

Draft EIS
Public Comment and Response Summary
and Matrix
North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line
Project

COMMENTS RECEIVED FOR THE NORTH STEENS 230-KV TRANSMISSION LINE DRAFT EIS

On July 8, 2010, the BLM issued a press release announcing the opening of the public comment period for the Draft EIS. On July 16, 2010, the BLM and EPA published a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register*; this date marked the beginning of the formal 45-day public review comment period, scheduled to close August 24, 2010. In response to requests from governmental agencies, interest groups, and private citizens, the comment period was subsequently extended to September 17, 2010 to allow for submission of additional comments.

Draft EIS Meetings and Comments

During the public comment period for the Draft EIS, the BLM held public meetings in Burns, Oregon on August 23 and in Bend, Oregon on August 24 to inform the interested and affected public and to obtain comments about the Draft EIS. These meetings were structured in an open house format, with the BLM and USFWS specialists available to provide information and answer questions. The public could also request hard copies or CDs of the Draft EIS at the meetings, and submit written comments.

During the public comment period, BLM received 258 comment submissions at the public meetings; through the Project website; and by fax, e-mail, and regular mail from the public, cooperating agencies, other federal agencies, an Indian tribe organization, and businesses. Each of these submissions was first assigned a unique identification number. They were then reviewed, substantive comments were identified, each of these substantive comments was given a secondary identification number as well as a topical code, and then they were placed into a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet matrix (see Table G-2). The 258 submissions contained 900 individual comments.

Substantive Comments and Responses

The individual comments were provided to the BLM, USFWS, and the third-party consultant technical experts to cooperatively prepare responses to the individual comments. All “substantive” comments are listed and responded to in Table G-2, below. A substantive comment 1) questions with reasonable basis the accuracy of information in the EIS; 2) questions with reasonable basis the adequacy of, methodology for, or assumptions used for the analysis; 3) presents new information relevant to the analysis; 4) present reasonable alternatives other than those analyzed in the EIS; 5) causes change or revision in one or more of the alternatives (BLM, H-17901-1) Where a number of comments raised similar issues, a single response was prepared and the remaining similar comments refer to that initial response. Where appropriate, the agency and consultant technical experts then modified the text of the Draft EIS to prepare this Final EIS.

Non-Substantive Comments and Responses

Non-substantive comments are those that express an opinion about which alternative BLM should select, or that suggest actions or ask questions outside of the scope of the Project or Agency authority. Some (but not all) “non-substantive” comments are also listed below, these are followed by the BLM response “comment acknowledged,” “Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged,” or “Your support for the Project is acknowledged,” because the comment did not raise new alternatives or suggestions that needed to be corrected in the analysis. General support or opposition to the Project or an alternative is one of many factors that BLM will consider as part of its decision process. Comments received in form letters were coded as substantive comments for only the first letter received. For each additional letter, the comments were recorded as non-substantive, because they did not introduce new information or new points of view.

Draft EIS Late Comments

An additional seven comment letters were received after the comment period closed on September 17, 2010. BLM responded to the 10 substantive comments in these letters by making revisions to the Final EIS. If no changes were required in the Final EIS, BLM still responded to the substantive comments in writing.

The BLM authorized officer will consider all comments, substantive or not, before making a decision about which alternative and mitigation measures to select. Table G-1 summarizes the number of comments received for each topic, generally coded into categories similar to those presented in the technical resources subsections in Section 3.

Table G-1 Summary of the Comments Received During the Draft EIS Public Comment Period

