

**Libby (FEC) to Troy  
Public meeting comments  
June 9, 2005**

**Comments from a public scoping meeting on May 18, 2005 in Helena, Mont.**

**Participates include:** Mont. DEQ, Mont. Dept. of Commerce, DNRC, field staff for Congressman Denny Rehberg, Mont. SHPO (State Historic Preservation Office) and Mont. Dept. of Transportation.

Questions and Answers:

1. Who built the original line?  
Pacific Power and Light.
2. How did BPA acquire the line?  
We purchased it three years ago.
3. Can you see the line currently from the falls?  
Yes.
4. Will it become more visible?  
No. We plan on moving the line upstream about ½ mile.
5. Would it entail additional tree clearing?  
Yes. The 115-kV single circuit option would have the least amount of clearing.
  - 5a. What is the reason for the timing of this project?  
Primarily the physical condition of the line.
6. If you don't need the second circuit, could you just place the poles w/ out stringing the line?  
Yes, that could be done, but there are a lot of pro's and con's.
7. One of my concerns is the homes built right up to the ROW in mile 20. – T. Ring.  
We will still need to hear from the public and landowners of those properties to see how they feel about the line. It would be expensive to move the line in that area, that it does or could entail a 3000' span, and the USFS will likely have concerns.
8. Would it involve helicopter construction?  
Yes.
9. What is the cost of the project?  
115 kV single circuit - \$9 million  
115 kV double circuit - \$16 million  
230 kV single circuit - \$18 million
10. What are you using as baseline data for the need date of the line?  
Planning studies based on the current electrical load. And, line history over the past 10 years.
11. What is BPA's preferred alternative?  
We don't have one.
12. With closure of Columbia Falls Aluminum, would this project help alleviate pressure on dams to spill more?  
No. The ends of the Libby (FEC) to Troy transmission line aren't at 230-kV. If those segments were upgraded, then, yes, this line could hold extra load coming from the dams.
13. Are you predetermining what would happen elsewhere?  
Yes. Our planning studies show the portion of line from Libby Dam to Libby is due to be upgraded in 2017.

14. Are there plans to get surplus power out?  
There are no projects planned to take power out of Hungry Horse and Libby Dam. This project would help relieve pressure only. [Note: T. Ring expressed worry about “build it and they will” phenomenon. Kirk indicated he didn’t disagree, noting that at some point, new transmission capacity linking Libby to the NW will be needed. Tom also specifically asked about implications for adding a new turbine at Libby Dam. We discussed both the substantial cost to upgrade transmission all the way to Bell Substation, as well as the probability that an added turbine at Libby would require funding that BPA doesn’t have available. Nancy Johnson then commented that these planning assumptions need to be made very clear in the EIS.]
15. Will Mont. DEQ be a cooperating agency?  
Hopefully so. BPA will reimburse DEQ for their work.
16. Will there be concerns from Fish and Wildlife, and will they be there tomorrow at the scoping meeting?  
We expect folks from fisheries to be there and game representatives from the sheep farm.
17. When will BPA be on the Mont. DOT ROW?  
We would opt to use the DOT ROW vs. the railroads. Air ambulance is also a concern and may be specifically focused on the height of the towers. We may have to place marker balls on the line.
18. Please make sure you provide information in the DEIS on future growth in the area. Also census and economic data would be helpful. – Mont. Dept. of Commerce.
19. We are concerned about state trust lands. Is there an existing easement, if it is only 60 feet, it may be necessary to secure a wider easement. Also, does BPA have easements across the river? BPA will need to fill out two forms for the access road affecting the river flood plains, because the bed of the river is state trust land. We plan on providing comments in the DEIS. – Mont. DNRC.
20. We are concerned with socioeconomics of the project. –Mont. DEQ.  
We will send you the DEIS to review before it’s released to the public. You can have 30 days to review.  
[Note: there was discussion of Corps of Engineers 404 permit, and a state “Section 318” authorization for in-water work as well as 401 Certification (COE?) and a “124” permit for flood plain work. DEQ pointed out that the state-siting act preempts local permitting, but noted that Lincoln Co. needs to “be informed” and the permit to work in the flood plain needs to involve DNRC
21. Libby is a non-containment area and it’s air restriction are getting stricter, just be aware. – Mont. DEQ.
22. West of the Old Highway 2 Park, what do you think about increasing the span lengths and having fewer towers?  
Towers will be where they are now. Unless we can find a way to increase the span lengths and are interested in looking at this, but do not want to end up with towers above the tree line. .
23. Look at wingspan from conductor to cross arm for bird habitat. They probably perch in wood poles along the line.
24. Libby is interested in installing fiber in Libby. They want high-speed cable for business development.  
We can look into fiber.

25. Look at the Dept. of Commerce's web site for hiring helicopter pilots. We have a new program to train Native Americans to fly helicopters. – Dept. of Commerce.
26. What are the forest service's feelings on the project?  
Hopefully they will be a cooperating agency. They wont say much at the meeting.
27. Is anyone looking at Libby to Noxon for an upgrade?  
Not at this time.