

102705 scoping afternoon.txt

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**TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
FEDERAL ENERGY CORRIDOR DESIGNATION**

**Thursday, 2:10 p.m.
October 27, 2005
Little America Inn
Cheyenne, Wyoming**

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P R O C E E D I N G S
(Public scoping meeting proceedings)

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MR. KESTERKE: I want to go ahead and get started.

First, I'd like to welcome all of you here. Really appreciate you coming to this scoping meeting dealing with energy corridor designations on federal lands.

I'm Alan Kesterke. I'm the associate state director for the Bureau of Land Management here in Wyoming, and again, I appreciate very much your attendance here today.

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 requires the secretaries of energy, interior and agriculture to designate corridors for oil and gas, hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission and distribution facilities on federal lands in the 11 western states. It also directs the secretaries to incorporate the designated corridors into land use plans or resource management plans and to do the necessary environmental review required to amend those plans dealing with the designation of corridors.

For that purpose, the Department of Energy, Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service are preparing a west wide Energy Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Currently we consider

rights-of-ways generally on a case-by-case basis. This would provide an opportunity to deal with integrated coordinated looks at corridors in general. Again, the west wide corridor -- Energy corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact statement -- I'm not going to say that too many times quickly -- will evaluate the general issues associated with energy corridor designation, again, as well

8 as the amendment of individual land use lands, excluding
9 Alaska.

10 Argonne National Laboratories is assisting the
11 Department of Energy, BLM and Forest service in the
12 preparation of the environmental impact statement and
13 representatives from both Argonne, Department of Energy,
14 Forest Service and BLM are here to hear your comments.
15 Again, we appreciate very much your being here today. This
16 is actually great attendance.

17 I'd like to introduce the other two panel
18 members. First is Jerry Pell, who's the director of the
19 office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability in
20 the Department of Energy, on the far right -- on my far
21 right, your left on the table.

22 And our moderator today will be Bob Cunningham,
23 who's the assistant director for the Forest Service, in
24 Washington, D.C., of lands and realty.

25 with that, again, thank you for coming.

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1 And, Bob, I'll turn it over to you.

2 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you. Thank you,
3 Alan. ■ appreciate that.

4 And ■ want to make just a few more comments
5 regarding the proposal that we're talking about here,
6 proposed impact statement at this initial scoping meeting.

7 Fairly important with respect to legislation
8 passed August 8, signed by the president August 8 of '05,
9 very comprehensive energy bill, Section 368 of that
10 particular act directed the Department of Energy, Interior,
11 Agriculture, Defense and Commerce to identify utility -- or

12 energy corridors, including electric, oil and gas, hydrogen
13 in the 11 western states through a process of amending and
14 revising existing plans or otherwise, according to
15 legislation.

16 some of the things that are important to
17 consider, as we start off on our initial scoping, are some
18 of the benefits of having these -- this type of designation
19 on federal property. Certainly streamlining and expediting
20 the processing of energy-related permits and projects,
21 providing applicants for individual rights-of-way within
22 designated corridors with a clear set of actions required
23 by each of the agencies to implement projects in designated
24 corridors. This is extremely important in helping reduce
25 unnecessary paperwork, reducing duplicative assessment of

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1 generic environment impacts by focusing further impact
2 assessment on site-specific, on-the-ground environmental
3 studies to determine route suitability and appropriate
4 mitigation. In other words, the agencies and the personnel
5 can spend their time and energy finding site-specific
6 solutions to real problems, rather than a mass of needless
7 paperwork, for lack of a better term.

8 Ensuring needed interagency coordination as part
9 of the application process to make sure the neighboring
10 agencies are both working together and both towards common
11 objectives and encouraging new and innovative technologies
12 to increase corridor capacity. I think this is one that
13 we'll need to give a great deal of thought to, because
14 these particular corridors, as you know, many of them have
15 been in existence for 40 and 50 years, and it's expected
16 that we'll have these things with us for a long time. Yet

17 the technology is already changing, so we have to have some
18 flexibility to every corridor design and designations.