<u>Technical Resource Area/Issue</u>	<u>Number of Comments Received</u>
<u>Wildlife, fish, and special status animal species</u>	<u>226</u>
<u>General – in favor of the Project</u>	<u>94</u>
<u>Form Letter - ONDA form letter (opposed to the Project)</u>	<u>65</u>
<u>Visual resources</u>	<u>63</u>
<u>Land use – grazing and realty</u>	<u>54</u>
<u>Social and economic values and environmental justice</u>	<u>53</u>
<u>General - opposed to the Project</u>	<u>48</u>
<u>Water resources</u>	<u>37</u>
<u>Energy</u>	<u>23</u>
<u>Alternatives</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Cumulative effects</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>EIS</u>	<u>17</u>
<u>Regulatory consistency</u>	<u>20</u>
<u>Wild horses, burros, and areas of critical environmental concern</u>	<u>16</u>
<u>Wetlands and riparian areas</u>	<u>15</u>
<u>Recreation</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Vegetation, special status plant species, and noxious weeds</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>Purpose and need</u>	<u>13</u>
<u>Cultural resources</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Noise</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Geology and Soils</u>	<u>12</u>
<u>Steens Mountain wilderness, wilderness study areas, and wildlife and scenic rivers</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>Suggestions for other locations</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>Requests for more information</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Comment acknowledged</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Form Letter – in favor of the Project</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>No comment or duplicate comment</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>Form Letter</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Operations, maintenance and decommissioning</u>	<u>6</u>

Table G-1 Summary of the Comments Received During the Draft EIS Public Comment Period

<u>Technical Resource Area/Issue</u>	<u>Number of Comments Received</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Construction</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Editorial changes</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Air quality and climate change/greenhouse gases</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Decommissioning</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Public health and safety</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Mitigation</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Form Letter - opposed to the Project</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Public Services</u>	<u>1</u>
<u>Total Comments</u>	<u>910</u>

Responses to Draft EIS Comments

In Table G-2, below, the comments are listed by letter number, comment number, comment, and then BLM response. Where a number of comments raised similar issues, a single response was prepared and the remaining similar comments refer to that initial response.

Table G-2 Responses to Comments Received During the Public Comment Period for the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line Project Draft EIS

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
1.01	GEN1	<i>I think it's a great idea!!!</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
2.01	VIS	<i>Why ruin one of the most beautiful, most wild, most scenic places in all of Oregon? You cannot convince me that they would not be visible nor ruin the landscape and scenery:</i>	Comment acknowledged.
2.02	LND	<i>The idea that any of this would encroach on Malheur Wildlife Refuge is chilling.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
2.03	WILA	<i>unforeseen impact of the wind turbines on bats: what would their impact be on the thousands of migrating birds that pass through that part of Oregon twice each year? Has anyone addressed that, or even thought of that?!</i>	See the response to Comment 51.25.
2.04	LOC	<i>If more wind turbines must be built (and really, must there be more?), why not consider the area east of Burns? Between Buchanan and Crane? Between Burns and Burns Junction? In the area around Rome or Jordan Valley? There are vast unpopulated, unvisited areas in the southeastern corner of the state that, while beautiful in their own way, are not part of a popular wilderness area nor a sanctuary for many types of wildlife. In those remote areas the presence of wind turbines would be unobtrusive</i>	See the response to Comment 76.121.
3.01	ENR	<i>I would like to voice my dislike for these projects to take place. I read in the Oregonian in the last week that during a storm that the turbines had to be turned down in the Columbia Gorge because the power grid would not handle all the excess power. Why build 200 more turbines if they are not needed.</i>	The Echanis Project would produce the most power during winter months, which would be beneficial to the integrated transmission and power system (Ramsayer 2008). While adding these resources to the power grid would increase the amount of energy without capacity into the system, the energy variability would occur at times that would complement the Columbia River Gorge wind energy projects, potentially benefitting the balancing required by BPA. As shown in Figure 3.18-3, the Echanis Project typically would generate the most energy in the December through March period, whereas the Columbia River Gorge wind energy projects would generate the most energy in the March through August period (Crowley 2011).
3.02	LOC	<i>If the grid needs to be extended or enlarged then do it in the Gorge the scenery and wildlife have already been affected there.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
3.03	WIL	<i>Please leave the Steens alone, the wildlife don't need them.</i>	See the response to Comment 39.02.
3.04	ECO	<i>The few jobs the turbines would create are not enough to ruin one of Oregon's few pristine places left.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
4.01	VIS	<i>The report about the visual impact of wind turbines in the midst of Oregon's most scenic places, including Steens Mountain and the area of the Willowa and Blue Mountains in northeast Oregon is typical of studies and articles concerning proposed wind projects. It narrows the question of visual impact down to one defined area, in this case from within the wilderness, in an effort to diminish the true impact, which reaches far beyond the wilderness borders. All of us who live within the view of these hideous industrial sites that are plunked down in the middle of our wide-open scenery know that you can see the towers and powerlines during the day and the blinking red lights at night from 30 or 40 miles away. The destruction to our scenery and the continuing questions about impact on health and wildlife are not worth the few permanent jobs the projects create or the eventual loss of income and jobs in the tourism industry. The dramatic, unmarked landscapes and unmarred night skies of eastern Oregon are among our greatest assets...</i>	The Visual Resources Analysis contained in DEIS Section 3.9 (Aesthetics and Visual) utilizes the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) system to consider impacts to visual resources from within and outside of BLM lands. Several of the Key Observation Points (KOPs) utilized in this study are situated well outside of the Steens Wilderness and, thus, discloses impacts beyond BLM-managed lands. DEIS Section 3.13 (Wilderness) also illustrates viewshed impacts to areas outside of BLM managed lands. Section 3.13.1 indicated that a 5-mile radius around Project facilities was established to take into account the potential for possible Project effects to visual resources. Five miles was chosen as the analysis area for this section because it would consist of an area subject to foreground and middleground views of the Project, as defined by the BLM's VRM methodology, and would be the zone in which changes would be more noticeable and more likely to trigger public concern.

