



## Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 61409  
Vancouver, WA 98666-1409

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

January 8, 2018

In reply refer to: TEP-CSB-1

### **To: Parties Interested in the Marys Peak BPA Communications Site Project**

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is sending this letter to update you on BPA's proposal to maintain and upgrade the existing BPA communications site located at Marys Peak. The site is on the summit of Marys Peak, located about 15 miles southwest of Corvallis, in Benton County, Oregon. The BPA communications network is essential for the safety and reliability of the BPA transmission system.

This letter provides the status of the environmental review process for the Marys Peak BPA Communications Site Project (Project). It outlines our next steps, including an additional public scoping period and meeting, and explains how we plan to keep the public informed about the Project. Additional information can be found at the Project website at: [www.bpa.gov/goto/maryspeak](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/maryspeak).

### **Environmental Review Process**

In 2016, BPA initiated an environmental assessment (EA) process for the Project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The BPA communications site is located on lands managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) Central Coast Ranger District of the Siuslaw National Forest. The unpaved access road leading from the parking lot to the site crosses lands administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Northwest Oregon District. Both agencies have agreed to participate as cooperating agencies under NEPA.

During the initial Project scoping period held in the fall of 2016, we asked for your comments on the proposal and hosted a public meeting in Philomath, Oregon. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns. All comments that were received are available at the Project website.

BPA reviewed all comments received during the initial Project scoping period. Based in part on your input, we expanded our consideration of potential alternatives for the Project. Alternatives that were suggested during public scoping and by the Project engineers included over 30 sites in western Oregon. We sent a letter to the public in May 2017 explaining that information on potential alternatives would be presented during an additional public scoping period in the fall of 2017. Investigating all of these suggested alternatives took longer than expected, requiring us to postpone the additional scoping period.

We have completed our investigation of the suggested alternatives. Engineering feasibility assessments were conducted to determine which alternatives would meet the Project need for reliable communications and thus be suitable for analysis in detail in the Project EA. All alternatives include two communications sites between which the microwave radio waves passes. All alternatives use either Marys Peak or West Point Spur as one of the communications sites, and the BPA Albany Substation or the BPA Prospect Hill communications site as the other communications site (see attached maps).

BPA determined that the following five alternatives are suitable for analysis in detail in the Project EA:

1. No Action (the communications sites would not be maintained or upgraded)
- 2A. Marys Peak at Existing BPA Site – BPA Albany Substation
- 2B. Marys Peak at Existing BPA Site – BPA Prospect Hill Site
- 3A. Marys Peak Colocate at New USFS Site – BPA Albany Substation
- 3B. Marys Peak Colocate at New USFS Site – BPA Prospect Hill Site
4. West Point Spur Colocate at Existing Consumer's Power, Inc. Site – BPA Prospect Hill Site
5. West Point Spur Proposed New BPA Site – BPA Prospect Hill Site

Additional information about each of these alternatives is posted on the Project website. The EA will describe and analyze each of these alternatives in detail, describe the alternatives that were considered but eliminated as a result of the engineering feasibility assessments, and detail the rationale for eliminating them from further consideration.

### **Additional Public Scoping and Meeting**

BPA, USFS and BLM will host a public scoping meeting to share information about the alternatives to be analyzed in detail in the EA and the alternatives that have been considered but eliminated to date. The project team will be available to answer questions and accept comments concerning the scope of the EA:

**Thursday, January 25, 2018, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.**  
**Linus Pauling Middle School Auditorium, 1111 NW Cleveland Avenue, Corvallis, Oregon**

BPA will provide a presentation on the Project need, the communications sites considered, including those eliminated from further consideration and the alternatives that will be analyzed in detail in the EA. The presentation will begin at 6:00 p.m.

Please send your comments to BPA by **February 21, 2018**, and identify them as “Marys Peak BPA Communications Site Project.” All comments will be posted in their entirety on the Project website. There are several ways to comment:

<b>Mail:</b> Bonneville Power Administration Public Affairs – DKE-7 P.O. Box 14428 Portland, OR 97291-4428	<b>Toll-free:</b> 800-622-4519 <b>FAX:</b> 503-230-4019 <b>Online:</b> <a href="http://www.bpa.gov/comment">www.bpa.gov/comment</a>
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During the environmental review process, BPA will work with federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, landowners, and interest groups. The draft EA will be provided to the public for review and comment, and the EA will be finalized after taking all comments into consideration. Both the USFS and the BLM will be making their own agency decision, if needed based on the selected alternative.

The expected schedule for the environmental review process is:

Additional scoping comment period	January 8 through February 21, 2018
Draft EA available for public comment	Early 2019
Final EA	Late 2019
Agency decisions (BPA, USFS, and BLM)	Early 2020
If decision to proceed, construction could start	Summer 2020

### **For More Information**

To learn more about the Project, please visit the project website ([www.bpa.gov/goto/maryspeak](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/maryspeak)) or call the toll-free number listed above. For questions about the Project, please contact me at 360-619-6276 or [bbyounce@bpa.gov](mailto:bbyounce@bpa.gov). You may also contact Molly Kovaka, Senior Project Manager, Flux Resources at 360-619-6262 or [mckovaka@bpa.gov](mailto:mckovaka@bpa.gov). For questions regarding the environmental review process, please contact Kimberly St.Hilaire, Environmental Protection Specialist, at 503-230-5361 or [krsthilaire@bpa.gov](mailto:krsthilaire@bpa.gov), or Becky Hill, Contract Environmental Protection Specialist, Flux Resources at 503-230-7312, or [rlhillclark@bpa.gov](mailto:rlhillclark@bpa.gov). Thank you for your interest in the Project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Benjamin Younce  
Benjamin Younce  
Project Manager

Enclosures:

Project Alternatives Map

Marys Peak and West Point Spur Communications Sites Map

Comment Form

Return Envelope

Reply Card