19 That's just a bit of background information.

20 we're here at a scoping meeting. This may be a little bit
21 different than some of you might be used to. we will be
22 recording comments. we have a court reporter here. And
23 we'll ask each of the speakers, as they come up, to
24 identify themselves, spell their name, if it's one that I
25 can't pronounce very well, which is many, and tell us which

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1 organization you're with.

2 we'll go through -- it looks like we have three
3 people thus far that have signed up, so we'll probably go
4 10 minutes or so to hear from each of these three people,
5 then we'll probably take a break and at that time we will
6 ask the court reporter to stop recording. we'll get up,
7 mill around a bit and have the opportunity to speak with
8 agency people that are here in the room today, and I would
9 ask that those folks at the BLM and Forest Service to stand
10 up so that folks know who you are and have an opportunity
11 to chat with you during the break session. okay. It's not
12 required that you wear targets, but hopefully you'll be
13 able to help answer some questions, particularly about the
14 mechanics of need for procedures and things of that nature.

15 Now, as you noticed, there's several ways to be
16 involved in this scoping exercise. The Notice of Intent in
17 the Federal Register was issued November -- excuse me,
18 September 28th, and I believe we'll be going until November
19 28th, accepting comments. And as indicated on the chart in
20 the back of the room, there are several ways to comment to

21 the group that will be preparing the initial scoping for
22 the programmatic impact statement. There's a website, can
23 use a fax machine, written comments, verbal comments given
24 here at the meeting.

25 one word of caution, if you do want to mail

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1 comments to the Department of Energy in Washington, it may
2 take a while for it to get there. It's not a comment on
3 the efficiency of the U.S. postal service; however, all the
4 mail to the federal agencies are asked to go through a very
5 rigorous screening process that usually destroys most of
6 the mail and makes sure nothing bad happens, also nothing
7 good happens, either. But it may work best to fax a
8 comment if you are not -- are not wanting to use a website,
9 or if you have a document -- a video or something of that
10 nature you want to send, one of the express companies can
11 get that to them fairly quickly and efficiently.

12 we've asked that folks corral their pagers and
13 telephones and things of that nature. I remembered this
14 time to turn mine off, which I don't usually do. so that
15 helps on the buzzing and the ringings and things.

16 okay. I'd ask our first speaker to come up.
17 It's Rob Hurless from the energy and telecom adviser to the
18 governor's office.

19 MR. HURLESS: Thank you, Mr. cunningham.

20 My name is Rob Hurless, H-U-R-L-E-S-S, and I am
21 energy and telecommunication policy adviser to Governor
22 Freudenthal.

23 First of all, welcome to wyoming.

24 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

25 MR. HURLESS: we appreciate you coming here

1 and pursuing this process of gathering comments on these
2 important issues and taking the time to listen to folks
3 here. we think that will be important. I'm going to give
4 a few brief comments from the -- kind of the 30,000-foot
5 level, if you will, and we may file written comments later
6 as the process develops.

7 As you might expect, we believe the west is
8 special. And it's special not only because we live here,
9 but because it has attributes that make it a little
10 different than other parts of the country. If you look at
11 the amount of federal land in the west and that percentage
12 as a percent, pardon me, of land area of the western
13 states, it's very high with Nevada, I think, ranked number
14 one with nearly 88 percent federally owned land. Wyoming,
15 at 50 percent, is really number 7 among the western states,
16 so you can see that federal lands are a big issue, as you
17 well know, in the west.

18 And to that point, it would be very hard, I
19 think, to site any kind of energy corridor, be it electric
20 transmission, natural gas corridors without involving
21 federal land to some degree. so that's one of the reasons
22 why we think this is an important process.

23 what we also find is that the national interest
24 oftentimes does match up with regional interests. we have
25 that -- the attribute in the west of large population

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1 center separated by vast distances, and that leads to some
2 unique problems and challenges in the west, which this

3 effort has a potential of addressing in a very successful
4 manner, ■ believe. But the physical realities of that
5 separation, as well as the federal ownership, really do
6 make this a bit of a different place.

