

July 9, 2005

Mr. Kirk Robinson
Project Manager
Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration
PO Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

Re: Rebuild Libby (FEC) to Troy Section - Transmission Line

Dear Mr. Robinson,

I am providing written comments below now, since I had no prior notification of the referenced project proposal and public meeting. Tish Eaton, BPA Environmental Protection Specialist, instructed me to provide written comments by the end of July 2005 if I so desired and that the comments would be fully addressed in the environmental impact statement (EIS).

In the following paragraphs I hope to convey what a sincere intrusion this proposal is to my wife and I. How un-American it seems. And in addition, if this proposal is chosen as the preferred alternative, that unnecessary and irreversible damage to water quality, fish and wildlife, aesthetics and the environment as a whole will occur.

In the second week in June 2005 I received an alarming phone call from a friend and care taker in Libby Montana to my residence in Washington. I was told that Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is going to construct an overhead power line across my land (located in Libby). My heart sank. How could this be possible?

To set the stage for this story I'll provide a little history. Having grown up on a small farm in southwest Washington surrounded by forests and working many years as a forester and recreating by camping, horse back riding, hunting and fishing my love for grand open spaces and forest land has only intensified through the years. Because of my love, even fascination, of the outdoors it's only natural at some point I would discover Libby Montana, a place with diverse tree species, light underbrush, lots of wildlife and four seasons with snow for grand kids to play in and sunshine for Nana (that's grandma – my wife).

In 1998 my wife and I went on a road trip through western Montana. We haven't traveled much in the past, in fact only one other road trip in 34 years of marriage, and that trip took us to Yellowstone National Park and an ensuing loop back to Washington. During the 98 trip we planned to camp and enjoy some of Montana's special scenic wilderness. Not long into the trip and after camping in the Yack, I was convinced, this is my kind of

country...so quite and peaceful, beautiful, it even smells good. One of our next planned overnight stops was a place called Whitefish. I chose this spot from the road map because it sounded so "Montana" to me. When we arrived, to my complete surprise and dismay we discovered a bustling little city, no place to park, filled with people, maybe tourists. It didn't matter. As the trip went on I became more and more stressed as it seemed as though the land I imagined would be so isolated, unstained and free, reminded me of all the other places I've seen man has corrupted. Wilderness is out there, but from the retirement aspect, a place that would provide privacy for country people like my wife and I, come retirement time, well that's another question. This brings me to the property we found for sale on our trek across northwest Montana. It was near the sleepy town of Libby. 73 acres off a dead end road, Pipe Creek running across it, a revitalizing view of the Cabinet Mountains and a nearby active Bald Eagle nest, plus USFS land on three sides. Now you're talking, but was it affordable? Oh yes, the owner would take a little down payment and carry the contract. Were in. A deep peace has come over me. At last we have a place to retire where we can plan to enjoy this beauty and rest our hearts and minds. Not so fast, partner.

BPA. Another scar upon the landscape. More natural resource loss and damage. Glaring, unnecessary, ugly, an invitation to vandals, and my property value will be devastated. Can this really be happening? Well, I called the number a neighbor gave me. Sure enough and they liked the plan to cross our land best. Maybe you would also like to know after a full and difficult week with a new job (promotion) I started typing this letter at 4 AM Saturday morning, July 9th...just couldn't sleep, humm. Again, they said they liked the option to cross my land best. A very good reason why, is partially due to the fact that when BPA had a public meeting, that included public comment, they failed to notify the property owners along this newly proposed route that this project would negatively impact.

I can't say with all certainty that includes "all" but at least my immediate neighbor who I believe is somewhat influential in the community and at least one other neighbor and myself. BPA may have run an announcement in the local paper but you would think a phone call or letter would be in order if one is being directly impacted. That is if you're the folks whose land there going to take, I mean force one to sell at a price BPA chooses and change the appearance of for ever. Just an oversight you say...Yeah...I know you people are well educated business, engineer and scientific professionals with methodical thought processes and checklists. You can be sure many of the public comments that were in favor of re-routing across my land where *made by those that would really benefit from such a duplicative endeavor and would agree to this proposal, probably without any regard for public resources, such as those folks who bought land or homes with a power line view recently or years ago...**talk about a huge increase in their land value when BPA removes those humming unsightly lines from their lives - you bet why not...let's get started!*** Ok, so much for my opinions and emotions.

Please include in the draft EIS how you intend to mitigate and justify the following **actual and potential** wildlife and environmental impacts of the proposal option that crosses Pipe Creek and my property:

1. The active Bald Eagle nest during construction and post construction.
2. The disturbance to other wildlife during construction and post construction.
3. The timber harvest, scarification and construction on and below very steep, failing, unstable slopes located between the eagle nest and Pipe Creek and to the south.
4. The very great potential of mass soil failure and direct delivery to Pipe Creek.
5. The very great potential of erosion and direct delivery to Pipe Creek on both sides due to construction, ROW clearing and maintenance.
6. Rain on snow relative to item 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7.
7. The loss of riparian function along Pipe Creek.
8. The noise created from construction and post-construction. i.e. equipment, line-hum and right-of-way maintenance, trespassers, off road vehicles.
9. The increased need for police and fire protection/suppression as a result of off-road vehicles and power line right-of-way trespassers.
10. The loss and displacement of the recreational camping sites adjacent to or under the proposal on my land. The ground will still be there but the large old cottonwood (especially beautiful in the fall) trees and view will be gone indefinitely.
11. The glare off the lines.
12. The 100 foot plus swath cut through the timber.

Numbers 10, 11 and 12 are directly in the view from my home site and camp sites as we look to the southwest toward the Cabinet Mountains.

Also please include how creating this completely new scar across the landscape that will likely create a “take” or loss of the Eagle, increase slope failure potential to presently failing slopes and ultimately result in mass soil movement to Pipe Creek, a bull trout stream, and all the other items listed, is, and I quote from your letter dated May 2, 2005, last paragraph, “minimizing environmental impacts and demonstrating regional accountability”.

Sincerely,

Richard and Nancy Young
Libby Property Owners