



Department of Energy

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

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

March 4, 2016

In reply refer to: TEP-TPP-1

To: People Interested in the Midway-Moxee Rebuild and Midway-Grandview Upgrade Transmission Line Project

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has finalized the environmental assessment (EA) for the Midway-Moxee Rebuild and Midway-Grandview Upgrade Transmission Line Project (project). Based on the final EA, BPA is issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and has made a decision to proceed with the project. This letter describes BPA's decision, the construction schedule, and how to obtain additional information.

BPA is the lead federal agency for the National Environmental Policy Act review process for the project. The U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is a cooperating agency, as portions of the transmission line rights-of-way and access roads for both the Midway-Moxee and Midway-Grandview transmission lines cross BLM-administered lands.

Background: BPA will rebuild its 34-mile long Midway-Moxee transmission line and its 26-mile long Midway-Grandview transmission line. Both lines are 115-kilovolt (kV) wood-pole lines located in Benton and Yakima counties, Washington. The lines were built in the 1940s and are deteriorating due to age and exposure to weather. Both lines need to be rebuilt to ensure reliable electric service.

For both transmission lines, the project will include replacing all wood-pole transmission structures and conductor (wires), improving existing access roads, and creating new access, where needed. Most structures will be taller and will be replaced next to or in their existing location, except where changes are needed to provide adequate clearance between the conductor and the ground or to minimize impacts to agricultural lands. Both lines will continue to operate at 115-kV.

BPA prepared an EA to help the agencies determine if the Proposed Action would cause significant impacts that would warrant preparing an environmental impact statement. BPA released the draft EA for public review and comment in July 2015 and received comments from ten entities, including private landowners, a tribe, state agencies, and a federal agency. The final EA provides responses to those comments as well as revisions to the EA. Based on the analysis in the EA and because mitigation measures and best management practices would be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts, BPA has found that the Proposed Action will not cause any significant impacts, and therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared.

Decision: BPA has decided to proceed with the Proposed Action and will rebuild and upgrade the transmission lines as described in the final EA. Project construction is expected to begin in September 2016 and continue through spring 2018, with breaks in construction during seasonal restrictions, such as during the summer fire season.

Copies Available: The final EA, FONSI, and mitigation action plan are enclosed if you previously requested them. If you did not receive a copy of any of these documents and would like one, please call our toll-free document request line at 1-800-622-4520. Leave a request naming this project and giving your name and complete mailing address. It is also available on BPA's website at www.bpa.gov/goto/MidwayMoxee

For More Information: If you have questions regarding the project, please contact me at 360-619-6557 or cjhamel@bpa.gov, or questions regarding the environmental process, contact Kimberly St. Hilaire, Environmental Protection Specialist, at krsthilaire@bpa.gov or 503-230-5361. You can also reach us toll free at 800-622-4519.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

/s/ Chad Hamel

Chad Hamel
BPA Project Manager

Enclosures (if requested):
Final EA
FONSI/Mitigation Action Plan