7 I'm here to also offer from the governor's office
8 that we fully intend to cooperate in this process and offer
9 our assistance, in whatever form that may take, to help
10 move the ball down the field, if you will, because the
11 nature of our economy, as a commodity state, we have vast
12 resources, energy resources, in this state that we want to
13 get to markets, to the benefit of the nation. And
14 corridors are, obviously, the key part of that, be it a
15 transmission line, which I'll reference in a moment,
16 that's -- that is contemplated from Wyoming to California
17 through both Utah and Nevada, or natural gas transmission
18 lines, the most recent of which will start in Wyoming and
19 terminate -- the most recently announced, pardon me, start
20 in Wyoming and terminate in Kansas for the first phase.

21 so energy transmission corridors are life blood
22 to the economy of this state, and will be the life blood
23 for a long time, and that's why we have particular interest
24 in the activities that are outlined here. we have a
25 number, because of those characteristics, of mature

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1 organizations in the west, I think, that can contribute to
2 this process, including the western Electric Coordinating
3 council, which I'm sure you're familiar with, that takes a
4 very broad view of the electric grid in the west. And many
5 coordinating efforts and activities are worked through that
6 organization to the benefit, I think, of all the states in
7 the west.

8 we also have seen the results of an open and
9 collaborative process entitled the Rocky Mountain Area
10 Transmission study, which was undertaken, I guess, about
11 three years ago now. And looking at the electric
12 transmission constraints in Wyoming and surrounding states
13 that revealed, as might be expected, that there is great
14 benefit to consumers in the west of increasing transmission
15 capacity, electric transmission capacity, through -- to
16 markets and also to strengthening the reliability of the
17 electric grid in this part of the world.

18 That was, I think, a particularly good example of
19 a collaborative process where people -- all the
20 stakeholders were invited to be there. It was based on
21 science and had some very significant outcomes in terms of
22 the consumer benefits for increasing transmission. The
23 Frontier line, which I mentioned a moment ago, started life
24 really with Governor Levitt at the time, governor of Utah,
25 and Governor Freudenthal, which was an agreement to explore

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1 transmission constraints that led to RMATS, the creation of
2 RMATS. From RMATS sprang the notion of the Frontier line.
3 We now have a MOU between the four governors of Wyoming,
4 Utah, Nevada and California, that with the purpose of
5 exploring and ultimately creating the Frontier line, what's
6 been called the Frontier line, which will -- envisions
7 moving electric energy, both coal-fired and renewables in
8 the form of wind, from the supply states, being Wyoming, to
9 some degree Utah, Nevada would probably be both a consumer
10 and supplier, to the load centers in California. That, as
11 you might expect, is a very complex process, but it has the

12 wonderful attribute of kind of making common sense.
13 Doesn't mean it's going to be any easier to construct, but
14 it does mean that -- kind of on the surface it does seem to
15 make sense and that we should go forward with that.

16 The other thing that I want to pass on and get on
17 the record is that Wyoming has done a good job, in my
18 judgment, of putting their money where their mouth is,
19 particularly as it relates to energy corridors. In this
20 state we have both the Wyoming Natural Gas Pipeline
21 Authority and the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority. Those
22 are two unique organizations that have the mission of
23 developing electric or -- pardon me, energy transmission.
24 Energy, in the form of natural gas and natural gas liquids
25 and oil in the context of the pipeline authority and

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1 electric transmission in the context of the infrastructure
2 authority.

3 Both of those organizations, in addition to
4 having their own boards and operating budgets, have bonding
5 authority of a billion dollars. So through the legislature
6 and the governor's leadership, through time, I think that's
7 a manifestation of our recognition of the importance of
8 moving energy out of this state to markets.

9 And we also recognize when we don't have
10 sufficient capacity on those energy corridors, the economic
11 impact of this state, we see that in -- a couple of recent
12 examples may bring that point home. Most recently, slack
13 Hills Power had the permits and ability, financing, to
14 build a 350-megawatt power plant with state-of-the-art coal
15 combustion technology up in the Powder River Basin. After
16 extensive market analysis, that plant was scaled back to 90

17 megawatts, and part of the reason, not all the reason, but
18 part of the reason for that was 90 megawatts was the amount
19 of power that they could consume locally within Wyoming.
20 That meant that in the range of 250 megawatts could not be
21 moved, was not developed, at least now, and the constraint
22 was transmission.

