



United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Spokane District
Wenatchee Field Office
915 Walla Walla Avenue
Wenatchee, Washington 98801

IN REPLY REFER TO:
2850 (ORW020)
WAOR 65753

To: Agencies, Organizations, and Interested Parties

Subject: Notice of Availability of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Vantage to Pomona Heights 230 kV Transmission Project DOI-BLM-OR-134-2013-0002-EIS

On January 4, 2013, the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for public review and comment. As a result of the comments received at public meetings and submitted in writing during the DEIS comment period, the BLM, Pacific Power and the U.S. Department of the Army Joint Base Lewis-McChord Yakima Training Center (JBLM YTC) met and identified a New Northern Route (NNR) Alternative that is located largely on JBLM YTC land. Through this process, the BLM determined that a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) was required. As was done with alternative routes analyzed in the DEIS, the NNR was developed into an alternative and evaluated for potential impacts in the SDEIS.

The SDEIS fully describes the NNR Alternative and identifies direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts as well as mitigation measures that could avoid, minimize, or reduce potential impacts. The SDEIS focuses the analysis on the NNR Alternative as well as any significant new circumstances or information that has become available since the January 2013 publication of the DEIS. New information that has been incorporated into the SDEIS is primarily related to greater sage-grouse, a Candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. Following publication of the DEIS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Conservation Objectives Team (COT) published the Greater Sage-grouse Conservation Objectives: Final Report (COT Report). A key component of the COT Report is the identification of Priority Areas of Conservation (PACs), which are considered key habitats essential for sage-grouse conservation. The COT Report identifies four PACs within the state of Washington, two of which have extant populations, Moses Coulee and Yakima Training Center. With the exception of a small portion of the NNR Alternative, the project is located entirely within the Yakima Training Center PAC. The impact analysis for sage-grouse was expanded in the SDEIS to address USFWS and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife concerns regarding sage-grouse and to incorporate information from the COT Report and the Yakima Training Center PAC. In addition, the SDEIS analyzed two identified areas (approximately 10 miles in total length) with both an Overhead and an Underground Design Option to address wildlife agency concerns regarding impacts to sage-grouse.

The SDEIS analysis identified several advantages associated with the NNR Alternative and they include:

- Reduced overall transmission line length; approximately 22-miles shorter than the DEIS Preferred Route. The reduced transmission line length provides reduced resource impacts for several issues compared to the original DEIS Agency Preferred Alternative.
- Reduced overall transmission line length across non-federal lands; The NNR Alternative occurs primarily on federal lands and therefore has less impacts on land use, public health and safety, and other issues compared to the DEIS Agency Preferred Alternative.

- Reduced overall disturbance footprint; the NNR Alternative is consolidated in an existing transmission line corridor (approximately 200-foot centerline-to-centerline separation) for the majority of the proposed routing. The reduced disturbance footprint thus reduced resource impacts such as impacts to wildlife habitat (especially sage-grouse), military training, soils, water resources, invasive species spread, and others issues compared to the DEIS Agency Preferred Alternative.

The BLM remains the lead federal agency and, along with the Cooperating Agencies, is responsible for analyzing the effects of granting, granting with conditions, or denying Pacific Power's (the applicant) right-of-way applications to construct, operate and maintain a 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, associated access roads, and other ancillary facilities. The JBLM YTC, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), USFWS, Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Washington Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and Kittitas and Yakima Counties are Cooperating Agencies and assisted with the preparation of the SDEIS.

Project Location

The project area is situated in south-central Washington State, extending from BPA's Vantage Substation, just east of Wanapum Dam in Grant County, to Pacific Power's Pomona-Heights Substation near Selah, Washington. Three alternatives are compared in the SDEIS: No Action, NNR Alternative, and DEIS Agency Preferred Alternative. The NNR Alternative analyzed in the SDEIS is approximately 41 miles in length. The NNR Alternative also includes one potential sub-route section and two locations with underground and overhead design options. The NNR Alternative crosses federal land managed by the BLM, the JBLM YTC, Reclamation, and state land managed by WSDOT and DNR. The NNR Alternative crosses private lands in Yakima, Kittitas, and Grant Counties.

Public Review of the Supplemental Draft EIS

The BLM is soliciting written comments on the SDEIS. The forty-five (45) day public comment period for the SDEIS will begin on January 2, 2015 and end on February 17, 2015. The SDEIS is available for review online at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/spokane/plans/vph230.php>. The January 2013 Draft EIS is also available online.

A CD containing the SDEIS is available upon request. Please contact the BLM Wenatchee Field office to request a CD.

Contact by Mail

BLM Wenatchee Field Office (Attn: Vantage to Pomona Heights Supplemental Draft EIS)
915 Walla Walla Avenue
Wenatchee, WA 98801-1521

Contact by Phone: 509-665-2100

Contact by e-mail: blm_or_vantage_pomona@blm.gov

Copies of the SDEIS will also be available for review at the following locations during regular business hours:

Repository Site	Address
Mattawa Community Library	101 Manson Lane, Mattawa, Washington
Terrace Heights Library	4011 Commonwealth Rd., Yakima, Washington
Yakima County Public Services Dept. - Planning Division	128 North Second St., Fourth Floor. Courthouse Yakima, Washington
WSDOT South Central Region Office	2809 Rudkin Road Union Gap, Washington
Bureau of Land Management, Wenatchee Field Office	915 Walla Walla Ave., Wenatchee, Washington
Bureau of Land Management, Spokane District Office	1103 N. Fancher Rd., Spokane Valley, Washington

Public Meetings

The BLM will host public meetings during the comment period. The meeting will provide an overview of the project and take public comments on the proposed project and SDEIS. The public meeting will be announced by the BLM at least 15 days in advance through the BLM website, public notices, local media news release, and/or mailings.

Ways to Submit Comments

Comments related to the Vantage to Pomona Heights 230kV Transmission Line Project SDEIS may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- Online at: <http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/spokane/plans/vph230.php>
- By email to: blm_or_vantage_pomona@blm.gov (please specify Vantage to Pomona Heights SDEIS in the Subject line)
- By mail to: Spokane District, Records Manager, 1103 North Fancher Road, Spokane, Washington, 99212, Attn: Vantage to Pomona Heights SDEIS.
- By fax: (509) 536-1275, Attn: Vantage to Pomona Heights SDEIS Project Manager
- Written comments may also be hand delivered to the BLM Wenatchee Field Office 915 Walla Walla Avenue, Wenatchee, Washington 98801-1521 between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, but excluding federal holidays.

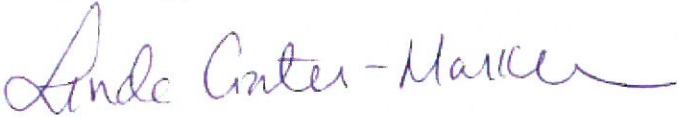
Comments on the SDEIS should be as specific as possible. It would be helpful if comments referred to chapters and/or sections of the SDEIS. Comments may address the adequacy of specific analyses in the SDEIS and the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the document (refer to Council on Environmental Quality regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §1503.3).

For all comments submitted, please identify whether you are submitting them as an individual or as the designated spokesperson on behalf of an organization. All comment submittals must include the commenter’s name and address. However, before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal information, may be made publically available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

For further information, contact the Vantage to Pomona Heights SDEIS Project Manager; telephone (509) 665-2100 or email: blm_or_vantage_pomona@blm.gov.

We appreciate your interest in public land management and look forward to receiving your comments on the SDEIS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Linda Coates-Markle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Linda Coates-Markle
Field Manager