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Public Hearing on
Energy Policy Act—Section 368
Energy Corridors in the West:
Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement

Cheyenne, Wyoming, February 5, 2008, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.

LaVerne Kyriss: Okay, I just got the thumbs-up sign. I want to thank you all for your patience while we dealt with our technical challenges getting our Internet connection and our webcast set up.

Good afternoon, thank you for joining us for a public hearing on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Designating Energy Corridors on Federal Land in the West. I am LaVerne Kyriss from the Department of Energy, and I will serve as this afternoon's hearing officer.

Before we begin the formal hearing, Bob Bennett, who is the BLM state director, will make a brief opening statement. But first, if you haven't signed in or let us know that you want to speak at this hearing, you can do so right now at the registration desk just outside the door.

Handout materials, and we've got a one-page fact sheet on our project, and a map on the back, and a larger size example of our siting process on the table by the water station inside the door, are available for you. Restrooms are located just to my right, your left, out in the lobby. In the event of a fire or other alarm, we ask you to please take your personal belongings with you and evacuate the building as quickly, quietly, and safely as possible. Our nearest exit would be right here and also quickly out in the lobby.

With us today representing the federal interagency team managing this work are Kate Winthrop, here from BLM, and Glen Parker from Forest Service in the back of the room.

After we are finished taking your comments, we'll stay around to informally discuss the Draft PEIS with you.

And now I'd like to turn the mike over to Bob.

Bob Bennett: Good afternoon. I want to thank you for coming to give your comments on the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Designation of Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. I'm Bob Bennett. I'm the Wyoming Bureau of Land Management state director.

In a few minutes, you'll hear a brief presentation about the document, which the Department of Interior, Energy, and Agriculture are preparing to meet the requirements of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Currently, application for rights-of-way to cross federal lands with pipelines or electric transmission infrastructure are considered by the Bureau and other agencies are pretty much on a case-by-case basis without, probably, a lot of coordination among the various federal agencies whose lands are often involved in the project that the transmission corridors are crossing.

In 2005, Congress directed the federal agencies to address the situation by designating energy transportation corridors and also performing necessary reviews of the environmental impact of designation. A Programmatic Impact Statement developed under the National Environmental Policy Act represents that environmental review. It's important to note that another round of site-specific NEPA analysis will be completed for each project proposed and the locations designated in the corridor.

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The Department of Energy, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service developed the corridor locations proposed in the Draft Impact Statement using a three-step process, which is detailed in the document in a handout available on the information table and which the presentation will also describe.

In essence, today's hearing represents Step Four in that process. Public comments will help the agencies further refine the locations of the corridors so that important goals of the project are met, balancing the need to improve energy delivery in the West with our responsibilities to protect many of the resources found on federal land.

From the beginning, the agencies have been committed to this strategy, and your comments will be valuable in helping us to ensure that it's carried through to the end of the planning efforts. Representatives from the Department of Energy, Bureau of Land Management, and the Forest Service are here to receive your comments and on behalf of all three agencies thank you again for your interest and thank you again for attending. We really appreciate it.

LaVerne Kyriss: Thank you, Bob. We are here today to receive your oral comments on the Draft PEIS. You can also submit comments via the project website, by fax, or by mail. This hearing is being webcast and transcribed, so speakers are asked to speak clearly and distinctly into the microphone.

If you are having trouble hearing a speaker, please signal me, and I'll advise the speaker accordingly. After everyone who wishes to comment has spoken, I'll close the hearing, and what we'll do is we'll go into an informal discussion period. And if we need to open the hearing again to take formal comments, we will do that.

So far, we've got two people who requested to speak on these issues this afternoon. Each of you will have an initial five minutes to make your presentation. When you have 30 seconds remaining, I will notify you so you can wrap up.

This hearing is to take comments on a Draft Programmatic EIS and response to directions given by Congress to five federal agencies -- Energy, Agriculture, Interior, Commerce, and Defense. Section 368 of the Energy Policy Act directs the secretaries to designate corridors for oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines, and electric transmission lines on federal lands in 11 western states to perform the necessary environmental review.

Partly because of this requirement, we decided to prepare the Draft PEIS, that's the subject of this hearing, and to incorporate these designations into land use, land management, or equivalent plan. A separate and distinct public process is expected to begin later this year to identify corridors in the other 39 states.

The statute requires that when the secretaries designate these corridors, they must specify the corridor centerline, the corridor width, and the corridor compatible uses. Congress also directed the secretaries to take into account the need for electric transmission facilities to include reliability, relieve congestion, and enhance the capacity of the national grid to deliver electricity.

The Draft PEIS proposed designating more than 6,000 miles of corridor—62 percent would incorporate existing locally designated corridors and/or rights-of-way; 86 percent would be on BLM land; and 11 percent on Forest Service land. The Draft PEIS identifies 166 proposed corridor segments in all 11 Western states. If all are included in the follow-on decisions, this would involve amending 165 land use or equivalent plans.

Previously designated corridors are outlined in yellow on the project map. Some of these are proposed for upgrade only. In the case of existing previously designated utility corridors, amendments to land use plans designating them as 368 corridors would subject these corridors to

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the interagency coordination processes described in the PEIS, and they would be assigned Section 368 criteria; in effect, centerline width and compatible purposes.