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5.01	GEN1	<i>They are a reality, years in the future Human Genius will remove them, but for now they are a necessary part of a system...Reasonable Men and Women know you do not get something for nothing, the view can have Transmission Lines in it or it can and will have Smog or worse Global Warming will change Oregon's Southeast into a Real - Desert...The major effect of these Lines is only visual, they do not cause deforestation, erode streams, block migration paths, cause acid rains, they only come in to view. The Power Grid of the United States is very much in need of an overall Federal, State and Community effort to rebuild, extent, renovate this New Transmission Line(s) gives all Westerners knowledge that a Start has been made...</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
6.01	VIS	<i>There are very few places remaining in the contiguous United States where one can experience the beauty and majesty of pristine wilderness, especially of a high desert ecosystem such as Steens Mountain. I read today in the Oregonian of a proposal to develop a wind energy farm on the slopes of Steens Mountain. I believe this is a horrible idea that should be blocked from any consideration. I fully recognize our need to develop alternative energy sources, such as wind power, but not at the expense of the unique scenic beauty and wildlife habitat that the Steens Mountain area provides.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
7.01	VIS	<i>I am writing this note to voice my protest, in the strongest terms, to all wind development in the SE Oregon desert....Regardless of scenic impact, which is absolutely appalling,More importantly, we will all lament the loss of the last scenic places in this amazing state under a burgeoning, white steel and fiberglass tide of turbines.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
7.02	WIL	<i>Regardless of scenic impact, which is absolutely appalling, the damage to wildlife has been astounding. Go to Gilliam county and any rational person will easily apprehend the fact that once wind development starts, it is like a cancer and will rapidly spread and consume more and more of our precious and irreplaceable land...Since the wind farm outside of Condon went in over a decade ago, deer numbers around it have decreased, game bird numbers have decreased, and elk numbers have decreased. I cringe to think of the damage that these turbines have caused in the northern part of Gilliam county--hundreds upon hundreds, potentially thousands of turbines stacked like four hundred foot matchsticks across the countryside, visible from 50 miles away. It is ridiculous.</i>	See the responses to Comment s156.02 and 39.02.
7.03	LOC	<i>The state of Oregon and the federal government have already destroyed large parts of Gilliam, Sherman and Morrow counties using my tax dollars to subsidize a power source that is less than 25% efficient--in pursuit of the misguided religion of Environmentalism. Get smart. Turn the PGE coal fire plant in Boardman into a nuclear plant as originally envisioned in the 70s and stop ruining the rest of the state with these monolithic monstrosities.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
8.01	OPS	<i>My husband and I have camped for years at the Steens and have wandered all over the area, finding solace in the unique stillness and peace that we find there. We are saddened beyond measure at the prospect of wind farms being placed in such a precious place. I was born and raised in Hawaii, and on the Big Island, on the road to South Point, there are two wind farms. One has been abandoned and is rusting and ugly, while the other is viable. Both are a blight on the landscape. I would hate to have the Steens end up as South Point has. Please consider thoughtfully the long range aspects of such installations, and on their effect on the wildness of that area.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
9.01	ENR	<i>Wind energy is a very inefficient form of generating electricity. There are already plenty of these inefficient wind turbines installed in the Columbia Gorge just east of where the Scenic Gorge Act ends past the Deschutes River. ...if this issue was really all about clean, efficient, affordable and reliable power we would install a few efficient nuclear or natural gas plants and be done with it. ...Preserve the view of the Steens and say no to inefficient Industrial Wind.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
10.01	GEN2	<i>Construction of 415' foot tall wind turbines on the North shoulder of Steens Mountain would ruin the values that most Oregonians place in this rugged landscape.... The impacts to wilderness</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.