23 This is at a time when -- when you see power
24 prices in other markets that suggests that that 250
25 megawatts would have found a ready market had transmission

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1 been available.

2 on the natural gas side of the ledger, we see a
3 significant differential between prices -- natural gas
4 prices at Opal, which is a large marketing hub in the
5 southwestern part of the state, and Henry hub for
6 California order -- border or other market points, some of
7 that, of course, is made up of actual transmission -- or it
8 means transportation costs, which are certainly legitimate,
9 but there's a good part of that differential probably in
10 the range right now of a dollar and a half at MCF. That
11 doesn't accrue to either the producers or via taxes to the
12 state of Wyoming. Those are significant dollars and those
13 are important to both the producers and the state of
14 Wyoming, and so there are on-the-ground, real world
15 examples that you can point to and attach hard dollars to
16 look at the cost of not having the kinds of energy
17 corridors that would make good sense.

18 And with that, I will wrap up and again offer the
19 governor's help -- governor's office help in moving
20 forward. Thank you very much.

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MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

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Is this working?

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MR. PELL: It's got a slide switch on the

24 bottom.

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MR. CUNNINGHAM: Slide switch on the

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1 bottom.

WY02

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okay. Thank you very much, Rob.

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our next speaker coming up is Steve waddington

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from the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority.

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MR. WADDINGTON: Steve waddington, I'm the

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executive director with the Infrastructure Authority here

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in Cheyenne. And as Rob mentioned, the pipeline Authority

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and the Infrastructure Authority are sister agencies

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created by the legislature and funded by the legislature to

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bring a focus to this important issue of energy corridors.

11

I'd like to echo Rob's comments, it's great to

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see you out here in Cheyenne. ■ think one of the reasons

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this is so well attended is it's really widely recognized

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how vital to the economy of Wyoming it is to have adequate

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carrying capacity to move our low-cost resources to market.

16

My focus is on electricity and my comments will

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be very brief. I was heartened when I looked at your map

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to see that you've picked up the RMATS' recommendations.

19

Rob mentioned the Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study

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that was done a couple years ago, and it really is the

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blueprint that we're working from in terms of identifying

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on the electricity side where the most promising corridors

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are for getting electric generation incrementally developed

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in Wyoming, with the power moving to approximate load

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centers, which is Denver and salt Lake and Boise, and then

1 ultimately to California. So ■ think the place for you to
2 start, as you're identifying corridors, are the corridors
3 people are actually working on trying to develop, and in
4 Wyoming's perspective we're starting with RMATS, we're
5 working on the Frontier line Rob mentioned. And the other
6 one ■ add, which is new one, Arizona Public Service
7 announced two 500 KB corridors through Arizona through --
8 up to Wyoming. so that's where I suggest you start.

9 And your EIS alternatives looks like the right
10 intellectual way to embrace the range of alternatives, but
11 hopefully you'll get to a flexible plan that defines
12 corridors based on what people are really working on trying
13 to develop and leave open the possibility for future
14 corridors as the economy continues to grow. And we'll be
15 here happy to help any way -- in any way we can, so keep in
16 touch. Thanks.

17 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you very much.

18 Our next person who was asked to offer comments
19 is Jerry Vaninetti, Transelec. And you'll have to
20 pronounce your name and spell it, I'm sure.

WY03

21 MR. VANINETTI: Thank you. You were pretty
22 close. My name is Jerry vaninetti, V-A-N- ■-N-E-T-T- ■, and
23 I'm with Transelec. Transelec is an independent
24 transmission development company. It's been in existence
25 about five years and it's one of a handful of companies

1 that has the vision we do to develop independent
2 transmission to jump into places where the utility

3 stakeholders, for whatever reason, haven't been able to
4 develop transmission.

