



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 491
Vancouver, Washington 98666-0491

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

September 28, 2009

In reply refer to: TEP-TPP-3

To: Parties Interested in the Central Ferry-Lower Monumental Transmission Line Project

In June 2009, the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) wrote to tell you about a proposal to build a new transmission line. We asked for your comments on the project and hosted one public meeting. Thank you for taking the time to tell us your ideas. This letter briefly summarizes our proposal and the comments we received, outlines our next steps, and provides contact information if you have questions.

Proposed Transmission Line

BPA is proposing to construct a 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line in Garfield, Columbia, and Walla Walla counties, Washington. The proposed line would extend west from a new BPA 500-kV substation, called Central Ferry Substation, in Garfield County, to BPA's existing 500-kV Lower Monumental Substation in Walla Walla County (see enclosed map). The proposed line is needed to increase the electrical capacity of our transmission system in response to requests for transmission service in this area.

We are considering two routing alternatives for the proposed transmission line project. One routing alternative for the transmission line is about 38 miles long, and the other is about 40 miles long. Portions of both routes parallel existing BPA lines in the area, and cross both private and state lands. BPA is also considering taking no action to build the line, an alternative BPA always considers as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. BPA has not determined a preferred alternative at this time.

Public Comments

BPA received 189 comments about the proposed project in the categories below. More than half came from the public meeting.

Environmental Impacts – Sixty-five percent (123) of all comments were about the potential environmental impacts of the proposed routes. Forty dealt with potential impacts to agricultural land use and the future development of wind resource areas along the proposed routes.

Resource impacts related to fish and wildlife and soils, geology and water resources received between 19 and 29 comments each. Commenters noted concerns for impacts to deer and their habitat, raptors nesting within the project area, and for riparian areas along the Tucannon River. Also of concern were potential impacts from soil erosion, including the possible sedimentation of project area streams. Weed management was a concern not only for agricultural lands, but also for grazed and fallow lands. Other resource impacts receiving 8 or fewer comments each included recreation, public health and safety, transportation, cultural resources, socioeconomic, visual resources, air quality and cumulative impacts.

Alternatives – Forty-six percent (86) of all comments focused on the proposed locations of the north and south routing alternatives. Specifically, commenters expressed a preference for either the north or south routing alternative based on current farming practices and the landscape's capacity to support wind turbines in the future. Commenters were concerned about losing prime farmland and wind resource

lands. Some commenters on the east end of the routes stated their preference for the north alternative because it would avoid currently farmed areas and future wind development areas along ridgelines. Other commenters on the west end of the routes preferred the south route because it would avoid agricultural lands. Many commenters asked why one alternative could not be located adjacent to existing lines for its entire length; the possible wide separation between existing and proposed lines was a concern. Commenters did suggest routing alternatives for portions of both the north and south alternatives.

Other Comments – The remaining comments included support for the project, questioned the distance wind turbines needed to be from the new line, asked about how wide an easement would be needed, asked whether the proposed route would impact historic properties within the project area, and asked how the line would impact Conservation Reserve Program lands.

Next Steps

BPA is now analyzing the possible environmental impacts of the project. Your comments are helping us focus our efforts. You may see survey crews and environmental contractors working along the proposed project area in the next few months. We expect to publish the information we gather in a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) in spring 2010. At that time, you will have an opportunity to comment on the draft EIS. BPA will hold another public meeting to accept your comments and answer questions. If you would like to receive a copy of the draft EIS, please fill out the enclosed reply card.

For More Information

If you would like to see all the comments we received, you can visit our Web site at: www.bpa.gov/applications/publiccomments/CommentList.aspx?ID=73. If you would like us to send you a copy of the comments, please call us toll free at (800) 622-4519. Please tell us the name of this project (Central Ferry-Lower Monumental Transmission Line Project) and your complete mailing address.

If you have questions regarding the environmental process or comment summary, please contact the environmental project lead, Tish Eaton, toll free at (800) 282-3713, or at (503) 230-3469; or by email tkeaton@bpa.gov. If you have questions about the proposed project, please call me toll free at (800) 622-4519; or my direct number (360) 619-6313; or send an e-mail to tmberry@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Theresa Berry

Theresa Berry
Project Manager

Enclosures:
Map
Reply Card