



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

In reply refer to: KEC-4

April 23, 2007

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DETERMINATION

Proposed Action: Palisades-Goshen Pole Replacement Project

Environmental Project Manager: Ms. Nancy Wittpenn, P.O. Box 3621, KEC-4, Portland, OR 97208-3621, Phone: 503-230-3297, Fax: 503-230-5699, e-mail: nawittpenn@bpa.gov.

Budget Information: WO #00192469

Location: Bonneville and Bingham Counties, Idaho

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). Cooperating agencies are Caribou-Targhee National Forest, Bureau of Land Management, and Bureau of Reclamation.

Description of the Proposed Action: The Palisades–Goshen 115-kv transmission line was built in 1949 and has approximately 700 poles and 60 cross arms that need to be replaced due to age and condition. Many of the line’s wood poles no longer have the ability to withstand required structural loads, including stresses caused by snow and ice build-up during winter. Most of the cross-arms are now rotting, and many show splitting and damage, which seriously compromise their integrity. BPA proposes to replace the entire 52 miles of existing 115-kV wood pole structures with new 230-kV wood pole structures.

In addition, there is a need to address load growth in the service area served by the Palisades–Goshen line. Due to expected future growth, replacing the existing 115-kV structures with 230-kV structures would allow the line to operate at 161-kV. Although BPA studies have indicated that loads actually requiring a higher voltage may not materialize until 2027, BPA believes that it is more cost-effective to rebuild now using a 230-kV structure to accommodate these future loads.

Class of Action to be Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): C4. – “Reconstructing (upgrading or rebuilding) existing electric powerlines more than approximately 20 miles in length...”

We have determined that the proposed action is within the class of actions normally requiring an Environmental Assessment (EA), but not necessarily requiring an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as listed in Subpart D of 10 C.F.R. Part 1021.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. Therefore, we have determined that an EA will be prepared to assess the impacts of the proposed action. On the basis of the analysis in the EA, BPA will either prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact and proceed with the action, or will prepare an EIS if the EA reveals the potential for significant environmental impacts.

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 23, 2007

cc:

Mr. Brent Porter, Caribou-Targhee National Forest,

Mr. Ryan Newman, Bureau of Reclamation, 1359 Hansen Ave., Burley, ID 83318

Mr. Jan Parmenter, Bureau of Land Management, 1405 Hollipark Dr., Idaho Falls, ID 83401