



## Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration  
P.O. Box 491  
Vancouver, Washington 98666-0491

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

September 24, 2012

In reply refer to: TEP-TPP-3

### **To: Parties Interested in the Pacific Direct Current Intertie (PDCI) Upgrade Project**

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to upgrade its Pacific Direct Current Intertie (PDCI) by performing upgrades at the Celilo converter station and along the Celilo-Sylmar No. 1 transmission line in Oregon. This letter explains our proposal, outlines our environmental review process and schedule, invites comments on the proposal, and invites you to attend one or all three of our public scoping meetings in October.

**Project Description** – BPA proposes a project that would replace aging equipment at its Celilo converter station and upgrade equipment on the Celilo-Sylmar 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The line runs from the Celilo converter station in The Dalles, Oregon to the Nevada-Oregon border (265 miles), where BPA's ownership of the 846-mile line terminates. This work would increase the PDCI transfer capability from its current 3100 megawatt (MW) capacity to 3210MW, and create the potential for future increases of up to 3800MW. The proposed upgrades would improve reliability and performance of the aging DC line. The project crosses Lake, Jefferson, Crook, Deschutes, and Wasco counties, Oregon, as depicted on the enclosed map.

As part of the project, BPA would remove and salvage the existing converter terminals 1 and 2 at BPA's Celilo converter station in The Dalles, Oregon, and expand the existing substation by 20 acres to accommodate a new two-converter terminal. We would upgrade about 265 miles of transmission towers on the Celilo-Sylmar 500-kV transmission line by installing new hardware assemblies, insulators, dampers, and shunts. BPA would reconductor about 1.8 miles of the existing transmission line to match the remainder of the line. We would construct four reinforced dead-end towers to improve reliability and strength of the line in the event of tower failure.

BPA would improve most of the existing access roads to accommodate construction equipment. Improvements could include rocking, grading, and minor expansion of the existing footprint. We would also add some new permanent and temporary spur roads in areas where existing access to individual tower sites is not available (typically where right-of-way crosses agricultural fields). On access roads where new dead-end towers would be located, BPA would reinforce and expand existing access roads to accommodate construction equipment.

**Public Meetings** – This fall we will start to assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives and would like to hear from you. What questions do you have? What resources should we analyze? Do you have information or concerns about specific areas? BPA will be seeking public input and comments. We have scheduled three open house scoping meetings:

**October 9, 2012**  
**5 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Lakeview Town Hall  
525 North First Street  
Lakeview, Oregon 97630

**October 10, 2012**  
**5 to 7:30 p.m.**  
Crook County Library  
Broughton Room  
175 NW Meadow Lakes Drive  
Prineville, Oregon 97754

**October 11, 2012**  
**4:30 to 7 p.m.**  
Columbia Gorge Community College  
Building #2, Third Floor  
Lecture Hall  
400 East Scenic Drive  
The Dalles, Oregon 97058

We do not plan to give a formal presentation, so you may come at any time during the scheduled meetings. Several members of the project team will be available to answer your questions and listen to your ideas.

**Other Ways to Comment** - If you're unable to attend the meeting, you can still comment. Please submit comments to us by **October 29, 2012** and reference "PDCI Upgrade Project" with your comments. We will post all comments we receive on our website at [www.bpa.gov/comment](http://www.bpa.gov/comment). BPA welcomes your input about the proposed project using any of the tools listed below:

- Submit comments to BPA online at: [www.bpa.gov/comment](http://www.bpa.gov/comment);
- Return the enclosed comment form or other written correspondence in the postage-paid envelope provided;
- Fax comments to (503) 230-4019;
- Call us with your comments toll free at (800) 622-4519.

**Environmental Review and Schedule** – To understand the potential environmental impacts of this proposed project, BPA will prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA). As a federal agency, we follow procedures of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EA will study two alternatives: upgrade the line, or do not upgrade the line and continue with current operation and maintenance practices. The EA will describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources, and include mitigation measures that would enable BPA to avoid or minimize impacts. During this process, BPA will work closely with federal, state and local agencies, landowners, interest groups, and tribes.

You may see BPA staff or contractors in the area as they conduct engineering and environmental surveys. If we need to enter property where we do not have existing access rights, we will contact property owners through a separate mailing to request permission.

BPA plans to produce a Preliminary EA that will be available for review and comment in spring, 2013. If you would like to receive a copy of the Preliminary EA, please indicate on the enclosed postcard whether you would like to receive it by regular or electronic mail. If you would like to be taken off the project mailing list, please mark the box on the form. If you do not return the form, you will still receive notice when the Preliminary EA is available.

BPA plans to produce a Final EA in the fall of 2013. Based on the results of the analysis in the Final EA, BPA will either prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact and decide whether to proceed with the project, or will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement if there is the potential for significant environmental impacts.

If you have other questions or would like more project information, please call me toll free at (800) 622-4519, or directly at (360) 619-6398. You may also email me at [etorth@bpa.gov](mailto:etorth@bpa.gov). Thank you for investing the time to read this letter and for your interest in this important project.

Sincerely,

*/s/ Erich T. Orth*

Erich T. Orth  
Project Manager

Enclosures:  
Project map  
Comment form  
Postage-paid envelope  
Reply card