitrous oxide, methane, CO_2 , O_3 , halogenated fluorocarbons, hydrofluorocarbons, and perfluorinated carbons.
Ground water	Water within a geologic stratum that supplies wells and springs.
Habitat	The environment occupied by individuals of a particular species, population, or community.
НАР	Air pollutants that are not covered by ambient air quality standards but that present, or may present, a threat of adverse health or environmental effects. These include an initial list of 189 chemicals designated by the U.S. Congress that is subject to revision by EPA.
Hazardous waste	A by-product of society that can pose a substantial or potential hazard to human health or the environment when improperly managed. Possesses at least one of four characteristics (ignitability, corrosivity, reactivity, or toxicity) or appears on special EPA lists.
Heavy metals	Natural trace elements such as lead, Hg, cadmium, and nickel, that are leachable and potentially toxic.
Historic property	Prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP.
Historical site	A site that is more than 50 years old.
Hydrology	A science dealing with the properties, distribution, and circulation of water on the surface of the land, in the soil and the underlying rocks, and in the atmosphere.
Impoundment	A body of water confined by a dam, dike, floodgate, or other barrier.
Indirect	Employment or job created or sustained from a project's purchase of goods and services from
employment/labor	businesses in a region.

Industrial and/or process waste	Any liquid, solid, semisolid, or gaseous waste generated when manufacturing a product or performing a service. Examples include cutting oils; paint sludges; equipment cleanings; metallic dust sweepings; used solvents from parts cleaners; and off-specification, contaminated, or recalled wholesale or retail products. The following wastes are not industrial process wastes: uncontaminated packaging materials, uncontaminated machinery components, general household waste, landscape waste, and construction or demolition debris.
Infiltration	The process of water entering the soil at the ground surface and the ensuing movement downward. Infiltration becomes percolation when water has moved below the depth at which it can return to the atmosphere by evaporation or evapotranspiration.
Infrastructure	The underlying foundation of a basic framework, as in a system or organization.
IGCC	A process that uses synthesis gas derived from coal to drive a <i>gas turbine</i> , and exhaust gas from the gas turbine to generate steam from water to drive a steam turbine.
Integration	Organization or structure allowing constituent units to function cooperatively.
Intrusive (noise)	That noise which intrudes over and above the existing ambient noise at a given location. The relative intrusiveness of a sound depends upon its amplitude, duration, frequency, time of occurrence, and tonal or informational content, as well as the prevailing ambient noise level.
Irretrievable commitments	Resources that are lost for a period of time.
Landfill	Waste disposal method where waste material is stockpiled in a designated area until that area is full, at which time the material is buried and reclaimed in accordance with the applicable regulations for that type of landfill.
Laydown area	Material and equipment storage area during the construction phase of a project.
LOS	Measure of traffic operation effectiveness on a particular roadway facility type.
Lithic scatter	Concentration of waste flakes resulting from the manufacture of stone tools.
Loam	A soil composed of a mixture of clay, silt, sand, and organic matter.
Local roads	Public roads and streets not classified as arterials or collectors are classified as local roads. Local roads and streets are characterized by the many points of direct access to adjacent properties and the relatively minor value in accommodating mobility. Speeds and volumes are usually low and trip distances short.
Low income population	A community that has a proportion of low-income population greater than the respective average. Low income populations in an affected area should be identified with the annual statistical poverty thresholds from Bureau of the Census Current Population Reports, Series P-60, Income and Poverty.
Makeup water	Water feed needed to replace that which is lost by evaporation or leakage in a closed-circuit, recycle operation.
Mean sea level	Average ocean surface height at a particular location for all stages of the tide over a specified time interval (generally 19 years).
MW	Unit of power equal to 1 million watts. A power plant with 1 MW of capacity operating continuously for one year could supply electricity to approximately 750 households.
Minority	Individual(s) who are members of the following population groups: American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian or Pacific Islander; Black, not of Hispanic origin; or Hispanic.
Minority population	Identified where either more than 50 percent of the population of the affected area is minority, or the affected area's minority population percentage is meaningfully greater than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis.
Miscible	Property of liquids that allows them to be mixed together and form a single homogeneous phase.

