



Department of Energy

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

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

October 27, 2020

In reply refer to: TEP-CSB-1

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

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) prepared a draft environmental assessment (EA) for the Marys Peak BPA Communications Site Project (Project). BPA is proposing to maintain and upgrade the existing BPA communications facility located at the summit of Marys Peak, in Benton County, Oregon. More information on the proposal is available at the Project website at www.bpa.gov/goto/maryspeak.

The EA describes the Project, explains why it is needed, describes the alternatives under consideration, and analyzes potential impacts from each alternative. It also includes mitigation measures that would help avoid or reduce environmental impacts. ***This letter requests your comments on the draft EA, invites you to attend a virtual public meeting, and outlines the next steps for the Project.***

The EA was prepared in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) Central Coast Ranger District of the Siuslaw National Forest (SNF), and the U. S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM) - Northwest Oregon District because lands managed by these agencies could be affected by the Project. Project activities could also occur on lands owned and managed by the City of Corvallis.

The EA analyzes the No Action Alternative and three action alternatives. Each Project alternative includes two communications sites between which BPA communications signals would pass. Under the No Action Alternative, existing communications between the BPA Marys Peak communications site and the BPA Prospect Hill communications site would continue. Although periodic routine and emergency maintenance would occur at these two BPA communications sites, the reliability and safety concerns that prompted this Project would persist.

The following three action alternatives are analyzed in the EA:

- **Alternative 2A.** Marys Peak at Existing BPA Communications Site – BPA Albany Substation
- **Alternative 3C.** Marys Peak Co-locate with USFS – BPA Albany Substation
- **Alternative 4.** West Point Spur Co-locate at Existing Consumers Power, Inc. (CPI) Site – BPA Prospect Hill Communications Site

How to Comment

The public comment period on the draft EA has been extended from Nov. 12 to Nov. 23, 2020 to ensure sufficient time for interested parties to comment. Please submit your comments to BPA by November 23, 2020, and reference the Marys Peak BPA Communications Project. All comments will be posted in their entirety on the Project website. You can submit comments using one of the following methods, including phone, email, mail, fax, on BPA's comment website, or by submitting comments at the virtual public meeting.

Mail: Bonneville Power Administration
Public Affairs – DKE-7
P.O. Box 14428
Portland, OR 97291-4428

Toll-free: 800-622-4519
FAX: 503-230-4019
Online: www.bpa.gov/comment

Virtual Public Meeting

Due to COVID-19 concerns, we will not host an in-person public meeting for this Project. Instead, BPA, USFS, and BLM will host a web-based virtual public meeting where you can provide comments and ask your questions verbally. See the Project website for details on how to access the virtual public meeting and instructions on how to participate during the following meeting date and time:

Wednesday October 28th, 2020, 6:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Webex

Next Steps

BPA, USFS, and BLM will consider all comments submitted during the draft EA comment period and provide responses to comments in the final EA. All comments will be posted in their entirety on the project website. If BPA decides a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is warranted and decides to implement one of the Project action alternatives, a final EA and FONSI would be released in 2021. Both the USFS and the BLM will make their own agency decision, based on the selected alternative.

The Forest Service Responsible Official, District Ranger Michele Holman, has identified BPA as the designee to receive comments on this Project. On March 27, 2013, a final rule revising 36 CFR Part 218 was published in the Federal Register Volume 78, No. 59. The new rule replaces the previous USFS appeal rules defined in 36 CFR 215, and expands the use of the pre-decisional objection process. The new rule provides the public an opportunity to comment and express concerns on projects before decisions are made, rather than after. The portion of this Project that would occur on USFS managed lands is subject to USFS specific pre-decisional objection regulations. Only those who submit timely and specific comments regarding the proposed project or activity during a formal public comment period, such as this one, established by the Responsible Official, are eligible to file an objection. For objection eligibility, each individual or representative from each entity submitting timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed project or activity comments must either sign the comments or verify their identity upon request.

Schedule

The remainder of the NEPA process is expected to be completed in 2021, as follows:

Draft EA available for public comment	October 13 to November 23, 2020
Final EA	Spring 2021
Agency decisions (BPA, USFS, and BLM)	Summer 2021
If decision to proceed, construction could start	Spring 2022

For More Information

The draft EA is available for your review and comment on the Project website www.bpa.gov/goto/maryspeak. If you requested a hard copy of the draft EA, it is enclosed. If you would like a hard copy (about 230 pages), please call our toll-free document request line at 800-622-4520 and leave a message with the Project name, your name, and a complete mailing address.

If you have questions about the Project, please contact me at 360-619-6276 or bbyounce@bpa.gov. For questions on the environmental process, please contact Kimberly St.Hilaire, Environmental Protection Specialist, at 503-230-5361 or krsthilaire@bpa.gov, or Becky Hill, Contract Environmental Protection Specialist, Flux Resources at 503-230-7312, or rhill@bpa.gov. Thank you for your interest in the Project.

Sincerely,
/s/ Benjamin Younce
Benjamin Younce
Project Manager

Enclosures:
Comment Form
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