



Department of Energy

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

ENVIRONMENT, FISH AND WILDLIFE

In reply refer to:

To: People Interested in the Wallula-McNary Transmission Line Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to build a new transmission line that could affect you. This letter briefly explains what is being proposed, outlines our process and schedule, and invites you to a meeting where you can learn more. The letter also tells where to call if you have questions.

Proposal - Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to build a 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the proposed Wallula Power Project to the McNary Substation, a distance of about 35 miles. The new line would begin at the proposed natural gas-fired power plant in Walla Walla County, Washington, and run about 5 miles to the proposed Wallula Substation (see enclosed map). It would then parallel an existing transmission line for about 30 miles south into Umatilla County Oregon and west to the McNary Substation.

The proposed line would parallel the north side of the existing line. It would use lattice steel structures that are about 145 feet tall.

The new line will be needed to connect the Wallula Power Project into the Northwest's power grid. Existing lines in this area are operating near capacity. With the power shortage that the Northwest is experiencing, new generation facilities are needed.

Alternatives - We will analyze alternative tower locations and the impacts of not building the line (an alternative we always consider).

Public Meetings - We will soon start to assess the environmental impacts of the alternatives, but before we do, we would like to hear from you. What questions do you have? Are there other routes we should consider? What resources should we analyze? Are there areas that require special consideration? We have scheduled an open house public meeting to hear your ideas and answer any questions you have. The meeting will be:

Thursday, June 7, 2001

4 to 8 p.m.

McNary Fire Station (Umatilla Rural Fire District Station No.2)
305 Willamette Street
McNary, Oregon

We do not plan to give a formal presentation at the meeting, so come anytime between 4 and 8 p.m. Members of the project team will be available to answer your questions and listen to your ideas.

Other Ways to Comment - If you cannot come to the meeting, you can still comment on the proposal. Call BPA's toll-free comment line at 1-800-622-4519, and leave a message (please include the name of this project); send an e-mail to: comment@bpa.gov; or mail comments to Bonneville Power Administration, Communications - KC-7, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, Oregon 97212. You can use the enclosed form to submit comments if you like. Additional public meetings will be held this summer in Washington near the proposed power plant.

Process/Schedule - We have teamed-up with the Washington state Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) to do the environmental analysis. While EFSEC carries out the environmental review requirements of the State Environmental Policy Act for siting the generation plant, BPA will carry out the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act in siting the transmission line.

BPA and EFSEC will share the work, resource information, analysis, results, and public contacts. The information gathered in the environmental study will be published in a joint Draft Environmental Impact Statement that analyzes both the plant and the transmission facilities. The study will be available for public review and comment this winter. We will hold joint public meetings at key points in the process and send you advance notice of meeting dates and locations.

If you would like to receive a copy of the environmental study, please return the enclosed postcard and check whether you would like to receive it by regular or electronic mail. If you do not return the postcard, you will still receive notice when the study is available.

Once the environmental review is completed next year, EFSEC will recommend to the Governor of Washington state whether to grant a permit to construct and operate the Wallula Power Project, and BPA will decide whether and how to proceed with the transmission project. If the Governor approves the project, construction of the plant could begin by late summer next year. If BPA decides to proceed, construction of the transmission line would likely begin in 2003.

Work You May See - You may see a survey crew in the area as they begin preliminary mapping and design work to refine a possible route. We will also conduct on-the-ground environmental surveys. If we need to access property along the proposed route for this work, we will contact property owners for permission.

For More Information - If you have any questions about this proposal, please call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713; at my direct number, (503) 230-5525; or send an e-mail to lcdriessen@bpa.gov.

Thank you for your interest in our work.

Sincerely,

Lou Driessen
Project Manager

3 Enclosures:
Map
Post Card
Comment Form