



Department of Energy

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

TRANSMISSION BUSINESS LINE

March 28, 2002

In reply refer to: TNP-TPP-3

To: People Interested in the Raymond – Cosmopolis Transmission Line Rebuild Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to rebuild the Raymond – Cosmopolis Transmission line. This Project could affect you. This letter explains what is being proposed, outlines the process and schedule, invites you to meetings where you can learn more, and explains how you can provide us with your input.

Proposal

This approximately 18-mile long transmission line is located between the towns of Raymond and Cosmopolis in Pacific County and Grays Harbor County, Washington. It is roughly parallel to Highway 101, crossing the highway several times. It was built in the 1930's, acquired by BPA in the 1940's, and reconstructed by BPA in 1952 with new wire and tower tops. The existing structures and conductor (wire) show structural damage due to impacts from trees falling on the line and normal deterioration due to their age. Erosion and unstable soils have undermined the structure bases in some areas.

There are three reasons this transmission line needs to be rebuilt. First, the projected load for this service area is expected to increase. Second, certain outages on our electrical system during the summer cause this line to be overloaded. Both of these reasons mean that BPA will need to send more current through this transmission line. This additional current would increase the operating temperature of the existing conductor above its rated capacity. As the conductor heats up, it sags closer to the ground, until it may exceed acceptable safety clearance requirements. A new conductor, rated at a higher temperature, would be required. The existing structures would need to be replaced because they are not adequate to support the new conductor. The third reason for rebuilding the line is concern over the safety of maintenance workers given the condition of the existing line. Maintenance workers must work on this line during frequent outages.

The transmission line would remain a 115 k-V transmission line and most activities would take place within the existing 50-foot right-of-way. Proposed activities include upgrading existing roads and developing a few new roads on the right-of-way, removing and replacing existing structures, and installing a new conductor. Outside the existing right-of-way, BPA would acquire and/or develop a few new access roads to structures that have no vehicle access. In two areas, some structures might be moved outside the existing right-of-way to avoid wetlands, if possible.

Structures would generally be replaced within 10 feet of their existing location, although they might be shifted within the existing right-of-way to avoid or decrease impacts to sensitive environmental resources such as wetlands. Existing lattice steel box structures would be replaced with a single steel tubular pole, except for some longer crossings, which could require steel H-frame structures. The tubular steel structures would be about 30 feet taller than the existing structures.

Alternatives

The alternatives currently being considered are to:

- rebuild the line, mainly within the existing right-of-way except for a minor realignment of some structures to avoid sensitive resources such as wetlands, or
- do not rebuild the line (we always consider not doing the project as an alternative).

Environmental Analysis of the Proposal

The environmental process consists of community involvement, consultation with tribes, coordination with state and federal agencies, and gathering information to serve as the basis for the EA. A contractor will be hired to prepare the Environmental Assessment (EA) in order to determine if the Project has the potential to significantly affect environmental quality. The EA will also describe any mitigation measures that have been incorporated into the proposal.

Some environmental studies will be conducted. A report on noise, public safety, and safety issues will be prepared. A survey will determine if cultural resources are present and may be affected by the project. The impacts to fish and wildlife and their habitat will be assessed, and BPA will consult with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). A wetland study will be conducted to locate and describe wetlands that could be impacted by project activities and a Joint Aquatic Resources Permit will be submitted to the appropriate federal and state agencies. A recently completed Slope Stability Study will be incorporated into the analysis.

Public Meeting

Before we begin to determine the environmental effects of the Project, we would like to hear from you. BPA invites you to learn more about the Project and comment on it by attending one of the following public meetings:

Wednesday, April 17, 2002

5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Cosmopolis Fire Hall

111 D Street

Cosmopolis, WA

Thursday, April 18, 2002

5:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

PUD No. 2 of Pacific County

405 Duryea Street

Raymond, WA

These meetings will provide an opportunity to meet the BPA Project team and the consultant who will prepare the EA. Project team members will be available to describe the proposal, answer questions, and receive comments. Because the meeting will be an informal, open house without a presentation, you are invited to come any time between 5:00 and 7:30 p.m.

Commenting on the Proposal

Your comments will help BPA to understand public concerns related to the Project, focus the environmental analysis based on those concerns, and design the Project to best meet the long term power needs of BPA's customers while protecting the environment.

If you comment by May 10, 2002, we will be able to incorporate your ideas into our environmental studies. To submit any comments you may have, you can give them to us at the public meetings, leave a message on our toll-free comment line at 1-800-622-4519, send an e-mail to comment@bpa.gov, or mail them to: Bonneville Power Administration, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, OR 97212. Faxes will also be accepted at 503-230-3285. **Please reference the Raymond-Cosmopolis Transmission Line Project in all communications.**

Schedule

BPA will circulate the Preliminary EA for public review and comment in the fall of 2002. If you would like to receive a copy of the Preliminary EA, please return the enclosed post card. Comments will be considered and responded to in the EA, scheduled for publication in early 2003. On the basis of the analysis in the EA, BPA will either:

- Prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact and proceed with the action, or
- Prepare an EIS if the EA reveals the potential for significant environmental impacts.

Related Projects Along the Raymond – Cosmopolis Transmission Line

BPA will conduct normal road maintenance within the Project area, including replacing existing culverts that are failing. A Danger Tree Removal Project is also proposed along this transmission line for the summer and fall of 2002. A danger tree is any tree located outside the 50-foot right-of-way, which could, within a fifteen-year period, fall, bend or grow into the transmission line. Danger trees routinely fall onto the transmission line, causing outages and unsafe conditions. You can learn more about the Danger Tree Removal Project at the public meetings on April 17 and 18.

For More Information

If you have any questions about the Rebuild Project, please call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713, call my direct number (360) 619-6596, or send e-mail to gobeck@bpa.gov. You may also call or e-mail the Environmental Lead for the project, Kimberly St. Hilaire, at 503-230-5361, krsthilaire@bpa.gov.

To keep updated on the Rebuild Project, visit BPA's web page at www.efw.bpa.gov. Under the Environmental Planning/Analysis link, go to Active Projects and find this project under the Transmission heading. Thank you for your interest in our work!

Sincerely,

Gary Beck
Project Manager

3 Enclosures: Map, Comment Form, and Postcard