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JOINT NEWS RELEASE

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BPA releases final environmental assessment for Northern Mid-Columbia Joint Project

Proposed transmission route endorsed with a finding of no significant impact

Portland, Ore. – The Bonneville Power Administration is releasing its final environmental assessment for the Northern Mid-Columbia Joint Project in central Washington along with a finding of no significant impact, or FONSI, for one of the routing alternatives.

The transmission line would provide significant benefits, including improved system reliability and congestion management, to the four funding partners: BPA and Douglas, Chelan and Grant county public utility districts.

Additionally, the new transmission path would increase operational flexibility while adding capacity for future load growth for the partners. By sharing the cost among the entities benefiting from the work, funding for the project should result in less rate pressure at each of the funding utilities.

The project involves BPA funding a portion of the construction for a new, 8.4 mile-long, 230-kilovolt transmission line from Rapids Switchyard near Rock Island, Wash., to BPA's existing Columbia Substation in Douglas County. The project would traverse both Douglas and Chelan counties.

Douglas PUD would permit, construct, own and operate the new transmission line. In addition to funding a portion of the line, BPA would install a new bay in its Columbia Substation to interconnect the line to the Federal Columbia River Transmission System. Douglas PUD would interconnect the transmission line to their Rapids Switchyard.

The need for the project was identified following a 2008 ColumbiaGrid Study that addressed transmission system operations throughout the area and identified a “one-utility” approach to resolve several emerging needs in the mid-Columbia region.

As a result of the analysis in the environmental assessment for the project, BPA determined that one of the routes studied, West Route D-E, would not cause significant impacts. BPA decided to implement West Route D-E as described in the EA and developed a mitigation action plan to further avoid or reduce environmental impacts from the project.

If all of the partners decide to go forward with the joint project, construction could begin as early as 2017.

The final EA and FONSI are available to interested parties who request a copy. For copies, please call BPA’s toll-free document request line: 1-800-622-4520. The documents are also available at www.bpa.gov/goto/NorthernMidColumbia.

About BPA

The Bonneville Power Administration, headquartered in Portland, Ore., is a nonprofit federal power marketer that sells wholesale electricity from 31 federal dams and one nuclear plant to 142 Northwest electric utilities, serving millions of consumers and businesses in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, western Montana and parts of California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming. BPA delivers power via more than 15,000 circuit miles of lines and 259 substations to 490 transmission customers. In all, BPA markets about a third of the electricity consumed in the Northwest and operates three-quarters of the region’s high-voltage transmission grid. BPA also funds one of the largest fish and wildlife programs in the world, and, with its partners, pursues cost-effective energy savings and operational solutions that help maintain affordable, reliable and carbon-free electric power for the Northwest. www.bpa.gov

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