

I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project

January 2013



Answers to landowner questions

Will BPA have to buy property for the new line and substations?

If BPA were to decide to build this project, BPA would need to purchase the property for the substations and to purchase easements for the transmission line right-of-way and access roads. An easement is the right granted by a property owner for BPA to use a limited portion of a tract of land for its facilities. BPA does not actually own the property, but the property owner grants BPA (1) the right to install and operate its facilities and (2) the right to access the easement area. An easement is also sometimes referred to as a right-of-way. Property owners are allowed continued use of their property so long as the use does not interfere with BPA's easement uses.

What is the process for defining or describing an easement for this transmission line?

Once BPA selects a route, the agency would contact the property owners directly affected and request permission to conduct land surveys on the property to establish the boundaries of the easement. Easement areas would be defined and described by a registered professional land surveyor. The land surveys are specific descriptions of the exact measurements of the land needed for the new facilities.

How are easements obtained and how does BPA compensate property owners?

BPA respects property rights, however, the construction of new transmission typically requires the acquisition of land rights from private landowners and public

agencies. These property rights, called easements or rights-of-way, are typically a strip of land needed to allow BPA to construct, operate and maintain the transmission line. Easements would be purchased through negotiations with each individual landowner, based on an appraisal of fair market value. However, if negotiations fail, easements may be acquired through eminent domain action for facilities to be built in the public interest. Payment for easements is based on the value of the rights acquired and landowners are compensated at fair market value. Landowners would retain title to the land.

Would BPA negotiate with property owners to acquire easements?

Yes. BPA would negotiate with property owners to acquire each easement. BPA would formally contact property owners with an offer after project approval, sometime after the surveys have been obtained and appraisal reports have been prepared.

How wide are BPA easements?

Easement widths vary for different projects and typically range from 100 to 150 feet wide for a single line. For the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project, a 150-foot-wide easement would be needed for a new 500-kV line and up to a 50-foot-wide easement may be needed for access roads outside of the right-of-way.

Would homes be taken using eminent domain for this project?

BPA's goal is to find a way to route the line such that no one will need to be asked to move from their home. While BPA does have the authority to exercise the right of eminent domain over private property and





state and local government agencies, we usually reach mutually acceptable agreements with property owners on just compensation for the value of the property. In the unlikely event where eminent domain was exercised, BPA would pay fair market value for the property. In the event that a landowner would be asked to move, BPA complies with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies for Federal and Federally Assisted Programs. These policies ensure that displaced landowners, including individuals and businesses, receive relocation assistance services, and compensation as directed by The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 as amended.

Would new access roads be needed for the proposed project?

Yes. We would use existing access roads wherever possible but would need to develop new access roads to provide access to each tower and substation. BPA normally acquires access road easement and develops and maintains permanent road access to each of its transmission line towers. Access roads are designed

to be used by cranes, excavators, supply trucks, boom trucks, log trucks and line trucks for construction and maintenance. Typically, maintenance of the line requires lighter duty trucks for patrol a couple of times per year. To view proposed access road locations, go to the project interactive map.

Would BPA remove all trees along transmission line routes?

BPA removes all trees on our transmission right-of-way when constructing a new transmission line. We also remove “danger trees” outside the transmission easement. Danger trees are trees that could grow into or fall into a transmission line. Removal is done to ensure the reliability of the line.