



## Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration  
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TRANSMISSION SERVICES

October 26, 2012

In reply refer to: TEP-CSB-2

### **To: Parties Interested in the Northern Mid-Columbia Joint Project**

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is collaborating with the Public Utility District No. 1 of Douglas County (Douglas PUD) to jointly propose a transmission project that could affect you. This letter briefly explains what is being proposed, outlines the environmental review process, invites you to a meeting where you can learn more, and explains how you can comment on the proposal.

**Proposal** - BPA has been in ongoing discussions with members of the Northern Mid-Columbia Study Team (BPA, PUDs of Grant, Chelan, and Douglas counties in Washington) on how to address deficiencies in the Northern Mid-Columbia transmission system that could cause power outages. Solutions were explored that would meet each utility's current and future electric reliability needs. These discussions led to an agreement between BPA and the three county PUDs to jointly fund the Northern Mid-Columbia Joint Project (Joint Project). The Joint Project would require Douglas PUD to design, build, own, and operate an approximately 9-mile, 230 kilovolt long transmission line. The line would extend from the Douglas PUD's Rapids Substation in the town of Rock Island to BPA's Columbia Substation, approximately eight miles to the southeast. Both endpoints of the proposed line are in Douglas County, Washington. To interconnect the proposed line to the Federal Columbia River Power System, BPA would add a bay to its existing Columbia Substation.

The following areas in Douglas and Chelan counties have been identified as possible routes for the transmission line but a specific alignment has not yet been determined (see enclosed map):

**East Route** – From the Rapids Substation, this route would follow Highway 28 for approximately three miles southeast of Rapids Switchyard, then diverge from the highway and climb a steep slope. It would traverse cultivated land on top of the plateau, descend the plateau near Palisades Road, and head about one mile southwest to the Columbia Substation.

**West Route** – This route would require two crossings of the Columbia River, but would traverse flatter terrain than the East Route. Most of the route would be within an existing utility corridor with multiple existing transmission lines and a gas pipeline.

**Environmental Review Process** - To understand the potential environmental impacts of this proposal, BPA will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA). The EA will describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources and include mitigation measures to avoid or minimize impacts. Douglas PUD will cooperate with BPA in the preparation of the EA. During this process, BPA and Douglas PUD will work with federal, state and local agencies, Tribes, landowners, and other interest groups.

**How to Comment** - We will soon start to assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposal and would like to hear from you. We have scheduled a public scoping meeting where members of the BPA and Douglas PUD project teams would like to hear your ideas, discuss possible routes, and accept comments related to the scope of the environmental analysis. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, November 14, 2012, from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m., at the Douglas County PUD auditorium, located at 1151 Valley Mall Parkway in East Wenatchee. Since this is a scoping meeting that is focused on listening to you and understanding your concerns, we do not plan to give a formal presentation at the meeting. Please come at any time convenient for you between 4 and 7 p.m.

If you cannot attend the meeting, you can still comment. You may submit comments to BPA online at: [www.bpa.gov/comment](http://www.bpa.gov/comment), return the enclosed comment form or other written correspondence in the postage-paid envelope provided, or fax your comments to (503) 230-4019. You also may call us with your comments toll free at (800) 622-4519. Please submit scoping comments to us by **December 14, 2012** and reference "Northern Mid-Columbia Joint Project" on your comments. We will post all comments we receive on our website at [www.bpa.gov/comment](http://www.bpa.gov/comment).

**Process and Schedule** – Starting this winter, we will begin collecting environmental data and conducting engineering surveys for the project. The information we gather in our environmental studies will be published in a preliminary EA we expect to release for public review and comment in late 2013 or early 2014. If you would like to receive a copy of the preliminary EA, please indicate on the enclosed form whether you prefer a hard copy or CD and if you would like to receive it by regular or electronic mail. If you would like to be taken off the project mailing list, please mark the box on the form. If you do not return the form, you will still receive notice when the preliminary EA is available. BPA is planning to produce a final EA for the project in 2014. Based on the analysis in the final EA, BPA will either prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact and decide whether to proceed with the project, or will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement if there is the potential for significant environmental impacts.

**For More Information** - To find out more about the project please go to BPA's project website at: [http://efw.bpa.gov/environmental\\_services/Document\\_Library/NMC\\_Joint\\_Project](http://efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/NMC_Joint_Project).

If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact the environmental project lead, Kimberly St. Hilaire, toll-free at (800) 282-3713, directly at (503) 230-5361 or e-mail [krsthilaire@bpa.gov](mailto:krsthilaire@bpa.gov). If you have questions on the transmission line route or design, please contact Douglas County PUD's Assistant Manager-Distribution Engineering, Jerry Kyle at 509-881-2234 or Property Supervisor, John Brown at 509-881-2297. If you have other questions or would like more project information, please call me, Alaric Hsu, at the toll-free number listed above, directly at (360) 619-6331 or e-mail me at [ahhsu@bpa.gov](mailto:ahhsu@bpa.gov).

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Alaric Hsu*

Alaric Hsu  
BPA Project Manager

Enclosures:  
Project Map  
Comment Form  
Reply Card  
Return Envelope

cc:

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