



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 491
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TRANSMISSION SERVICES

June 27, 2013

In reply refer to: TEP-TPP-3

To: Parties interested in Hooper Springs Transmission Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) released a draft environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed Hooper Springs Transmission Project in March 2013. Many of you provided comments during the comment period for the draft EIS. Thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns with us. We are sending you this letter to update you on where we currently stand with the EIS and this project and share our expected next steps toward completing the EIS process and reaching a decision.

Preparing the final EIS

Now that the draft EIS comment period has closed, BPA is beginning work on preparing the final EIS for the project. The final EIS will respond to all comments that we received. In addition, the EIS text will be updated to reflect refinements in the EIS's environmental evaluation of the project and the alignments of the routing alternatives considered in the EIS. For the proposed 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission line that would extend from the proposed Hooper Springs Substation near the city of Soda Springs, Idaho, to a proposed connection with Lower Valley Energy's existing transmission system in northeastern Caribou County, the routing alternatives currently include a North Alternative with two route options and a South Alternative with four route options.

Getting to a preferred alternative

Because we did not have a clear preference for one routing alternative over another at the time we released the draft EIS, we did not identify a preferred alternative in the draft EIS. Since the release of the draft EIS, however, we have heard that most commentors would prefer that BPA identify the South Alternative or one of its options as the preferred alternative. We are taking this suggestion very seriously. Accordingly, BPA is focusing its efforts to further investigate the South Alternative and its options in more depth to determine if one of these routes could be identified as the preferred alternative. We are also meeting with landowners along the South Alternative to consider further refinements in the alignment of this route and will continue to explore suggestions from the public.

Next steps

As BPA staff and contractors continue to further refine and evaluate project alternatives and options in the coming months, you may see these specialists working in the area. They will only access properties that BPA has permission to enter. BPA will use the updated information gathered to help respond to the comments it has received and to prepare the final EIS. After this work is complete, BPA will issue the final EIS which will identify BPA's preferred alternative. BPA expects to complete and publish the final EIS in winter 2013. We then expect to issue a record of decision in early 2014 that will explain BPA's decision about whether to build the project and, if so, the alternative selected.

For additional information

BPA is committed to providing reliable, low-cost transmission products and services to the region while minimizing environmental impacts. Please visit the project website at www.bpa.gov/goto/HooperSprings if you would like more information. If you have questions or would like additional information about the project, please call us toll free at 800-622-4519 or email me at etorth@bpa.gov. Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Erich T. Orth

Erich T. Orth
Project Manager