5 Most recently we've, in a partnership with
6 Western Area Power Administration, developed the Path 15
7 linkage in California. It was a \$320-million project that
8 we brought in at \$250 million to increase the power flows
9 from northern California into southern California to
10 alleviate a small portion of their -- their energy
11 imbalance issues out there.

12 our company is about a billion-dollar asset
13 company and we are developing -- or attempting to develop a
14 number of projects throughout the country. The majority of
15 the projects we're looking at happened to be in the west.
16 There's a major supply and demand imbalance in the west,
17 and transmission seems to be the solution. The Wyoming
18 Infrastructure Authority has stepped up to create the
19 opportunity to export Wyoming's abundant coal and wind
20 resources to the adjoining states. Steve Waddington has
21 touched on them, as has Rob Hurless.

22 There are a number of projects involving Wyoming,
23 there are a number of other projects throughout the western
24 United States that would also require transmission and I
25 think right now we're looking at 20 different projects.

17

1 Recently we announced a partnership between
2 ourselves, Wyoming Infrastructure Authority, as well as
3 Western Area Power Administration, that would involve
4 expanding the transmission right through the Cheyenne area.
5 It's the Tote 3 expansion, so there are a number of
6 opportunities out here. The thing that slows down the
7 development of these projects is having to go through the

8 cumbersome process of getting all the approvals and permits
9 and we'd like to commend DOE, the Forest Service and the
10 BLM for being proactive. ■ understand that proactivity is
11 maybe a function of some federal legislation, but we're
12 happy nonetheless. It would simplify the process for us if
13 some of these corridors could be identified early in the
14 game rather than retroactively. So we really commend you
15 for that.

16 ■ live in Denver. I've been in the energy
17 industry my 30-some-year career. The last five years
18 before joining Transelec, ■ was developing coal and wind
19 projects in Montana, as well as North Dakota, and the
20 problem we had there in developing those low cost and clean
21 projects was getting transmission built and that came down
22 to largely BLM access issues. And again, if corridors
23 could have been established beforehand, our task would have
24 been simplified and maybe I'd be up there developing a
25 project rather than working for Transelec, helping other

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1 people develop projects, but there are a number of very
2 viable projects throughout the Rocky Mountain states, at
3 the very least, involving coal and wind, a lot of advanced
4 clean coal technology involved.

5 we've got price imbalances in the load centers.
6 ■ live in Denver. My electrical rates have doubled in the
7 last year. ■ think you see that same story throughout the
8 country, or certainly the west. And we've got all this low
9 cost and clean energy bottled up in places like Wyoming
10 that needs to get to the load centers, so your work helps
11 get us in position. so ■ have a handful of questions for

12 you, and I guess this isn't really a question and answer
13 session at this point, but as you proceed on the study, I
14 would ask that you make sure that these corridors are wide
15 enough to accommodate multiple transmission lines. Just
16 because the transmission line might take 100 or 150 feet of
17 right-of-way doesn't mean it should -- your transmission
18 lines should be confined to a single right-of-way.

19 The Frontier line would involve 6,000 megawatts
20 of coal, 6,000 megawatts of wind, Tote 3 might be 750
21 megawatts of coal and wind. In some cases that's going to
22 require more than one transmission line. so a corridor, I
23 don't know what width you're looking at, but take a nice
24 wide swath.

25 One of the areas that are of concern is that BLM

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1 and Forest Service has lands in certain areas, and some
2 areas those -- those swaths or those land patterns come up
3 against tribal lands, they come up against state land and
4 certainly private lands. And, you know, there's railroad
5 tracks and highways and those kinds of things as well, and,
6 you know, I would advocate that you look at the things that
7 continue outside of your jurisdiction, across tribal lands,
8 in particular, where corridors could be approved, across
9 federal lands as well as into some of the adjoining
10 stakeholder lands.

11 I guess that complicates your tasks where you're
12 looking at a corridor that comes up to a brick wall where
13 you don't know what goes on on the other side, but
14 obviously a lot of coordination is going to be required.

15 I would want to close by saying that we're here
16 to support you. we will certainly be filing comments and

17 we will be an active participant throughout the process and
18 we'd like to share the things that we've learned over the
19 last five years in trying to develop transmission up to
20 your benefit and the quality of the study that's released.
21 Thank you.

