



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

January 8, 2013

In reply refer to: KEC-4

To: People Interested in the Midway-Benton No. 1 Transmission Line Rebuild Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has finalized the environmental assessment (EA) for the Midway-Benton No. 1 Rebuild Project in Benton County, Washington. Based on the Final Environmental Assessment, BPA is issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and has made a decision on how to proceed with the project. This letter describes BPA's decision, construction schedule, and how to obtain additional information about the project.

Background - BPA will rebuild the Midway-Benton No.1 and approximately 11 miles of the Benton-Othello No. 1 115-kilovolt transmission lines. No major work has been done on these transmission lines since they were built in the 1940's. Many of the structures, the conductor (electric wires), and associated structural components (cross arms, insulators, and dampers) are physically worn and structurally unsound in places. These transmission lines have lasted beyond their expected service life, and now need to be replaced.

BPA prepared the EA to help the agency determine if the Proposed Action would cause significant impacts that would warrant preparing an environmental impact statement. As required under the National Environmental Policy Act, in June, BPA made the preliminary EA available for public review and comment. Four comments were received. Minor revisions were made to the EA based on the public comments that were received. The EA Revision Sheet combined with the Preliminary EA constitutes the Final EA. Based on the analysis in the EA and the measures that will mitigate adverse effects, BPA has found that the Proposed Action will not cause any significant impacts and, therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be completed.

Decision - BPA has decided to proceed with the Proposed Action. BPA will rebuild the Midway-Benton No. 1 transmission line within the existing right-of-way, except for an approximately 14.5-mile-long segment. The 14.5-mile-long segment will be relocated south of the existing line right-of-way to avoid sensitive cultural features and BPA will remove the corresponding segment of the existing Midway-Benton line. The Benton-Othello No. 1 transmission line will be rebuilt within the existing right-of-way.

Construction schedule – Project construction is expected to begin in January 2013 and will continue through May or June 2013.

For more information – The EA Revision Sheet and FONSI, which includes the Mitigation Action Plan, are enclosed if you previously requested a Preliminary EA. If you did not receive a copy of these documents and would like copies, please call our toll-free document request line (800) 622-4520. These documents are also available online at www.bpa.gov/go/MidwayBentonRebuild.

If you have any questions about the project, you may call me toll free at (800) 622-4519 or send me an e-mail at tkeaton@bpa.gov. Thank you for your interest in the project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Tish Eaton

Tish Eaton
Environmental Project Manager

Enclosures:
FONSI
Mitigation Action Plan
Revision Sheet