Department of Energy

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

TRANSMISSION BUSINESS LINE

April 4, 2006

In reply refer to: TNP-TPP-3

To: People interested in BPA's Proposed Rebuild of the Libby (FEC) to Troy Section of Bonneville Power Administration's Libby to Bonners Ferry 115-kilovolt Transmission Line

The Bonneville Power Administration is proposing to rebuild a 17-mile-long section of the 115-kilovolt (kV) Libby-Bonners Ferry line in western Montana, Lincoln County to improve reliability on an aging line and meet future load growth in the area. In September 2005, BPA began to study the environmental impacts of rebuilding the transmission line, and to further evaluate voltage needs. Since then, BPA has identified some preliminary preferences based on information, which resulted during the scoping phase of this project. The purpose of this letter is to share with you BPA's preliminary identification of a preferred voltage alternative for rebuilding this line that will be evaluated in detail in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Project Need
The line must be rebuilt because many of the wood poles and cross arms have deteriorated to the extent that the line's reliability is in question. Many of the conductor fittings have begun to fail because of corrosion. The line is strung on deteriorating H-frame wood structures that no longer can withstand required structural loads, including the stresses caused by snow and ice build-up during the winter. In 2003, a failed conductor fitting allowed the conductor to fall to the ground, which caused a serious fire.

Currently, the towns between Libby, Mont., and Albeni Falls, Idaho, including Sandpoint and Bonners Ferry, have redundant service (with two transmission lines feeding the area). However, if the line segment between Libby (FEC, Flathead Electric Cooperative owns the substation) and Troy was lost because BPA did not rebuild the line, reliability of service would be reduced with only a single line serving these communities. BPA's standard of service for small communities is to keep redundant service (two transmission lines feeding the town) where possible. If an outage were to occur anywhere between Troy and Albeni Falls or Libby and Libby (FEC) substations, service to these communities would be lost. Rebuilding the line would assure redundant service to the towns in case of an outage or loss of service on one of the lines.

BPA's preliminary preferred voltage alternative
After studying the load service needs for the Libby area, BPA's planning analysis recommends rebuilding the line in-kind at its current voltage: 115-kV single circuit. The 115-kV single circuit alternative will meet load service requirements for the next 40 plus years. Currently, there are no firm plans to develop additional generation resources around Libby. Thus, there is no need from a transmission system planning standpoint to increase transmission capacity with a double circuit alternative at either the same voltage, such as a double circuit 115-kV alternative, or a higher voltage,

such as a double circuit 230-kV alternative. In addition, because a double circuit alternative would generally require a wider right-of-way and possibly taller towers, such an alternative would likely have greater environmental impacts than the 115-kV single circuit alternative.

BPA will analyze both its preliminary preferred voltage alternative (115-kV single circuit) and the 230-kV double circuit voltage alternative in the draft EIS. BPA has not made any decision on the route of the rebuild. BPA will be able to determine its route preference after the environmental analysis is complete. All three proposed reroutes: Pipe Creek, Quartz Creek and the Kootenai River crossing will be studied as potential new corridors for the Libby (FEC) to Troy line in the draft EIS.

Schedule
BPA expects to release the draft EIS for the proposed rebuild project in summer 2006. In the draft EIS, BPA will explain BPA's preferred alternative for rebuilding the line, which will include the 115-kV single circuit voltage alternative and a preferred alternative among potential reroutes. There will be a 45 day comment period following the release of the draft EIS. BPA will also hold public meetings in order to hear your feedback and to discuss information in the draft EIS.

For More Information
BPA is committed to providing reliable, low-cost transmission products and services to the region while minimizing environmental impacts. If you have questions or would like more information about the project, please call us toll-free at 1-800-622-4519 or email me at *kmrobinson@bpa.gov*, Additional information is available on our web site at *http://www.transmission.bpa.gov/PlanProj/Transmission_Projects/*.

Sincerely,

Kirk M. Robinson

Kirk Robinson
Project Manager

Enclosure: Project Map