

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.

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

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1 MR. POWERS: A couple things that I
2 forgot to mention. I did briefly touch on the
3 website. It's up and running, it's current, it's
4 going to stay current throughout this process.
5 It's the best source of easy access information.

6 I want to just tell you briefly about
7 the source of the map, because I don't want you to
8 think it's something that it's not. All it
9 represents are lines on a map that have been put
10 there over the years as an expression of interest
11 by a whole host of the utility folks around the
12 west. And actually it was used for awhile by the
13 Western Utility Group just to kind of raise the
14 level of interest in this project, and express the
15 need.

16 So with that, since we're waiting for
17 Mr. Olson, we'll go ahead with the next person,
18 Linda Bouck.

MT02

19 MS. BOUCK: My name is Linda Bouck, and
20 I am here today on behalf of Anaconda/Deer Lodge
21 County. I would first like to thank the
22 Department of Energy, the Forest Service, and the
23 Bureau of Land Management, as co-lead agencies for
24 hosting this meeting and starting the process of
25 compiling information necessary for designation of

1 energy transportation corridors. I do have my
2 testimony also written out, so I will give a copy
3 of that at the end.

4 This is an important process which is
5 critical to the orderly development of Montana's
6 energy resources, and to ensure the reliability of
7 energy supply in the Northwestern United States.
8 Anaconda/Deer Lodge County is already the site of
9 a number of energy transportation facilities.

10 Northwestern Energy has a 16 inch
11 natural gas pipeline which crosses the northern
12 portion of our county, and they also have numerous
13 transmission lines, ranging in size from 100 to
14 230 KV, entering the county, and come in from all
15 four points of the compass, and they converge at
16 the Mill Creek substation east of Anaconda.

17 The Bonneville Power Administration also
18 has a 230 kilovolt line and substation in our
19 county as well.

20 When designating potential energy
21 corridors for the future, and Anaconda/Deer Lodge
22 County would like to ask that the lead agencies
23 consider the following.

24 Number one, we would like to see
25 designation of every existing transmission

1 corridor with an electric transmission line
2 greater than or equal to 161 kilovolts as primary
3 transmission corridors.

4 In conjunction with this designation, we
5 would like to see adopted as a matter of policy a
6 rule which creates a preference for rebuilding or
7 upgrading those lines before constructing new
8 facilities. The environmental effects of existing
9 transmission lines have already taken place.
10 Service roads and other facilities needed to
11 upgrade, maintain, or repair the transmission
12 lines are present, and there should be no need to
13 do an extensive environment analysis.

14 In fact, the upgrade of existing
15 transmission lines, even if it includes
16 acquisition of some right-of-way to widen the
17 corridor, should be categorically excluded from
18 NEPA review.

19 We strongly endorse designating an
20 electrical transmission corridor beginning at the
21 500 KV substation in Garrison, Montana, moving
22 south through Powell, Deer Lodge, Butte-Silver
23 Bow, and Beaverhead Counties, into southern Idaho
24 as a way of moving the power to states south and
25 west of Montana, and to give Montana greater

1 opportunity to import electricity produced in
2 other states.

3 Northwest Energy has designated this
4 corridor as one option for connecting the Colstrip
5 500 KV transmission line with transmissions in
6 southern Idaho.

7 Four: A proposed corridor from Garrison
8 to southern Idaho offers several advantages over
9 other potential routes, including:

10 There are existing transmission lines
11 along this corridor, which can be readily expanded
12 to handle new lines, or a substantial upgrade of
13 an existing facility.

14 The route avoids major population
15 centers, and areas where there is extensive
16 suburban development, such as Helena and Gallatin
17 Valleys.

18 The route largely crosses land used for
19 livestock and grazing land, instead of crop
20 agriculture, and reduces the amount of potential
21 impact on agricultural operations. The route does
22 not impinge upon wilderness areas, national parks,
23 or other specially designated areas set aside to
24 protect wildlife, cultural, or recreational
25 amenity values. Most of the federal land that

1 would be crossed by this corridor consists of
2 grazing land.