22 You had a question?

23 MR. PELL: Not really a question, but a
24 request. If you would be in a position if you see yourself
25 clear at some point to put into the written record a

20

1 rationale for precisely what corridor width should entail,
2 perimeters should be considered, ■ think that would help us
3 enormously with that kind of input.

4 MR. VANINETTI: okay.

5 MR. PELL: That's exactly the kind of
6 information that would be beneficial to us in the
7 preparation of our luminary EIS.

8 MR. VANINETTI: I'll make sure I address
9 that.

10 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you, Jerry.

11 ■ don't think we've had anyone else submit a note
12 thus far that they wanted to give a statement. Do we have
13 anyone in the audience that would like to come forward and
14 offer the statement for the record?

15 what we -- what we have done in our other
16 meetings is take a little coffee break at this time.

17 MR. PELL: Before we do that, I want to
18 make --

19 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Okay. Jerry Pell would
20 like to make a comment.

21 MR. PELL: Just one thing. ■ want to
22 acknowledge Vernellia Johnson of the Department of Energy.
23 vernellia, if you would be kind enough to stand
24 and be recognized.
25 ■ want to thank vernellia publicly for the effort

21

1 she has made over a period of weeks, days, nights, months,
2 working assiduously to making sure the scoping meetings
3 happen. And it looks easy, because ■ assure you the harder
4 it is, the easier it looks.

5 So thank you, vernellia.

6 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you.

7 MR. CUNNINGHAM: okay. If there's no one
8 that wants to come forward right now, what we'll do is take
9 about a 15- or 20-minute break, and each of us will be
10 available to talk to you one-on-one, answer any questions,
11 and mill about and we'll regroup and go back on the record
12 for a period of time to see if some folks may want to offer
13 some comments to the record. so from this point on, about
14 20 till, we'll take about a 20-minute break and come back
15 at 3:00.

16 (Public scoping meeting proceedings
17 recessed 2:42 p.m. to 3:05 p.m.)

18 MR. CUNNINGHAM: okay. If you folks would
19 take your seats, we'll get started again. Okay. It's 3:00
20 and we're going to go back on official time, if you will.

21 ■ don't know what the folks are doing out on the
22 front desk, but they must be frightening people, keeping
23 them from volunteering to offer comments, but we haven't
24 had anyone in the last half hour fill out a card and
25 request to address the group or offer some comments. Now's

1 an opportunity, **if** you'd like to, just to come on up and
2 kind of let your thoughts be known.

3 Of course, it's not necessary to offer comments
4 like this, you can write them down on a card, fax them,
5 just remember **if** you mail them, **it** may be the next
6 millennium before the Department of Energy gets them and
7 opens them up. I would encourage you, **if** you'd like to
8 come forward, offer some comments, we'll keep the reporter
9 here and the procession open for a few minutes, see **if**
10 anyone chooses to do that.

11 well, it's probably appropriate to tell stories,
12 then. My family's from the South, Tennessee and Georgia,
13 and you can see why I didn't choose to be a preacher,
14 because I would have failed. **Nobody** to come forward and
15 testify, would have never worked.

16 I mention that the draft -- our projected date
17 for the draft impact statement is spring of '06, and
18 certainly folks have an opportunity to comment. The
19 purpose of a draft, of course, is to make critical comment
20 regarding what's being proposed as alternatives and what's
21 being projected as environmental consequences. we're
22 boldly stating that's the projected date. I think the team
23 is going to be working on **it**, as -- they're nodding their
24 head that, yeah, sure they can do **it**.

25 Don't be shocked **if it** slips a little bit, this

1 is a terribly ambitious project, as you can well recognize,
2 so a lot of territory to cover.

3 Do we have anyone that would like to offer a
4 comment or two? okay. we can take another 20-minute break
5 until someone -- the bar's not open, I don't believe, so I
6 don't think anyone will get more courage, but we'll wait
7 until about 3:20 and open the session again and we'll just
8 kind of close it down here for a few minutes and do what we
9 were doing before.