Using existing corridors alone would not meet the requirements of Section 368, so we have identified an additional 2,300 miles of proposed corridors. Proposed corridors also vary in width. We use a 3,500-foot starting point to provide flexibility for siting multiple rights-of-way.

An energy corridor is defined as a parcel of land identified through a land use planning process as a preferred location for existing and future rights-of-way, and that it is suitable to accommodate one or more rights-of-way, which are similar, identical, or compatible. Corridor designations assist in minimizing adverse impact and the proliferation of separate rights-of-way.

A right-of-way is a specific land-use authorization—not a change in ownership—granted to allow construction and operation of a specific project that is often linear in character, such as a utility line or a roadway. Right-of-way permits include requirements for compatible land uses and are not granted until a project applicant has completed all relevant requirements, including the appropriate environmental review.

In November 2007, we published the Draft PEIS. Comments are due February 14th. We will analyze and respond to the comments and complete the tasks necessary to prepare a final PEIS. We expect to have this ready sometime in mid-2008.

The land management agencies will be able to sign records of decision to designate corridors through amendments to land use plans no sooner than 30 days after the final PEIS is issued.

The Draft PEIS analyzes two alternatives, taking No Action and the Proposed Action. Choosing to adopt the No Action alternative would result in continued ad hoc uncoordinated development as is done now. The Proposed Action is the result of a three-step corridor siting process described in detail in Chapter Two of the Draft PEIS.

The first step was to incorporate comments provided by the public during scoping and after the draft map was released in 2006 when the agencies worked closely with local federal land managers to accommodate local land use priorities, incorporate local knowledge of areas, and avoid areas known to be incompatible with potential future development. A handout summarizing this process for determining where the proposed corridors would be located is on the information table. Examples of specific corridors are also available on the project website.

We believe that the analysis of these alternatives meets NEPA's requirement for a hard look. Because the proposed action does not involve any site-specific ground-disturbing activities, site-specific NEPA review will be required to support all proposed projects within a 368 designated corridor. And today we don't know when and where any projects will be proposed by applicants seeking to site pipelines and/or transmission lines. As a result of this uncertainty, the environmental effects described in Chapter Three of the Draft PEIS, are necessarily more general than a site-specific analysis for a known project would be.

Comments will be most useful if they are specific; that they include suggested changes or methodologies; they provide a rationale for your suggestions; and refer to the specific section or page number of the Draft PEIS.

Finally, we encourage you to submit your comments via the project website. It's easy for you, it speeds our ability to get comments into the database for analysis, and up on the website for public review, and it doesn't require stamps or envelopes.

WYC01

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Now for our hearing process—I'll call speakers in the order in which you registered. We ask you to please step up to this microphone and clearly state your name, and if you are representing an organization to state the name of that organization, before you make your comments. Please limit your oral comments to five minutes so that everyone who wants to speak today may have a chance to be heard. I will advise you when you have 30 seconds left so you can wrap up. I have this little sign that tells you when you have 30 seconds.

We will repeat this process until everyone who has registered to speak has had a chance to provide comments. I will then ask if anyone else wants to speak. After we do that, we'll go back and ask any of the previous speakers if they want to add to their comments. After everyone who wants to speak has had a chance to provide comments, we will close the hearing and remind you of when comments are due and how to submit them.

As I said, after we go off the record, if someone wants to make comments later, we are happy to come back on the record and open up the hearing again. If you are speaking from a prepared statement, we would ask you to please leave us a copy at the registration desk. If you are not able to do that today, we'd ask you to submit it via the website so we capture that.

Agency representatives won't be answering questions during the hearing unless we have to clarify a point, but we will stay afterward to discuss the Draft PEIS with you.

Are there any questions on the hearing process we're going to use today? If there are no questions on the process we use today, we will now begin taking your comments. Our first speaker is Tom Darin, and he will be followed by Steve Oxley—so take the microphone.

Tom Darin:

Thank you, LaVerne. My name is—I'll try to speak a little bit, and that sounds a little better. My name is Tom Darin with the Western Resources Advocates. We are a conservation group based in Boulder, Colorado, with a focus on the interior Rocky Mountain West. We advocate for a sustainable energy policy for the region based on principles of energy efficiency and making us clean and renewable energy resources for the power grid.

At the same time, we have a strong lands and water protection component to our organization that looks out for protecting those resources as well.

My comments on the Draft Programmatic EIS—I think this is an exciting time in the West for this document to be coming out. There is a huge opportunity for these corridors to really facilitate the new energy economy that's transitioning in this region of the country.

WYC01-001

There are concerns recently in the paper every day mounting about our current energy policy and air pollution, energy independence and trying to achieve that, and climate change.

Eight of the 11 Western states right now, the same 11 that are the focus of this document, has renewable portfolio standards on the books—state laws—that are really driving and responding to those concerns and driving the need for a significant amount of new renewable energy resources that connect up in the region over the next 10 to 15 years. In fact, we have a few thousand megawatts of installed renewable energy capacity in the West right now, and to meet bare minimum RPS requirements for the eight of the 11 Western states, I think there are some projections that are ramping that up to over 33,000 new megawatts installed capacity of wind, solar, and geothermal type resources in the next—by 2017.

