



Department of Energy

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

TRANSMISSION BUSINESS LINE

April 15, 2002

In reply refer to: TNP-TPP-3; (Schultz-Hanford)

To: People Interested in the Schultz-Hanford Area Transmission Line Project

In February 2002, Bonneville Power Administration wrote to tell you about the availability of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on the Schultz-Hanford Area Transmission Line Project. We asked for your comments on the Draft EIS and held three public meetings in central Washington. Thank you for taking the time to tell us your ideas.

This letter provides a project update, briefly summarizes the public comments, and describes our next steps.

Project Update

BPA still proposes to build a 500-kV transmission line in central Washington. The preferred alternative would connect from BPA's Schultz Substation to a new substation called Wautoma, which is located southwest of the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford Reservation (Hanford). This new 500-kV line would increase transmission capacity north of Hanford and allow additional power to move through this area. The preferred route would proceed mostly around the Yakima Training Center and would be on private lands from Vantage to the Wautoma Substation. The preferred route would utilize about eight miles of double-circuit structures through the irrigated areas between Vantage and the Columbia River Crossing.

Public Comments

In February and March, BPA received comments on the proposed transmission line alternatives. Many of these comments were from public meetings held in Ellensburg, Desert Aire, and Richland. We also received comments by phone, mail, and e-mail.

The comments focused on:

- Concerns about a potential transmission line re-route around tribal allotment land
- A desire to use double-circuit structures for more of the preferred transmission line route
- Concerns about the preferred alternative crossing the Hanford Monument and affecting sensitive habitat
- Questions about maps in the Draft EIS and Executive Summary

Next Steps

BPA will continue to conduct environmental studies in the project area. Cultural, plant, and wildlife resource surveys will continue through the spring and summer. BPA is in the process of surveying and designing the preferred plan. Tower sites are being delineated and access roads to those tower sites are being sited. BPA will also be talking to land owners for purchasing of rights across their property.

We will read and respond to all comments submitted during the comment period. A Final EIS is expected to be published by winter 2002 (if you received the Draft EIS, you will receive a Final EIS unless you tell us you do not want a copy). If you did not receive the Draft EIS and would like a Final EIS, please call 1-800-622-4519 or e-mail comment@bpa.gov, and you will receive the document when it is available. All your comments and our responses will be published in the Final EIS. Also, where appropriate, the Final EIS will be updated with any changes to the proposal or analysis as a result of comments or field studies.

Once we have completed the Final EIS, BPA will issue a Record of Decision outlining whether and how we will proceed with the project. If we decide to proceed, construction would likely begin in spring 2003.

For More Information

If you have any questions, please call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713; at my direct number, (360) 619-6327; or send an e-mail to lcdriessen@bpa.gov. Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Nancy Wittpenn 4-15-2002

Lou Driessen
Project Manager