

WEST-WIDE ENERGY CORRIDOR                  )  
PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL                  )  
IMPACT STATEMENT.                  )

# ORIGINAL

---

PUBLIC HEARING - AFTERNOON SESSION

---

Heard at the Elkhorn Conference Room  
Holiday Inn Downtown  
22 North Last Chance Gulch  
Helena, Montana  
October 27, 2005  
2:00 p.m.

LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR  
Lesofski & Walstad Court Reporting  
21 North Last Chance Gulch, Suite 201, Placer Center  
Helena, Montana 59601 (406) 443-2010

1  
2  
3  
4 WEST-WIDE ENERGY CORRIDOR )  
5 PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL )  
6 IMPACT STATEMENT. )  
7  
8

9 PUBLIC HEARING - AFTERNOON SESSION  
10  
11

12 BE IT REMEMBERED, that the proceedings in the  
13 above-captioned matter was heard at the Elkhorn  
14 Conference Room, Holiday Inn Downtown, 22 North  
15 Last Chance Gulch, Helena, Montana, on the 27th  
16 day of October, 2005, beginning at the hour of  
17 2:00 p.m., pursuant to the Montana Rules of Civil  
18 Procedure, before Laurie Crutcher, Registered  
19 Professional Reporter, Notary Public.

20 \* \* \* \* \*

21  
22  
23  
24  
25

1 power station wind generation stations being  
2 developed within Meagher County.

3 As the lady from Anaconda/Deer Lodge  
4 said, we are from counties that desperately need  
5 economic help, but we also have I think something  
6 that we are able to give. It would be a great  
7 opportunity for us to finally put that wind to  
8 use. Thank you for your time.

9 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Is there going to be  
10 an opportunity for just questions?

11 MR. POWERS: Yes, there is, as soon as  
12 we finish with the formal presentation. Is there  
13 anybody else that wanted to speak? MT05

14 MR. MARKS: My name is Bob Marks. I'm  
15 representing myself, and also Jefferson Local  
16 Development Corporation. I wasn't quite sure what  
17 I would expect here, and I thought we'd get more  
18 of a presentation than we have so far, so we could  
19 comment on that. The gentleman from Northwestern  
20 Energy gave us an indication of what their plans  
21 were, but there wasn't any definition as to  
22 whether those power lines or corridors would be  
23 operated by Northwestern Energy or by others.

24 We've had an experience in southwest  
25 Montana, and also western Montana, twenty some

1 years ago with the construction of the corridor  
2 from Colstrip, to Taft, to Hot Springs, and so on,  
3 in western Montana, some of which involved a  
4 federal agency, the BPA. I think there's a  
5 concern -- and I'll speak some for the counties.  
6 I appreciate the comments made previously.

7 Sometimes when those corridors go  
8 through, the operators and the owners of those  
9 facilities are privately held. They have a  
10 significant tax base. Other times they are, for  
11 whatever reason, owned by public entities, which  
12 may or may not have a tax base to the local  
13 entities. Part of the sting of having a high  
14 power line going through your community is  
15 alleviated somewhat by the amount of resources  
16 local entities get from that. I think the people  
17 speaking on behalf of the counties appreciate that  
18 help from the taxation that comes back to help  
19 their local schools.

20 I would hope that when these corridors  
21 are developed, that in the development of the EIS,  
22 you also take into consideration some of the lands  
23 other than government lands that you're going to  
24 have to go through. There isn't a blanket of  
25 government land from any of these places to any

1 other place in the state that doesn't have to  
2 cross private land. While one of the commentators  
3 mentioned that they wouldn't dare go through the  
4 Bob Marshall Wilderness, some ranchers I know have  
5 the equivalent value on their land as other people  
6 who don't own any land have on the Bob Marshall.  
7 So I hope that you consider that.

8 I think it's going to be difficult to  
9 make a comment on the EIS because we don't know  
10 what we're talking about. We're talking about a  
11 generic process, rather than an intimate process,  
12 where we could talk about locations. And I think  
13 that's extremely important for people to consider  
14 when they make comments as to whose ox is going to  
15 get gored, meaning the private land owners and  
16 other entities. It's hard to comment whether a  
17 line from Townsend to Idaho is going to cross my  
18 ranch or my neighbor's ranch, when you don't know  
19 for sure where it's going.

20 I think it would be important, either in  
21 the scoping process or another process, to  
22 identify those peculiar areas, particularly so  
23 people can make meaningful comments. I don't see  
24 how federal agencies can ignore the needs and  
25 wishes of private land owners. Even in some of

1 the areas that are generally considered BLM or  
2 Forest Service, you're going to have in-holdings  
3 there that will be impacted as well.

4 I think the other thing that I'm  
5 concerned about is from some experience. When  
6 some of the private utility companies propose  
7 power lines, it ends up becoming a public entity,  
8 such as BPA. I think both Broadwater County,  
9 Jefferson County, and four counties west of here  
10 encountered that some years ago when BPA built the  
11 line. I'm not sure what the motive was, but part  
12 of it was to dodge some of the issues on the part  
13 of the private power company -- at that time  
14 Montana Power Company -- to meet some of the  
15 criterias necessary as a private entity that BPA  
16 didn't have to go into.

17 Since that time, the people who use that  
18 line pay a beneficial use tax to the local  
19 counties that that line passes through. The total  
20 valuation is \$65 million. I think it's really  
21 important, while it may not be important to you  
22 people doing the EIS, it is really important to  
23 people who have to live under the darn thing. I'm  
24 not opposed to building power lines, but I think  
25 there's a bunch of these things that you have to

1 take into consideration, or should. I think you'd  
2 be derelict not to.

3 I hope that during the rest of the  
4 afternoon, people can give some more specific  
5 location opportunities, so we can comment on them;  
6 but so far today I see nothing we can comment on  
7 meaningful, other than we have a cup of coffee.  
8 Thank you.

9 MR. POWERS: Thank you very much. Also  
10 I want to acknowledge that Charlene Snoddy  
11 (phonetic) representing Senator Burns is here. I  
12 appreciate your attendance. I understand you  
13 don't wish to make a statement at this time.

14 Is there anyone else that would like to  
15 make a statement?

16 (No response)

17 MR. POWERS: One thing, Mr. Marks, when  
18 the draft of the Environmental Impact Statement  
19 will have a whole variety of alternatives and  
20 proposed locations, that will ask people to  
21 provide comment on it in the 90 day comment period  
22 and when the final decisions are made, it can be  
23 all or any combination of any of those  
24 alternatives that were considered in the EIS  
25 process, so they will have an opportunity to make

1       adjustments based on the public feedback.

2               Anybody else want to make public  
3       comment? Let's turn that off, and then we'll see  
4       if there's some questions.

MT06

5               (Off the record briefly)

6               MR. MELTON: I'm Jim Melton. I'm an  
7       environmental consultant. I work for a company  
8       called Maxim Technologies. We have five offices  
9       here in Helena, and seven offices within the 13  
10      states that are being considered for this study.  
11      I assume it's 13 states. I don't apologize for  
12      being a consultant. I worked for BLM for almost  
13      20 years in land use planning and analysis, and  
14      DOE for about five and a half with Western Area  
15      Power Administration.

16               I guess the comments I wanted to make I  
17      think is just to share, for everyone's  
18      information. I've worked on and seen a number of  
19      Programmatic EIS's, and maybe the gentleman's  
20      concern about the generic type of study is an  
21      important one. But I guess I don't see much  
22      relief in the guidelines, or NEPA policies, or  
23      CEQ, because you're doing a Programmatic EIS in  
24      terms of level of detail.

25               But I do think it's important, and it's