10 (Public scoping meeting proceedings
11 recessed 3:10 p.m. to 3:31 p.m.)

12 MR. CUNNINGHAM: okay. Folks we're going
13 to open up the meeting here for a few minutes. I just
14 received an up-to-the-minute report from John out in the
15 hall and he says he hasn't got any viable volunteers to
16 offer comments, so I didn't inquire any further regarding
17 the viability standard he was establishing for speakers,
18 but we are on the record now and it is an opportunity for
19 anyone that wishes to come up and offer comments regarding
20 scoping.

21 As we mentioned before, there are several
22 different ways to communicate to the group that will be
23 preparing the impact statement, and I encourage you to use
24 one or more of those means. By way of information, this is
25 our third meeting -- fourth meeting, excuse me, fifth going

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1 on right now, and we've received some very good comments
2 and some folks have obviously put some real thoughts and
3 it's certainly well appreciated, the work that's done so
4 far.

5 what I propose to do is close the record-keeping
6 portion of this. we will remain here until 5:00, and, then
7 at 7:00 again this evening we will open the meeting up and

8 have another session for those that may not have been able
9 to attend in the afternoon. So does anybody want to make a
10 comment before we go off the record?

11 Okay. very good. Thank you very much.

12 (Public scoping meeting proceedings
13 recessed 3:33 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.)

14 MR. MOLVAR: I'm Erik Molvar, E-R-I-K
15 M-O-L-V-A-R, with Biodiversity Conservation Alliance in
16 Laramie. And I'd like to open by saying that -- that
17 particularly with pipeline corridors, that we'd like to see
18 the DOE putting the pipelines along existing pipeline
19 corridors that are already there and there are a number of
20 them throughout the state that would seem to get you from
21 the areas of gas production to the areas of the important
22 hubs of transmission, the opal hub and the Cheyenne hub.

23 Don't see any need to further fragment the
24 habitat by putting pipelines along pristine areas, but
25 would like to see the pipelines that go in, go in along

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25

1 existing corridors. There are some issues where the
2 industry would like to have more capacity for pipelines,
3 but there's no reason to have more different routings going
4 in different directions, necessarily, to achieve that.
5 It's much better to bundle these pipelines in the same
6 corridors. And also in corridors that are also other kinds
7 of travel corridors, such as highway corridors,
8 particularly Interstate 80 in the Red Desert, which is in
9 the south central part of the state, that's an area of
10 paramount conservation concern, so there particularly we'd
11 like to see the pipelines go along highways and

12 interstates.

13 There is an existing pipeline corridor that goes
14 between the Pion's Basin in Colorado and Wamsutter, there's
15 a -- Entegris is building a line that is going on top of an
16 existing line, and so is El Paso, I believe. We don't
17 agree that's a good siting for these pipelines. And they
18 should have been built along Highway 789, which is farther
19 east, to take advantage of the area that's already
20 disturbed along the Muddy Creek corridor. And for future
21 pipeline and power line use, we'd like to see that those go
22 along the highway instead of along the kind of
23 cross-country pipeline corridor that's been built through
24 the canyons of Sand Creek, because the canyons of Sand
25 Creek are of high visual resource value and of, you know,

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1 high interest to the public for recreation, would not like
2 to see those pipeline corridors go through that area.

3 Also, in terms of weeds, noxious weeds, we're
4 really concerned about noxious weeds coming in along
5 pipeline corridors. We recognize that -- that the federal
6 agencies typically require the operators to discede
7 these areas with native seeds, but nonetheless it seems
8 that pipeline corridors are heavy invasive noxious weed
9 colonization areas in the wake of construction. And as
10 nearly as we can tell, it's hard to tell whether this is --
11 this is due to the fact that heavy equipment is bringing in
12 noxious weed seeds because it's not been washed and
13 encrusted with mud that drops off and forms a colonization
14 base, or if it's just the fact that when you create -- when
15 you scarify the land and create a reset of the succession
16 to the most basic bare dirt level, that the noxious weeds

17 just have a fundamental intrinsic advantage over the native
18 vegetation in terms of colonizing.