And because of the place-dependent nature of these resources, meaning that—I experienced that on the drive up today. The wind blows where the wind blows, and the same for solar, is you're going to need to bring a lot of transmission to these resources to facilitate them linking up to the

WYC01-002

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grid. Their power source can't be transported by coal or natural gas through a pipeline to a power plant.

And advocating and sort of approaching the EIS, our organization is really advocating for smart corridors to be implemented by the agencies and—just backing up a moment—we understand, from the presentation here today and from the lack of significant transmission, electric power transmission, expansion in the West over the last 25 years, in addition to a lot of the renewable energy resources being place-dependent and not having access to transmission, but there is a need for new transmission to make this new energy economy transformation happen.

WYC01-002
(cont.)

Echoing what State Director Bennett said earlier, our organization views corridors as an excellent idea. There are—regardless of the generation source, we are facing some multiple proposals of thousands of millions of lines for new transmission in the West. Harnessing those into discretely defined corridors and instead of that spaghetti map that's presented in Chapter 2 of the Draft EIS is, in principle, a good idea.

Our over-arching principle here on smart corridors is really premised on this is an excellent opportunity, when you think of the key secretary, cabinet-level positions within the Energy Department, Interior, Defense, and Agriculture, when you're looking at a region programmatically, 11 states at one time, and we think this is a huge opportunity with those players involved and with the region being looked at comprehensively at one time, to have these corridors move it to an energy policy siting for the 21st century and not looking backwards.

WYC01-003

And I'll briefly elaborate on the three principles of how we think these corridors should be done smartly. The first is have an alternative in the final EIS, aggressively look at scenarios that would implement energy efficiency and distributed generation resources at the major load centers—30 seconds? All right. Is there any way that since we have only have two speakers, I could have about two extra minutes to close out? Thank you.

WYC01-004

LaVerne Kyriss: Yes, that will be fine.

Tom Darin: I appreciate that. As I said, the first principle is reducing the energy demands at the major load centers that are driving a lot of the need for these corridors across the West, principally south. This is no big secret. Southwest Arizona, the Las Vegas area, and certainly areas in California and the West Coast—there are Western Governors Association studies that if we achieve 20 percent energy efficiency over the next 10 to 20—by 2020, we can reduce the need for transmission lines by about 25 percent. I think they knocked out about 1,300 miles of a 4,000-mile base case transmission buildout scenario just by efficiency alone.

WYC01-005

Add conservation; add rooftop solar and localized power sources there, and we can maybe reduce the overall need for these corridors and certainly the width and particularly in some of the trouble spots across the West.

The second point on smart corridors would be, like I said, let's have these corridors instead of maybe looking backwards, look to how we can best serve the wind and the geothermal and the solar resources that are abundant in the region.

WYC01-006

And, thirdly, I think it's equally important that, even if we're focusing on renewable energy resources, after we have efficiency applied at the population demand centers, to avoid and minimize impacts to our public lands and wildlife resources.

WYC01-007

In Wyoming, I will point out that there are concerns about corridor 121–221 in Wyoming's Red Desert resources; corridor 78–255, and potential, fantastic habitat for black-footed ferret recovery

WYC01-008

WYC02

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in the Shirley Basin, and corridors like 121–240 that may impact some historic trails of significance in the state.

WYC01-008
(cont.)

Having said that, I think a challenge for all of us is to find a way for the renewable energy resources, like Wyoming's wind, to hook up to the grid and the transmission needed to support it while protecting these resources at the same time.

WYC01-009

I appreciate the opportunity to comment. I certainly appreciate being able to go over by a few minutes, and our organization is convinced that if you look at these smart line, smart corridor principles of energy efficiency, focusing on clean, renewable energy resources and while, at the same time, ensuring protection for our lands and wildlife resources in the West that you're going to find a lot of support in the region for this initiative and certainly from our organization. So thank you.

LaVerne Kyriss: Thank you, Mr. Darin. Our next speaker will be Steve Oxley, and he will be followed by Eric Molvar.

Steve Oxley: Well, I'm going to—I'm going tear this podium apart—

LaVerne Kyriss: It was already broken.

Steve Oxley: Oh. Well, I'll just use this for emphasis then. I'm the deputy chairman of the Wyoming Public Service Commission. I am sharing my own observations this afternoon so, consequently, they won't be very many and possibly not even thought provoking.

But I've been following this Programmatic EIS process from the very beginning. I hope that—I'll just express a couple of hopes, and let it go at that. I hope that these federal land corridors will—and the people who administer them—will be able to interface in a meaningful way with the sub-regional planning entities like Northern Tier Transmission Group, which are working on transmission solutions for the West.

WYC02-001

We—or I, anyway—also hope that the utilities will be able to form partnerships with you as they decide how they are going to handle their transmission needs in the future. I know that there is a movement, and the Western Research Advocates certainly articulated that to minimize the need for transmission and we certainly don't want to overbuild it, but what you build you want to build efficiently. And I think that this Section 368 may help that. I certainly hope it will, in any event.

