



## Department of Energy

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

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

March 24, 2016

In reply refer to: TEP-CSB-2

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

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has prepared a final environmental assessment (EA) for the Northern Mid-Columbia Joint Project (Joint Project), a proposed transmission line and associated facilities in the northern mid-Columbia area of Washington State. Based on the analysis in the final EA, BPA has prepared a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for one of the routing alternatives – West Route D-E – identified in the final EA, and has decided to proceed with this alternative. This letter describes BPA's decision to proceed, the construction schedule, and how to obtain additional information.

#### **Background**

The Joint Project involves the construction of a new 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line and associated facilities in Douglas and Chelan counties, Washington. The 8.4-mile long line transmission line under West Route D-E would extend from the existing Rapids Switchyard owned by Public Utility District No. 1 of Douglas County (Douglas PUD) near the City of Rock Island in Douglas County, Washington to BPA's existing Columbia Substation in Douglas County, Washington.

The transmission line would be permitted, constructed, owned, and operated by Douglas PUD. BPA would partially fund construction of this new line and add equipment at the BPA Columbia Substation to interconnect the line to the Federal Columbia River Transmission System. The project is needed to address deficiencies in the northern mid-Columbia area that could cause power outages and affect system reliability, provide operational flexibility for the transmission system, and meet load growth.

The EA for the Joint Project evaluates three Proposed Action alternatives (including West Route D-E) and a No Action Alternative. BPA released the draft EA and requested comments in November 2014. We also held two public meetings in the project area in Washington state including a meeting in the city of Rock Island on December 9, 2014 and a meeting at the Alcoa Facility in Malaga on December 10, 2014. Copies of all comments received on the draft EA, our written responses to those comments, and the changes made to the EA are included in the final EA.

#### **Decision**

Based on the EA analysis and mitigation measures to help lessen impacts, BPA has prepared a FONSI that finds West Route D-E will not cause any significant impacts and, therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. Accordingly, BPA has decided to implement the West Route D-E alternative described in the EA. The Mitigation Action Plan for this alternative includes mitigation measures that will be implemented to avoid or reduce environmental impacts.

#### **Schedule**

If all funding partners for the Joint Project (Douglas PUD, Grant PUD, Chelan PUD, and BPA) decide to fund and implement the Joint Project, the project could be constructed as early as 2017. Before that time, Douglas PUD will work with landowners to acquire transmission line and access road easements where they do not currently have easements. Douglas PUD will also acquire permits and other approvals for the project.

**Copies Available**

If you asked to receive a copy of the NEPA documentation for the project, the final EA, FONSI, and Mitigation Action Plan are enclosed. The documents are also available on the project website at [www.bpa.gov/goto/NorthernMidColumbia](http://www.bpa.gov/goto/NorthernMidColumbia). If you would like to receive a hard copy or a compact disc with an electronic copy of the documents, please call our toll-free document request line at (800) 622-4520. Please leave a message with the project name and your complete mailing address.

**For More Information**

If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact the Environmental Protection Specialist, Kimberly St.Hilaire, toll free at 800-282-3713, directly at 503-230-5361, or by email at [krsthilaire@bpa.gov](mailto:krsthilaire@bpa.gov). If you have questions on the transmission line route or design, please contact Douglas PUD's Distribution Engineering Supervisor, Dennis Baker, 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 at the toll-free number listed above, directly at 360-619-6331, or by email at [ahhsu@bpa.gov](mailto:ahhsu@bpa.gov).

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Alaric Hsu*

Alaric Hsu  
BPA Project Manager

**Enclosure (if requested):**

Final EA  
FONSI