Mitigation	Efforts to lessen the severity or to reduce adverse impacts, including: avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action; minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action; repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment; reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation; and compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.
Monitoring	Periodic or continuous determination of the amount of substances present in the environment.
Monitoring, mitigation, and verification	Capability to measure the amount of CO_2 stored at a sequestration site, monitor the site for leaks, to verify that the CO_2 is stored in a way that is permanent and not harmful to the host ecosystem, and to respond to CO_2 leakage or ecological damage in the unlikely event that it should occur. Monitoring, mitigation, and verification applies to geologic sequestration and terrestrial sequestration.
NAAQS	Uniform, national air quality standards established by EPA that restrict ambient levels of certain pollutants to protect public health (primary standards) or public welfare (secondary standards). Standards have been set for O_3 , CO, particulates, SO_2 , NO_2 , and lead.
NEPA	Signed into law on January 1, 1970, NEPA declared a national policy to protect the environment and created the Council on Environmental Quality in the Executive Office of the President. To implement the national policy, NEPA requires that environmental factors be considered when federal agencies make decisions, and that a detailed statement of environmental impacts be prepared for all major federal actions significantly affecting the human environment.
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System	Provision of the Clean Water Act that prohibits discharge of pollutants into U.S. waters unless a special permit is issued by EPA, a state, or where delegated, a tribal government on a Native American reservation.
Native species	Species normally indigenous to an area; not introduced by humans.
New source performance standards	Regulation under Section 111 of the Clean Air Act enforcing stringent emission standards for power plants constructed on or after January 30, 2004.
NO _x	A product of combustion by mobile and stationary sources and a major contributor to the formation of O_3 in the troposphere.
Noise	Any sound that is undesirable because it interferes with speech and hearing; if intense enough, it can damage hearing.
Nonattainment	An area that does not meet air quality standards set by the Clean Air Act for specified localities and time periods; locations where pollutant concentrations are greater than the NAAQS.
NOI	Notice that an EIS will be prepared and considered. It is published in the <i>Federal Register</i> as soon as practicable after an agency knows that an EIS is required for a proposed action.
03	A form of O_2 found naturally in the stratosphere and that provides a protective layer for shielding the Earth from ultraviolet radiation. O_3 occurring in the lower atmosphere is harmful and is classified as a criteria pollutant.
Palustrine	Living or thriving in a marshy environment.
PM	Fine liquid or solid particles such as dust, smoke, mist, fumes, or smog, found in air or emissions.
Particulates	Small particles of solid or liquid materials that, when suspended in the atmosphere, constitute an atmospheric pollutant.
Peak demand	The maximum rate of electricity use.
Peak particle velocity	Measure of ground vibration. Peak particle velocity is the maximum speed (measured in inches per second or millimeters per second) at which a point on the ground moves relative to its static state.
Peaking capacity	Capacity that is available for use and used to meet peak load, but usually designed to operate for relatively short periods of time.

Permeability	Rate at which fluids flow through the subsurface; reflects the degree to which pore space is connected.
рН	A measure of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution.
Plume	A flowing, often somewhat conical, trail of emissions from a continuous point source.
Point source	A stationary location or fixed facility from which pollutants are discharged or emitted. Also, any single identifiable source of pollution, for example, a pipe, ditch, or stack.
Potable water	Water that is safe and satisfactory for drinking and cooking.
PSD	An EPA program in which federal or state permits are required that are intended to restrict emissions for new or modified sources in places where air quality is already better than required to meet primary and secondary ambient air quality standards.
Prime farmland	Land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food feed, fiber, forage, oilseed, and other agricultural crops with minimum inputs of fuel, fertilizer pesticides, and labor, and without intolerable soil erosion.
Proposed action	The activity proposed to accomplish a federal agency's purpose and need. An environmenta impacts analysis analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed action. A proposed actior includes the project and its related support activities (pre-construction, construction, and operation, along with post-operational requirements).
Pulverized coal	Crushed coal used to fuel a coal power plant. Currently the principal electric generation technology in the U.S.
Qualitative	Analysis based on professional judgment of quality, generally lacking hard data.
Quantitative	Analysis based on hard data or numbers that can generally be repeated.
Recharge	The movement of water from an unsaturated zone to a saturated zone.
Reclamation	Restoration of land, water bodies, or other affected environmental resources to the original use or equal to or better alternate use.
Record of Decision	The concluding document of the NEPA process, which states the agency's decision, along with its rationale for its selection, including the major environmental reasons.
Recycle	The process of reusing or reprocessing a material after its initial use.
ROI	The physical area that bounds the environmental, sociologic, economic, or cultural features or interest for the purpose of analysis.
Richter scale	A measure of earthquake magnitude developed by Charles Richter.
Riparian	Pertaining to, situated, or dwelling on the bank of a river or other body of water.
Runoff	The portion of precipitation falling on the land that flows over the surface, rather than soaking into the surface.
Saline	Describes water with high concentrations of salts (typically more than 10,000 ppm dissolved solids), making it unsuitable for use.
Scoping meeting	An early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.
Scrubber	A device that removes noxious gases from flue gases (such as SO_2) by using absorbents suspended in liquid solution.
Scrub-shrub	Woody vegetation less than 20 ft (6 m) tall. Species include true shrubs, young trees, and trees of shrubs that are small or stunted because of environmental conditions.
Sediment	Material that has been eroded, transported, and deposited by erosional processes, typically wind, water, and/or glaciers.