Another thing I hope it will do is allow the size of wind-control areas to grow significantly. If you follow what that means, if you have two wind turbines in one area, and they are both turning, when they stop the power doesn't flow. But if you have lots and lots of wind resources attached to the same—well—attached in the same control area, what you have is something that becomes a little bit more dispatchable.

We have just permitted two 99-megawatt wind facilities in Wyoming; given them their certificates of public convenience and necessity, and they tell us that they have availability factors of approximately 40 percent—actually, slightly more than that—and if you know wind, you know that 40 percent is pretty good. It's not 95 or 96 percent that you would expect with some proven baseload coal technologies, but, on the other hand, no greenhouse gases are emitted.

WYC02-002

In any event, the larger the control area, the more chance you have of having the wind blowing in meaningful amounts in the area and the more chance you have of using wind as a more dispatchable, and therefore more important—more like a baseload resource.

WYC03

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Anyway, I hope that comes to pass. And I think that's probably about the extent of the remarks that I might be able to make without causing some consternation among my colleagues. So I will let it go at that, and wish this endeavor every success, and we're certainly going to be looking for the final product.

Well, I guess there is one other little thing to say, and that's that whoever is inhabiting the gaps, we hope share the idea that this can really be a force for good in solving our energy needs. Thank you.

WYC02-003

LaVerne Kyriss: Thank you, Mr. Oxley. Our next speaker will be Eric M-o-l-v-a-r, maybe? Molvar?

Eric Molvar: My name is Eric Molvar, I'm the wildlife biologist with Biodiversity Conservation Alliance based out of Laramie, Wyoming, and we are a nonprofit conservation advocacy group that works to protect wildlife in wild places throughout Wyoming and also in surrounding states.

I think this energy corridor, or PEIS, is to be praised for taking a broad look and a comprehensive look at where the energy corridor needs are going to be and, certainly, we do not oppose in any kind of broad brush kind of way the idea that we should be planning our infrastructure in terms of both electricity and pipeline capacity.

WYC03-001

I am going to confine my remarks primarily to the specific locations and lands where the energy corridors are located because while, for many of the corridors, we have no issues either from a wildlife or a wild land standpoint in terms of putting either pipelines or power lines there, there are a couple of corridors that do cause concern.

The first of these runs through the Shirley Basin, and it's a power line corridor, and the Shirley Basin is home to one of basically two viable wild black-footed ferret populations in the world. And the black-footed ferrets are an obligate predator of the white-tailed prairie dog, which is a colonial fossorial mammal, which is found in great abundance in the Shirley Basin, and one of the things that black-tailed prairie dogs are most vulnerable to is the construction of tall structures on which raptors can roost and nest and concentrate their predation.

So, obviously, since the black-footed ferret is so dependent on the white-tailed prairie dog for its survival, then we want to do everything we can to ensure that the viability of that white-tailed prairie dog complex maintains itself in the future, and so we would not like to see a power line corridor going through that area.

Also, just to the north of the Shirley Basin is a place called Bates Hole. This is an area that has recently been identified by the BLM in its Casper Resource Management Plan as an ACVCR area of critical environmental concern for the sage grouse, which is another species, which is very rare and probably on its way to listing under the Endangered Species Act.

WYC03-002

The sage grouse, like the prairie dog, is preyed upon by raptors, and there are a number of studies that have shown that raptors not only roost but also nest on these tall structures that become power lines and often roost in these areas even when perch inhibitors are placed.

So it really pays to take these sensitive areas and shift those power lines away from those sensitive areas into areas that are more suitable from an ecological standpoint, and I have a proposed routing for the same power line, which would run a little ways to the west of the Shirley Mountains along the Hanna Lea Road and down into Sinclair, basically linking the same destinations and corridor points. So by a different routing it avoids both the Bates Hole area and the Shirley Basin, and we hope that you will consider that as an alternate routing for power lines that will get you the same distance for your power without the impacts to the sensitive wildlife species that are there.

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The other power line corridor that I would like to mention is north of Rock Springs. In the Rock Springs along the I-80 corridor, the power line corridor runs west and then splits into three. One goes straight through Rock Springs, one goes to the north, and one goes to the south. The power line that runs to the north gives us the greatest pause in terms of wildlife and wild places because that is an area that is very close to the Jack Morrow Hills planning area, which has been recommended as a possible national conservation area. There are a lot of wilderness resources in that area and a lot of sensitive wildlife as well.

WYC03-003

So we would like to see the power lines consolidated through the Rock Springs area and moved away from that Jack Morrow Hills planning area. That northern loop that spurs up north from the power line and comes back down to reconnect could and should be eliminated so that power lines are not moving into that area.

One of the primary concerns from that standpoint is that wherever power lines and that sort of infrastructure go, there's a likelihood for wind energy development and facility placement, and while we support wind energy development as a renewable alternative to fossil fuels, it, too, must be carefully considered and managed where it goes, and the Jack Morrow Hills is not one of those places.