19 some of the species that we've seen, had major
20 problems with Red Desert area Halogeton -- you know how to
21 spell that -- and cheat grass. And, of course, in the Red
22 Desert we don't have a huge cheat grass problem yet, and we
23 used to think that it was simply too high in elevation and
24 cheat grass didn't thrive there, but recently along some
25 highway corridors we have been seeing that cheat grass

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1 invasion is occurring, and we're very concerned, because
2 the sage grouse or sagebrush ecosystems that are found in
3 the upper Green River Valley and the Red Desert, in
4 particular, are some of the most outstanding sagebrush
5 ecosystems remaining in the west, with full complement of
6 native sagebrush obligate types of wildlife.

7 And out in Nevada, where -- where they've had a
8 lot of cheat grass invasion, they've had a cycle of
9 overgrazing and cheat grass invasion and frequent wild
10 fires that pretty much wiped out sagebrush ecosystem in
11 large parts of Nevada, and really degraded those ecosystems
12 and threatened species like the sage grouse, burrowing owl,
13 some of the other rare native wildlife that's indigenous to
14 the sagebrush step. And we don't want to see that happen
15 in Wyoming, so we don't want to see pipelines becoming the
16 beachhead for cheat grass invasion or other noxious weed
17 invasion that spreads into surrounding undisturbed areas.

18 In terms of overhead power transmission lines,
19 I've never met an overhead power transmission line I liked.
20 we'd like to see trans -- electricity transmission go

21 underground. we would like to see innovative solutions to
22 the -- the transmission problems with putting lines
23 underground so that we can, you know, make sure that
24 transmission lines go underground. The overhead power
25 transmission lines, you know, are not just a problem

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1 visually. Of course nobody likes to look at them, because
2 they are quite a visual intrusion, but it's -- it's also a
3 question of -- of forming a focal point for raptor roosting
4 or raptor nesting sometimes.

5 The U.S. fish & wildlife Service has recommended
6 tall structures in order of wind turbines and -- and power
7 transmission towers not be built within five miles of a
8 sage grouse lek, because apparently sage grouse
9 behaviorally tend to abandon their leks if there are tall
10 things around, whether that's a tree or power line.
11 Typically in the basin of Wyoming you don't have too much
12 problems with trees, but power lines can be an issue and we
13 want to make sure that the EIS looks at where active and
14 historic sage grouse leks are located and make sure that
15 we're not building these overhead transmission towers
16 within five miles of sage grouse leks.

17 of course, there are numerous proposed wilderness
18 areas scattered throughout the west, and wilderness areas
19 as well. Quality of the wilderness recreational experience
20 is dependent upon having a pristine landscape to view,
21 either -- you know, both while you're in it, but also the
22 viewshed when you're looking out from it. And so you
23 wouldn't want to put overhead power line transmissions in
24 or near a citizen's proposed wilderness of any kind and you
25 want to keep it well out of the viewshed of spectacular

1 landscapes. There certainly are some important ones, Adobe
2 Town in the Jack Morrow Hills area of Wyoming are
3 particularly of high value. Those are really hot button
4 areas and you definitely wouldn't want to put power lines
5 anywhere near those areas.

6 And, of course, if you bury the power lines, then
7 you've alleviated a lot of the visual intrusions and also
8 the impacts of sage grouse from my different aspects. we'd
9 rather see those power lines be buried.

10 You know, really that's basically what I had to
11 say.

12 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Thank you very much.

13 MR. MOLVAR: sure.

14 MR. CUNNINGHAM: Very thoughtful comments,
15 and I know it's tough sometimes to travel all this way and
16 everything.

17 very good. okay. we'll go ahead -- ■ don't
18 think there's anyone else, and we'll go ahead and close out
19 the session here at 5:35 -- 4:35 p.m.

20 (Public scoping meeting proceedings
21 concluded 4:35 p.m., October 27, 2005.)

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■ KATHY J. MULLIVAN, a Registered Professional

Reporter, do hereby certify that ■ reported by machine
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Dated this ____ day of _____, 200-.

KATHY J. MULLIVAN
Registered Professional Reporter