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		<i>character, visual resources, sage grouse, golden eagles, Bighorn sheep and peregrine falcons are just too great. Please do the right thing and protect this special landscape for future generations.</i>	
11.01	EIS	<i>I find it impossible to imagine any truth in the drafted environmental study claim that finds the four proposed wind energy projects on the north end of Steens Mountain to have "little effect". This statement begs me to ask, "Little effect on what?" "Little effect on whom?" The only answer to this question is that this project would have little effect on the human contingent that has never visited the Steens area & never will in the future. Aside from those people, all the wildlife who presently reside there, all the wildlife who migrate through, all the birds that reside or migrate through, native plants, vegetation, trees in the path of destruction for this project will be sacrificed. A project of 200 wind turbines towering 415 feet off the ground, encompassing 10,000 acres simply can not occur with "little effect". Either of the proposed power transmission lines serving the wind projects are significant. Either the 29 mile configuration paralleling existing lines crossing the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge or the 46 mile configuration on private land will also have a considerable impact.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
11.02	WIL	<i>This is a wildlife refuge. This is Steens Mountain. This is Steens Wilderness. This is habitat of sage grouse, golden eagle, peregrine falcon, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep & numerous other wildlife. Aside from the turbine's calculated collateral bird damage, consideration for the dozens of miles of service roads that would be built for this project would have major impacts on ground dwelling wildlife, their migration routes, native plants & the general healthy state of the wilderness. This is not a project of "little effect". On the contrary. This project should not occur on public lands or private land surrounded by wilderness. The trade off is too great.</i>	See the responses to Comment s 39.02 and 156.02.
12.01	LOC	<i>I'd like to tell you that I have been coming to the Oregon, and particular to Southeastern Oregon, regularly for about 15 years as a tourist. I liked to go there for its beauty and tranquility. It's one of the few places left where you can find largely undisturbed ranchland and nature. If you are going to install the proposed wind farms, I will surely never return to that part of the country.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
13.01	GEN2	<i>I support Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative. The proposed transmission line and associated wind turbines are unacceptable in their impacts on wildlife and the landscape. The proposed route jeopardizes numerous wildlife species, including Greater sage grouse. Placing over 100 wind turbines on Steens Mountain will forever degrade the ecological integrity and unspoiled beauty of the Mountain.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
13.02	CME	<i>The cumulative impacts of the wind turbines and transmission line creates numerous hazards for wildlife, habitat fragmentation and visual impacts on areas that hold special designation.</i>	See the response to Comment 39.02.
13.03	WILA	<i>The proposed transmission route crosses through the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, an oasis for native bird populations. The presence of 70-120 ft poles with associated tiered power lines poses flight hazards to large birds, such as pelicans, sandhill cranes, white-faced ibis, snow geese, Ross' geese and Golden eagles, through strikes against the transmission lines.</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02 and 158.05.
13.04	WIL	<i>The transmission line, turbines, associated roads and substations will fragment dozens of square miles of sage grouse, elk, and mule deer habitat. .Part of the transmission line and most of the turbines planned for the four generating sites lie within areas that the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife has deemed "Category 1" sage grouse habitat, off-limits to any industrial development.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 155.15

