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**BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION
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**BPA releases I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project
Draft EIS and preferred alternative**

Portland, Ore. – After three years of information gathering and thorough analysis of likely advantages and disadvantages documented in its draft environmental impact statement, the Bonneville Power Administration has identified the Central Alternative using Central Option 1 as its preferred alternative for the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project.

“We have heard from many people their desire for us to identify a preferred alternative sooner rather than later,” said BPA Administrator Steve Wright. “The preferred alternative represents a healthy balance of our accountability to the region, particularly to those who participated in the public process; our responsibility to manage costs for regional ratepayers; our role as responsible environmental stewards and our goal of operating a reliable transmission system.”

Though BPA has identified a preferred alternative, all other alternatives in the draft EIS are still being considered. It is important that landowners along the preferred route help BPA further identify issues that may exist with proposed transmission tower and access road locations.

“We will continue to engage the public and other interested parties in our decision making,” said Mark Korsness, BPA Transmission Services project manager. “We look forward now to working with landowners on or near the preferred alternative as we consider refinements to tower and access road locations.”

The current cost estimate for the preferred alternative is \$459 million—not the lowest-cost or highest-cost alternative. However, the preferred alternative avoids many small, rural parcels of private land by crossing significant lengths of land held by large public and private landowners, as well as avoiding the most environmentally, mission-sensitive and high impact lands these entities manage on the East Alternative. Also, we believe the

Army Corps of Engineers will ultimately be able to issue the required wetland permits to build this preferred route.

The preferred route allows BPA to limit impacts on private property, nearby residences, schools and highly populated areas. It largely avoids these areas, though some homes are still affected. For example, there are 327 homes within 500 feet of the preferred alternative, while there are 3,032 within 500 feet of the West Alternative. Comparatively, there are slightly more homes within 500 feet of the preferred alternative than the East Alternative. Also, we believe the Army Corps of Engineers will ultimately be able to issue the required wetland permits to build this preferred route.

The primary driver for the proposed 79-mile line that would connect a new substation north of Castle Rock, Wash., with another new substation in Troutdale, Ore., is to maintain system reliability in the area. BPA has recently committed to invest in facility upgrades that delay the reliability need from roughly 2016 to 2018. Some commercial requests for BPA transmission service impact the project area. Even if there were no commercial requests for service requiring the I-5 Corridor Reinforcement Project, BPA would still need to take action to assure reliability of electrical service.

A CD copy of the nearly 2,000-page draft EIS is being mailed to everyone on the project mailing list. To save paper and reduce costs, BPA is limiting the number of print copies available. Individuals who are unable to access the document via the Internet or CD can review print copies at community locations listed at this [\(add link\)](#).

Between Dec. 4 and Dec. 15, 2012, BPA will make project staff available at the following locations [\(add link\)](#). These “drop-in” sessions will not include formal presentations, but will allow interested parties to ask questions about the EIS process and get information on how to document and submit comments on the draft EIS.

Six formal public meetings [\(add link to locations\)](#) are scheduled between Jan. 10 and Feb. 6, 2013. These meetings will include designated times for verbal comments and open house stations where attendees can interact with BPA staff and obtain project information.

BPA will take public comment on the draft EIS through March 1, 2013. BPA expects to complete and release the final EIS in 2014. Following the release of the final EIS, BPA will issue a record of decision, which will announce its final decision on whether to build the project. If a decision is made to build, the ROD also will explain BPA’s final decision about which route it will build.

A decision to build would result in construction beginning in 2015 and energization in 2018. As BPA finalizes the EIS, it will also continue work on non-wires measures that could help maintain system reliability. BPA continues to evaluate the technical and cost aspects, as well as the risks of these non-wires proposals. Earlier studies indicate that such measures can potentially defer but not replace the need for a new transmission line to assure reliability, and they do not provide the same level of certainty or effectiveness.

BPA, celebrating its 75th anniversary in 2012, is a nonprofit federal agency that markets renewable hydropower from federal Columbia River dams, operates three-quarters of high-voltage transmission lines in the Northwest and funds one of the largest wildlife protection and restoration programs in the world. BPA and its partners have also saved enough electricity through energy efficiency projects to power four large American cities. For more information, contact us at 503-230-5131 or visit our website at www.bpa.gov.