WYC03-004

So those are our two basic concerns. I'd also like to point out that between the scoping and the Draft Proposed EIS, there was an alteration, which was a good alteration that I'd like to point out and appreciate, which is that there was a consolidated power line and pipeline corridor right-of-way along the old CIG, Colorado Interstate Gas pipeline, between Wamsutter and the Piceance Basin, and we recommended that from viewshed standpoint. That pipeline would be okay, but for power lines that would be too close to the viewshed of Adobe Town, which is the crown jewel of Wyoming's high desert wilderness, and you would actually have a degradation of the viewshed from that wilderness study area if you had the power line there, and we appreciate the fact that you shifted that power line over to the Highway 789 corridor. Thank you very much.

WYC03-005

LaVerne Kyriss: Thank you, Mr. Molvar. We have no other speakers signed up to speak, but I would ask the audience if there is anyone who would like to make comments on the record. If there is no one who would like to make comments on the record, what we'll do is we'll take a break from the record, and we'll give you an opportunity to enter into informal discussion and, again, if we want to come back on the record and take comments, we will do that.

But before we do that, I want to remind you of a couple of things. I'm going to temporarily close the hearing. I'd like to thank you for joining us today to provide oral comments on the Draft PEIS Proposing to Designate Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. Comments on the Draft PEIS are due February 14th, and may be submitted online via our project website, by mail, or by fax. All comments received by February 14th will be considered in preparing the final PEIS. Comments received after February 14th will be considered to the degree possible.

Again, thank you for your attention, and we'll now stay around to informally discuss the Draft PEIS with you, and if you want to go back on the record, we'll do that.

Cheyenne, Wyoming, February 5, 2008, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

LaVerne Kyriss: Good evening. Thank you for joining us for a public hearing on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Designating Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. I'm LaVerne Kyriss from the Department of Energy. I will serve as this evening's hearing officer.

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Before we begin the formal hearing, Bob Bennett, the BLM state director, will make a brief opening statement, but first, if you haven't signed in or let us know that you want to speak at this meeting, you can do so right now at the registration table, just outside the meeting room.

I believe you also got handout materials here. We have a project staff sheet that has a map on the back and we have an example of our siting process. So you can have those.

Rest rooms are located just out in the lobby. In the event of a fire or other alarm, please take your personal belongings with you and evacuate the building as quickly, quietly and safely as possible. We've got exits right here and one just out the door.

With us representing the Federal Interagency Team managing this work are Kate Winthrop from BLM right here and Glen Parker from Forest Service, who's sitting right at the entrance to our room.

After we're finished taking your comments, we will stay around to informally discuss the PEIS with you. And now I'd like to turn the mike over to Bob.

Bob Bennett: I feel like I ought to just come over and sit down and shake your hand. Welcome. This is pretty intimate.

Good afternoon or good evening, rather, and thank you for coming to give your comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Designation of Energy Transportation Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. I'm Bob Bennett, the Wyoming Bureau of Land Management state director.

In a few minutes, you'll hear a brief presentation about the document, which the Departments of Interior, Energy, and Agriculture are preparing to meet the requirements of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Currently, application for rights-of-way to cross federal lands with pipelines or electronic transmission infrastructure are considered more or less on a case-by-case basis without a great deal of coordination among the various federal agencies whose lands are often involved in projects that transport energy across long distances.

In 2005, Congress directed the federal agencies to address the situation by designating energy transportation corridors and also performing necessary reviews of the environmental impact of designation. A Programmatic Impact Statement developed under the National Environmental Policy Act represents that environmental review. It's important to note that another round of site-specific NEPA analysis will be conducted for each project proposed for location within a designated corridor.

The Department of Energy, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Forest Service developed the corridor locations proposed in the Draft PEIS using a three-step process, which is detailed in the document, in a handout available on the information table and which represents-- and which the presentation will also describe.

In essence, this evening's hearing represents Step Four in the process. Public comments will help the agencies further refine the locations of the corridors so that important goals of the project are met, balancing the need to improve energy delivery in the West, which is our—with our responsibility to protect the many resources found on federal land.

From the beginning, the agencies have been committed to this strategy, and your comments will be valuable and help us to ensure that it's carried through to the end of the planning efforts. Representatives from the DOE, BLM and the Forest Service are here to receive your comments.

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On behalf of the three agencies, thank you again for taking time out of your schedule and thank you, also in your interest in the presentation. Now I think I'm going to turn it back to LaVerne.

LaVerne Kyriss: Thank you, Bob. We are here today to receive your oral comments on the Draft PEIS. You can also submit comments via the project website, by fax, or by mail. This hearing is being webcast and transcribed, so speakers are asked to speak clearly and distinctly into the microphone.

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Partly because of this requirement, we decided to prepare the Draft PEIS—that's the subject of this hearing—and to incorporate these designations into land-use, land management, or equivalent plans. A separate and distinct public process is expected to begin later this year to identify corridors in the other 39 states.

The statute requires that when the secretaries designate these corridors, they must specify the corridor centerline, the corridor width, and the corridor compatible uses. Congress also directed the secretaries to take into account the need for electric transmission facilities to improve reliability, relieve congestion, and enhance the capacity of the national grid to deliver electricity.

