



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

TRANSMISSION BUSINESS LINE

September 6, 2005

In reply refer to: T/Ditt2

To: People interested in BPA's Proposed Rebuild of the Libby (FEC) to Troy Section of BPA's Libby to Bonners Ferry 115-kilovolt Transmission Line

The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to rebuild the Libby Flathead Electric Cooperative (FEC) to Troy Section of BPA's Libby to Bonners Ferry 115-kilovolt Transmission Line. The purpose of this letter is to provide a description of the project and environmental process, inform you on how to comment on the proposal and how to contact BPA if you have questions or comments.

BPA is proposing to rebuild a 17-mile-long section of BPA's Libby to Bonners Ferry 115-kV transmission line. Currently, the condition of many of the wood poles and cross arms are very poor and in need of immediate replacement. The project is needed to continue to provide safe and reliable transmission service to the local communities, and to anticipate for the future growth of the area.

This rebuild would replace an existing 115-kV wood pole transmission line that runs west from Libby (FEC) Substation in the town of Libby, to BPA's Troy Substation, east of Troy, Mont. The proposed rebuild would be located primarily in BPA's existing right-of-way corridor. The three rebuild alternatives would require BPA to purchase additional right-of-way adjacent to the existing right-of-way. The rebuild options also include three potential re-routings that would require BPA to acquire new right-of-way—one to avoid immediately adjacent residences in the vicinity of the town of Libby near Pipe Creek, a second to bypass potential affected landowners in the Big Horn Terrace subdivision, and the third at a river crossing prior to a washout at China Creek, approximately one-half mile east of the present crossing of the Kootenai River.

BPA currently is considering four alternatives for evaluation in the Environmental Impact Statement:

- Rebuilding the line in-kind, as a single-circuit 115-kV wood pole H-frame line with some wood-pole equivalent steel poles;
- Rebuilding the line as a double-circuit 115-kV tubular steel pole line;
- Rebuilding the line as a double-circuit 230-kV tubular steel pole line; and
- No action alternative (an alternative BPA always considers).

Other alternatives may be identified through the scoping process. The four proposed alternatives are depicted on the enclosed map.

Public Meeting

BPA held two public scoping meetings in May 2005 in Libby, Mont. to hear comments on the proposed project. BPA is holding a third scoping meeting 6 to 8 p.m., Monday, Sept. 12 at the First National Bank of Montana, 504 Mineral Ave, Libby, MT 59923. The purpose of this meeting is to hear comments from landowners in the Big Horn Terrace subdivision area, who inadvertently were left off the original mailing list and didn't receive notification for the first two public meetings.

Environmental Process and Schedule

BPA considers potential environmental impacts of its proposed rebuild transmission line projects. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, BPA is preparing an environmental impact statement (EIS) to assess the potential impacts of the construction, operation and maintenance of the proposed line rebuild. BPA will use information collected at the public meetings, correspondence received from the public and its own assessments to help identify potential environmental impacts. After the public meetings, environmental and engineering activities will occur along the proposed BPA transmission line routes to determine if the design should be refined based on landowner concerns, resources present and potential impacts. All information gathered will be incorporated into BPA's environmental analysis and made available in a draft EIS. This document should be available for public review and comment in the spring of 2006. Additionally, BPA will hold public meetings to receive comments on the Draft EIS.

BPA will consider and respond in the final EIS to comments received on the draft EIS. Once BPA has completed its environmental review, the final EIS will be released addressing all public comments. In the final EIS a decision will be made whether to rebuild the line, delineating the number of circuits and the kilovolts of the line. If BPA decides to rebuild the line, construction could begin as early as summer 2007 and be complete by summer 2008.

How to Comment

Comments on BPA's proposal to rebuild the Libby (FEC) to Troy Section of BPA's Libby to Bonners Ferry 115-kilovolt Transmission Line were accepted through June 9, 2005. However, we will still consider your comments until Sept. 30, 2005. There are a number of ways to comment. If prefer to submit your comments in writing, you can mail the enclosed comment form to BPA Communications – DM-7, P.O. Box 14428, Portland, OR 97293-4428, fax them to 503-230-3285, send an email to comment@bpa.gov or submit them through the BPA Web site at www.bpa.gov/comment/.

Please include the name of this project with your comments. If you would like to receive a copy of the draft EIS, please return the enclosed postcard and specify if you prefer a CD or hardcopy of the document.

For More Information

BPA is committed to providing reliable, low-cost transmission products and services to the region while minimizing environmental impacts and demonstrating regional accountability. If you have questions or would like more information about the project, please call us toll-free at 1-888-276-7790. Additional information is available on our web site at http://www.transmission.bpa.gov/PlanProj/Transmission_Projects/.

Sincerely,

/s/ Kirk Robinson, Sept. 6, 2005

Kirk Robinson
Project Manager

Enclosures: Project Area Map, Postcard and Comment Form