3 And of course, probably most important
4 for our county, is the route crosses counties that
5 are in great need of economic development, and
6 this corridor would likely enjoy more governmental
7 and public support in those counties than other
8 potential routes.

9 Thank you for the opportunity to
10 testify, and we would look forward to working with
11 DOE and BLM as this process continues. Thank you.
12 I'll just hand mine to the secretary over there.

13 MR. POWERS: Mr. Olson, if you want to
14 say something.

MT03

15 REPRESENTATIVE OLSON: I appreciate the
16 efforts the BLM, DOE, and the Forest Service are
17 putting into this. This is something that is
18 definitely very beneficial to the state of
19 Montana. Any future development that we're
20 looking at in this state is going to be very
21 dependent on how this comes out.

22 I think Mr. Brush pretty much hit
23 everything on the head as far as what we're
24 looking for for corridor development, and I'm
25 going to sit back and listen to the comments, and

TESTIMONY

Introduction

My name is Linda Bouck and I am here today on behalf of Anaconda-Deer Lodge County. I would like to thank the Department of Energy and Bureau of Land Management, as co-lead agencies, for hosting this meeting and starting the process of compiling information necessary for the designation of energy transportation corridors. This is an important process, critical to the orderly development of Montana's energy resources and to insure the reliability of energy supply in the northwestern United States.

Anaconda-Deer Lodge is already the site of a number of energy transportation facilities. NorthWestern Energy (NWE) has a 16-inch natural gas pipeline crossing the northern portion of the county and numerous transmission lines ranging in size from 100 kilovolts to 230 kilovolts, entering the county from all four points of the compass and converging at the Mill Creek substation east of Anaconda. The Bonneville Power Administration also has a 230-kilovolt line and substation in the county as well.

Testimony

When designating potential energy corridors for the future, we ask the lead agencies to consider the following:

1. Designate every existing transmission corridor with an electric transmission line greater than or equal to 161 kilovolts as a primary transmission corridor.
2. Adopt as a matter of policy, a rule which creates a preference for rebuilding or upgrading those lines before constructing new facilities. The environmental effects of existing transmission lines have already taken place. Service roads and other facilities needed to upgrade, maintain, or repair the transmission lines are present, and there should be no need to do an extensive environmental analysis. In fact, the upgrade of existing transmission lines, even if it includes acquisition of some right-of-way to widen the corridor, should be categorically excluded from NEPA review.
3. We strongly endorse designating an electric transmission corridor beginning at the 500 kv substation in Garrison, Montana, moving south through Powell, Deer Lodge, Silver Bow, and Beaverhead Counties into southern Idaho as a way of moving power to states south and west of Montana, and to give Montana greater opportunity to import electricity produced in other states.

NorthWestern Energy has designated this corridor as one option for connecting the Colstrip 500 kv transmission lines with transmission in southern Idaho.

4. A proposed corridor from Garrison to southern Idaho offers several advantages over other potential routes, including:

- (a) There are existing transmission lines along this corridor which can be readily expanded to handle new lines or a substantial upgrade of an existing facility.
- (b) The route avoids major population centers and areas where there is extensive suburban development such as the Helena and Gallatin Valleys.
- (c) The route largely crosses land used for livestock versus crop agriculture (i.e., grazing land) and reduces the amount of potential impact on agricultural operations.
- (d) The route does not impinge up wilderness areas, national parks, or other specially designated areas set aside to protect wildlife, cultural or recreational amenity values. Most of the federal land that would be crossed by this corridor consists of grazing land.
- (e) The route crosses counties that are in great need of economic development and this corridor will likely enjoy more governmental and public support than other potential routes.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. We look forward to working with DOE and BLM as this process continues.

Linda Beach

INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ANACONDA-DEER LODGE COUNTY