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Fax number: \_\_\_\_\_ Total pages (includes cover): 3

From: Jan Watkins, CNW

Message:

*Please see comments attached*



Keeping the Northwest Wild

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Re: West-wide Energy Corridor Project, Washington State Lines  
 Preliminary draft corridor map

June 30, 2006

Dear Corridor Planning Team,

I am writing on behalf of Conservation Northwest and our over 4,500 households of membership to comment on the proposed map provided by you on the West-wide Energy Corridors in Washington State. Our organization works to protect, connect, and restore the wildlands in the northwest. The proposed energy line along Steven's Pass in Washington State raises some concerns for our organization, and please consider the points outlined below in your upcoming Environmental Impact Statement.

#### **Fragmenting and disturbing habitat in the North Cascades**

The Little Wenatchee Late Successional Reserve (LSR) would be more heavily cut over. This LSR adjoins the Alpine Lakes, Henry M. Jackson and Glacier Peak Wilderness areas. Combined, these areas provide contiguous forested habitats; connecting the eastside to the westside forest systems. To the north is rock and ice for 30+ miles. Fragmenting Stevens Pass area would add further disruption of habitat. Other LSRs affected would be the Deadhorse/Natapoc LSR/MLSA and the Chiwawa LSR. These areas are designated in the Northwest Forest Plan for their habitat value, and a powerline is not suitable to meet their stated objectives.

In the line of the proposed corridor, there are wetlands, riparian habitats, and talus/rock/cliff habitats. These are all limited in the Eastern Washington Cascades with many animal and plant populations heading towards a decline due to lack of these unique habitats. There is a potential Research Natural Area on Big Chief Mountain for the forested wetlands, sedges and fescue meadows.

The route goes through several Northern spotted owl home ranges, forested habitat would be further fragmented, the spotted owl is in a decline. Wide ranging carnivores (grizzly bear, gray wolf and Canada

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lynx) are in low numbers in the North Cascades, they would be affected by further disruption to wildlife corridors, habitat losses, and disturbance from construction and maintenance programs. Listed fish species in Nason Creek shows a bull trout spawning area which may be impacted. A 3,500 foot corridor would remove most of the riparian habitat along any streams the lines go through. Sensitive plants occur in micro habitats on Entiat Ridge, Natapoc Ridge and Mill Creek/Nason Creek.

#### **Scenic Conditions on Steven's Pass Highway for Tourism**

U.S. Highway 2, Stevens Pass, is a "Scenic Byway". The 3,500' energy corridor is sure to change the looks of this pretty mountain pass. The visual effects to this popular driving route must be considered in planning, and the potential adverse effects to tourism on the nearby towns.

#### **Other Concerns**

The Stevens Pass Historic District will be greatly affected by this proposal, in that all of the historic sites are within 3,500' corridor width. It is also situated along an American Indian cross-Cascade travel route. In addition, there is no notice in your proposed maps about the effects of this corridor on the private lands along the proposed routes. Further explanation is needed about the habitat impacts and work being done with the private land owners in the planning process.

#### **Conclusion**

Our organization is opposed to the proposed route as it is shown on your maps for the West-wide Energy Corridor as it disturbs critical habitat in the North Cascades with additional effects to nearby populations and resources. We suggest that in the Environmental Impact Statement, the maps more clearly outline the exact route of the proposed lines accompanied by a description of the footprint that the 3,500 foot corridor would have on the landscape. In addition to the release of this information, public meetings should be held to discuss the proposal and provide more detailed explanations of the route. Also, additional routes should be examined and proposed as alternatives in areas that are less disruptive to the natural resources and wildlife of the state.

Thank you for the chance to comment.

Sincerely,

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