Stages. Sedimentation The process or action of depositing sediment. Selsmic Pertaining to, characteristic of, or produced by earthquakes or Earth vibrations. Selective catalytic A system to reduce NO, emissions by injecting a reagent, such as NH ₃ , into exhaust gas to convert NO, emissions to N ₂ and water via a chemical reduction reaction. Sensitive receptor As used in this analysis, any specific resource (i.e., population or facility) that would be more otherwise be. Sequestration As used in this analysis, the process of injecting CO ₂ , which has been compressed into a liquid otherwise be. Slag The refuse from melting of metals or reduction of ores. Sludge A sused in this analysis, the process of injecting CO ₂ which has been compressued into a liquid the extrament processes. Sound pressure level Measure of a sound's strength or intensity, expressed in dBA. The sound pressure level generated by a steady source of sound will usually vary with distance and direction from the source. Sour water Water with dissolved sulfur compounds and other contaminants condensed from synthesis gas. Splil prevention control A plan that is implemented to protect resources from harmful quantities of petroleum discharges. Sub-bituminous A type of coal used primarily as fuel for electrical power generation, whose properties range water only during and ther gene in a well-defined channel during the wet seasons of the year, but no the	Cooline and a control	The elements and exception of facilities for exception of exception devices by we have to find
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	Tail gas	Gas from a processing unit treated as a residue.

Threatened species	Plants or animals likely to become endangered species within the foreseeable future. A federal list of threatened species can be found in 50 C.F.R. § 17.11 (wildlife), 50 C.F.R. § 17.12 (plants), and 50 C.F.R. § 227.4 (marine organisms). Texas maintains a list of threatened species with the TPWD.
Topography	The configuration of a surface including its relief and position of the natural and man-made features.
Topsoil	The upper native soil layer, usually consisting of the A and E horizons.
Transmission corridor	Area used to provide separation between the transmission lines and the general public and to provide access to the transmission lines for construction and maintenance.
Turbidity	Capacity of material suspended in water to scatter light. Highly turbid water is often called muddy, although all manner of suspended particles contribute to turbidity.
Turbine	A machine for directly converting the kinetic energy and/or thermal energy of a flowing fluid (air, hot gas, steam, or water) into useful rotational energy.
Upset or upset condition	An unplanned or unpredictable failure of process components or subsystems that leads to an overall malfunction or temporary shutdown of a power plant or subsystem while an issue with a component is corrected.
Vadose zone	Area of soil between the ground surface and the area directly above the ground water surface (i.e., the water table) of unconfined aquifers.
Vibration	Force that oscillates about a specified reference point. Vibration is commonly expressed in terms of frequency, such as cycles per second, Hertz, cycles per minute, and strokes per minute.
Viewshed	A nonmanaged area with aesthetic value.
Viscosity	Measure of a material's resistance to flow.
Volatile organic compounds	Any organic compound that participates in atmospheric photochemical reactions, except for those designated by EPA as having negligible reactivity.
Waste water	A combination of liquid and water-carried wastes from residences, commercial buildings, and/or industrial facilities.
Water table	The upper limit of the saturated zone (the portion of the ground wholly saturated with water; the upper surface of a zone of saturation above which the majority of pore spaces and fractures are less than 100 percent saturated with water most of the time (unsaturated zone) and below which the opposite is true (saturated zone).
Watershed	A region or area bounded peripherally by a water-parting feature and draining ultimately to a particular watercourse or body of water.
Wetland	Area inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

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