



Department of Energy

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

TRANSMISSION SERVICES

April 27, 2012

In reply refer to: TEP-TPP-1

To: Parties Interested in the Montana-to-Washington Transmission System Upgrade Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to upgrade parts of its existing transmission system in Montana, Idaho, and Washington as a result of recent requests for transmission service (*please see the enclosed project map*). This letter briefly explains what is being proposed, outlines our environmental review process and schedule, and invites you to meetings where you can learn more about and comment on the proposal. Please note that this proposed project was formerly known as the Colstrip Upgrade Project or "CUP West."

Proposal. BPA is proposing several upgrades on its existing transmission system in order to increase available transmission capacity from BPA's Garrison Substation in Western Montana to load centers west of the Cascades and to market hubs serving the entire Northwest power market. These upgrades would help BPA accommodate requests for long-term firm transmission service that BPA has received for the West of Garrison and West of Hatwai transmission paths. More specifically, these upgrades would increase the firm east-to-west transfer capability of these transmission paths primarily by increasing the series compensation in existing 500- kilovolt (kV) lines in the area.

The proposed upgrades consist of a combination of proposed reinforcements of several existing BPA substations, proposed reconductoring of sections of an existing BPA transmission line, and the proposed addition of a new series compensation substation along other existing BPA transmission lines. The substation reinforcements would occur at Garrison and Hot Springs Substations in Montana, Dworshak and Hatwai Substations in Idaho, and Bell Substation in Washington. The line reconductoring would occur on 4 sections totaling 12 miles on the Dworshak-Taft No. 1 500-kV line in Montana and Idaho. The new series compensation substation would be built along the Garrison-Taft No. 1 & 2 500-kV lines in Montana.

To understand the potential environmental impacts of this proposal, BPA will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. We are presently considering two alternatives to be studied in detail in the EIS: the proposed system upgrades listed above and a "no action" alternative in which BPA would not upgrade its system and not be able to provide the requested transmission service. The EIS will describe anticipated impacts to natural and human resources and include mitigation measures to avoid or minimize impacts. During this process, BPA will be working with federal, state and local agencies, tribes, landowners, and interest groups.

Public Meetings. BPA will soon start to assess the potential environmental impacts of the proposed alternatives, and we 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 is seeking public input and comments through June 18th, 2012. We have scheduled four open house scoping meetings to hear your input and accept comments related to the scope of the EIS that will be prepared:

May 22, 2012
5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Lewiston Community Center
1424 Main Street
Lewiston, ID 83501

May 23, 2012
5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
Linwood Elementary School
906 West Weile Avenue
Spokane, WA 99208

June 12, 2012

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 Missoula Fire Department, Station 4
 3011 Latimor Street
 Missoula, MT 59808

June 13, 2012

5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
 St. Regis School
 6 Tiger Street
 St. Regis, MT 59866

We do not plan to give a formal presentation, so you may come any time during any of the 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 are unable to attend any of the meetings, you can still comment. Comments may be submitted online at www.bpa.gov/comment, or you may return the enclosed comment form or other written correspondence in the postage-paid envelope provided, or you may fax your comments to (503) 230-4019. You also may call us with your comments toll free at (800) 622-4519. Please submit comments to us by **June 18th, 2012** and reference the “Montana-to-Washington Transmission System Upgrade Project” with your comments. We will post all comments we receive on our website at www.bpa.gov/comment.

Process and Schedule. Starting as early as summer 2012, 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 for permission through a separate mailing.

BPA is planning to produce a Draft EIS for review and comment in the fall of 2013. If you would like to receive a copy of the Draft EIS, please indicate on the enclosed comment form as to how you would like to receive it once it is available. 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 Draft EIS is available.

BPA expects to issue a Final EIS for the proposal in the fall of 2014. BPA’s decision concerning the proposed transmission system upgrades will be documented in a Record of Decision that will follow the Final EIS.

For More Information. To find out more about the project, please go to BPA’s project website at www.bpa.gov/go/M2W.

If you have questions regarding the environmental process, please contact the environmental project lead, Andrew M. Montano, toll-free at (800) 282-3713, directly at (503) 230-4145 or by e-mail at ammontano@bpa.gov. If you have other questions or would like more project information, please contact me at the toll-free number listed above, directly at (360) 619-6178 or e-mail at axsinha@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in this project.

Sincerely,

/s/ Amit Sinha

Amit Sinha
 Project Manager

Enclosures:
 Project Map
 Comment Form
 Return Envelope