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Previously designated corridors are outlined in yellow on the project map. Some of these are proposed for upgrades only. In the case of existing previously designated utility corridors, amendments to land use plans designating these as 368 corridors would subject these corridors to the interagency coordination processes described in the PEIS, and they would be assigned Section 368 criteria; in effect, the centerline, width and compatible purposes.

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The land management agencies will be able to sign Records of Decision to designate corridors through amendments to land-use plans no sooner than 30 days after the final PEIS is issued.

The Draft PEIS analyzes two alternatives: Taking No Action and the Proposed Action. Choosing to adopt the No Action alternative would result in continuing ad hoc, uncoordinated development as is done now. The Proposed Action is the result of a three-step corridor siting process described in detail in Chapter Two of the PEIS.

The first step was to incorporate comments provided by the public during scoping and after the draft map was released in 2006. Then the agencies worked closely with local land managers to accommodate local land-use priorities, to incorporate local knowledge of areas, and to avoid areas known to be incompatible with potential future development. A handout summarizing this process for determining where the proposed corridors would be located is on the information table. Examples of specific corridors are also available on the project website.

We believe that the analysis of these alternatives meets NEPA's requirement for a hard look. Because the proposed action does not involve any site-specific, ground-disturbing activities, site-specific NEPA review will be required to support all proposed projects within a 368-designated corridor. And today, we don't know when and where any projects will be proposed by applicants seeking to site pipelines and/or transmission lines. As a result of this uncertainty, the environmental effects described in Chapter Three of the Draft PEIS are necessarily more general than a site-specific analysis for a known project would be.

Comments will be most useful if they are specific; include suggested changes or methodologies; provide a rationale for your suggestions; and refer to the specific section or page number of the Draft PEIS.

Finally, we encourage you to submit comments via the project website. It's easy for you, it speeds our ability to get comments into the database for analysis and up on the website for public review, and it doesn't require stamps or envelopes.

And now I'm going to briefly go over our hearing process. I'll call speakers in the order in which you registered. Please step up to this microphone and clearly state your name and organization, if you're representing one, before making your comments. Please limit your oral comments to five minutes so that everyone who wants to speak today may have a chance to be heard—and we will be flexible. I will advise you when you have 30 seconds left, so you can wrap up.

We'll repeat this process until everyone who has registered to speak has had a chance to provide comments. I will then ask if anyone else wants to speak. After everyone has had a chance to—who wants to speak has had a chance to speak, we will close the hearing and remind you of when comments are due and how to submit them.

If you are speaking from a prepared statement, we would ask you to please leave us a copy at the registration desk and if you're not able to do that today, we'd ask you to submit it via our website later on.

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Agency representatives won't be answering questions during the hearing except to make a clarifying point, but we will stay afterward to discuss the Draft PEIS with you.

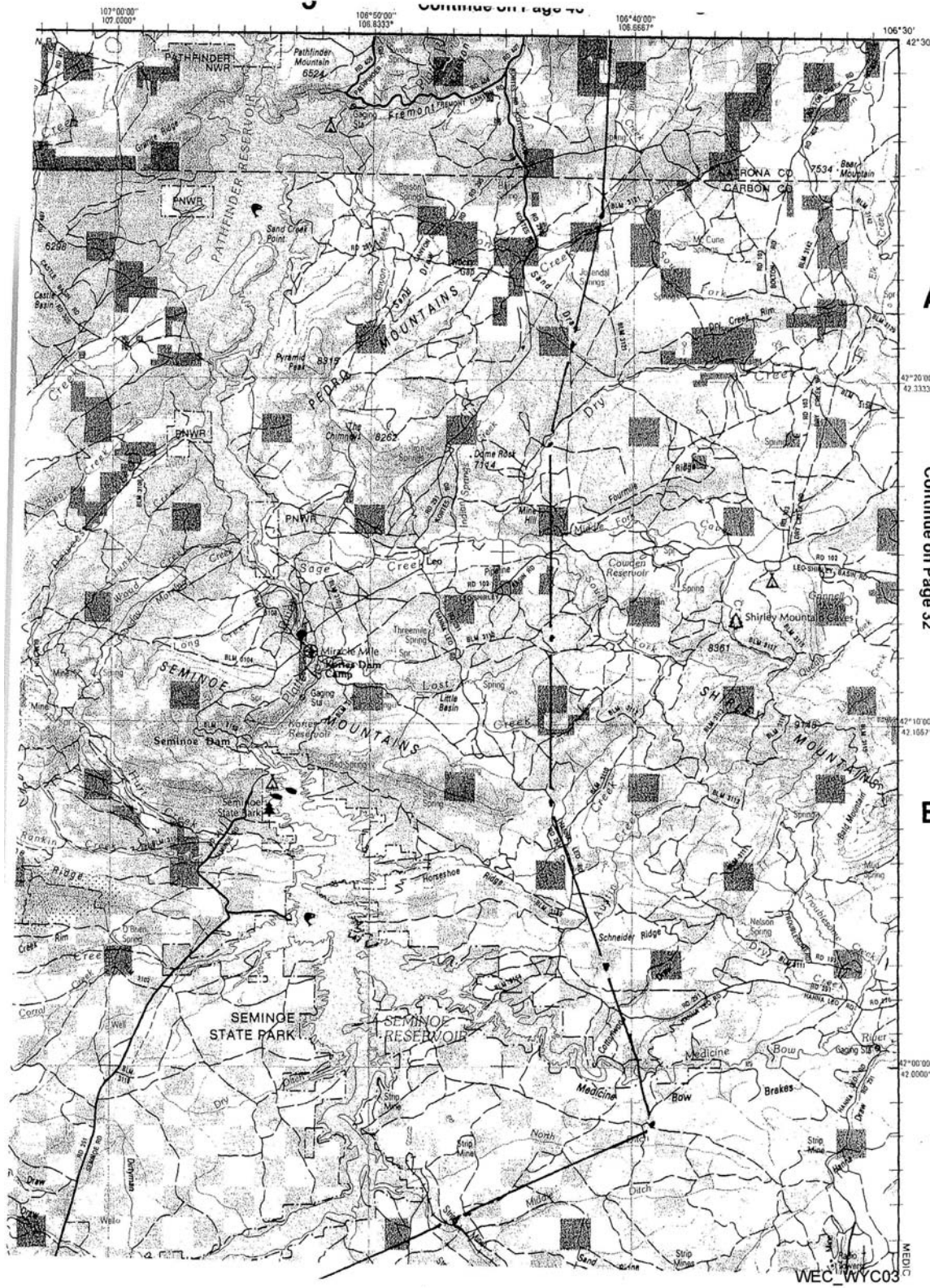
Are there any questions on the hearing process? Okay. We have no speakers tonight who are registered. However, would either of you like to make a comment on the record? Okay.

If there are no speakers this evening, I'm going to temporarily close the hearing and we'll open it at a time if anybody wants to speak between now and 8. If someone wants to make a comment on the record, we will go back on the record.

I'd like to thank you for joining us this evening to provide oral comments on the Draft PEIS Proposing to Designate Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. Comments on the Draft PEIS are due February 14th and may be submitted online via the project website, by mail or by fax. All comments received by February 14th will be considered in preparing the final PEIS. Comments submitted after February 14th will be considered to the degree possible.

Again, thank you for your attention and now we'll stay around informally to discuss the Draft PEIS with you.

WYC03



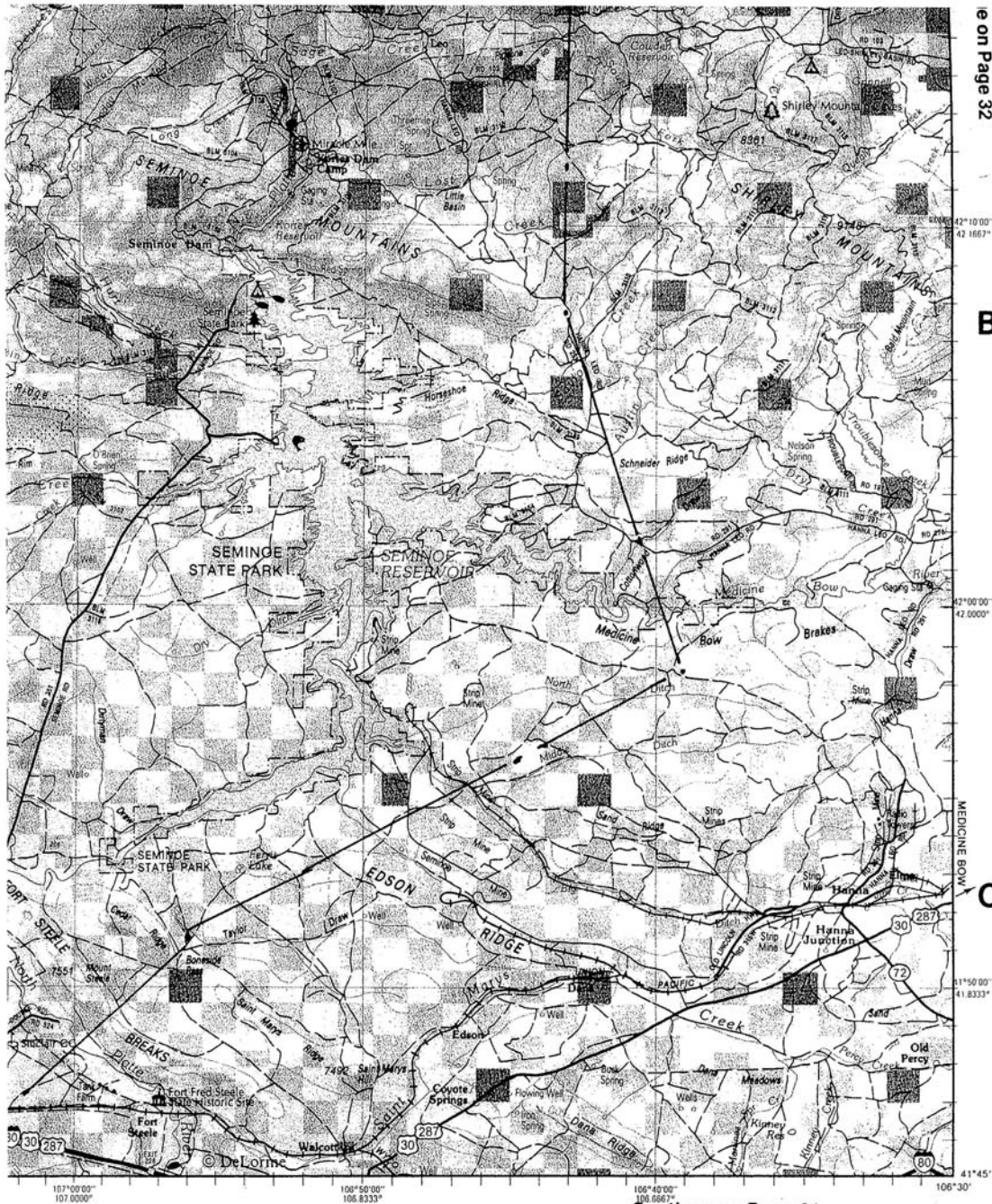
A

Continue on Page 32

B

Shirley Basin Powerline - BIA Recommended alternate route.

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B

C

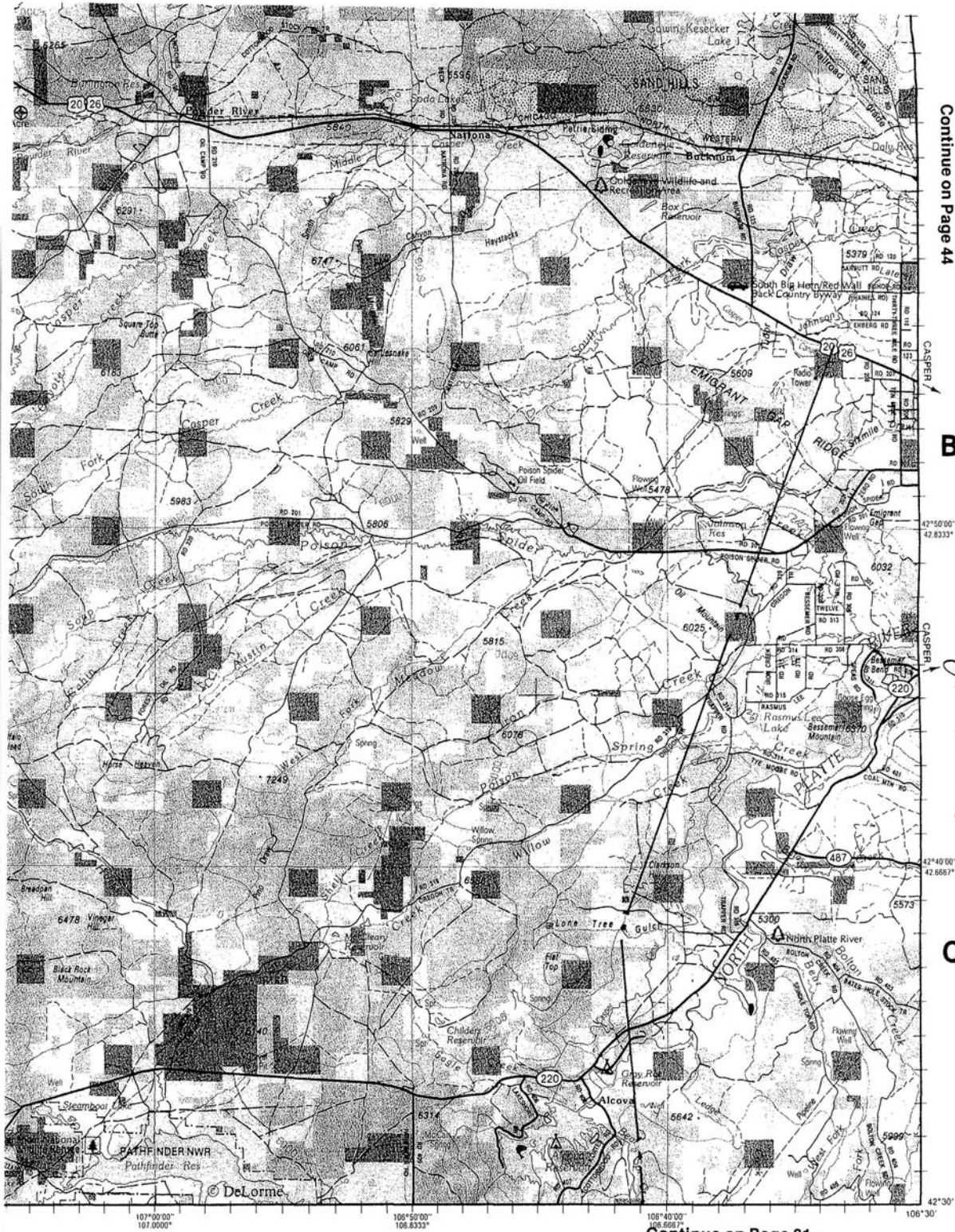
Shirley Basin Powerline - BPA recommended alternate route

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Contour interval
300 feet (91.5 meters)

31

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Continue on Page 44

B

C

Shiloh Basin Sub-B A Recommended Alternative Route

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