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13.05	EIS	<i>The draft EIS has not adequately analyzed impacts to sage grouse, Golden eagles, and other birds and wildlife from three of the four generating sites that are planned to connect to the new line. The current draft EIS only analyzes the impacts of one turbine site, while the developer, Columbia Energy Partners, has made it clear that it intends to develop four wind energy generation sites on or near Steens, all of which will use the proposed transmission line. This represents over 100 turbines within 5 miles of sage grouse leks. The BLM and USFWS must prepare a supplemental draft EIS to adequately analyze the impacts from all four proposed wind energy generation sites.</i>	The East Ridge, West Ridge, and the Riddle Mountain Projects are not currently active development proposals. However, all three Projects were included in the analysis of cumulative effects (DEIS Section 3.19, Cumulative Effects) as "reasonably foreseeable future actions." The potential effect upon fish, wildlife, and special status animals (including greater sage-grouse) from these Projects was acknowledged on page 3.19-15 of the DEIS. If there is a Federal action involved these future Projects would be subject to possible future environmental review and permit approval.
13.06	VIS	<i>By granting a ROW to this transmission line the BLM is opening up the path for the construction of 138 wind turbines within the Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area. The wind turbines associated with this project would be visible along the Steens Loop Road at Fishlake Campground, Whorehouse Meadows, the Kiger Gorge overlook, and along the ridgeline above Mann Lake and the Alvord Desert.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
13.07	EIS	<i>The draft EIS was prepared by a third party consultant with little apparent input from the land management agencies. The BLM and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service must conduct their own, independent studies on the dangers to sage grouse, Golden eagles, waterfowl, and other wildlife from this ill-conceived industrial development on Steens Mountain. The BLM must not issue a Right of Way for the proposed transmission line based on the unacceptable impacts to federally protected lands in the Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area, other federal lands, and the wildlife that live there</i>	All sections of the DEIS were reviewed by technical staff at the BLM, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and other cooperating agencies.
16.01	LOC	<i>Steens Mt. is no place for wind turbines and transmission lines because of the pristine nature of the area. I'm not opposed to electricity generated from wind turbines and the transmission lines in general but I apposed either being on the slopes of Steens Mt. I realize the property owners seek to maximize the profits from their property, but their decision to profit from wind turbines and transmission lines effects all who have eyes to see and the wildlife of this unique Oregon treasure. Let's preserve the landscape by not building highly visible contraptions into it.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
18.01	LND	<i>I firmly oppose the building of any structures effecting the sanctity of pristine wilderness areas on... or near Steens Mountain. Specifically, this is in opposition of building wind turbines on the north side of the Steens Mountain wilderness area including private ranches within the mountain range itself, southeast of Burns in Oregon.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
18.02	VIS	<i>This is a jewel in the high desert with awe-inspiring vistas and visions. One is never the same again once they visit here. As the last of our "wild west" is slowly being closed in on, this wilderness frontier is currently threatened by 'wind turbines' that will flank the mountain which are so large, then would also be seen from Burns, 50 miles away with binoculars. The view of these 400' wind turbines would take more of our diminishing wild frontier away from the nation's people, and from Oregon citizens who pride themselves on their beautiful country.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
18.03	ECO	<i>Tourism is also a draw and creates revenue, and certainly wind turbines will impede this.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
18.04	LND	<i>I understand it's on private property, but it's in this visual perimeter of a "protected wilderness", which this protection should encompass. My understanding is this also crosses through Federally protected wild horse herd management areas, such as Kiger and Riddle HMAs and would go against the Free-roaming Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971. Please don't allow such visual atrocities be part of one of our last remaining pristine wilderness areas.</i>	The Riddle Mountain and Kiger Wild Horse Herd Management Plan and the Warms Springs Herd Management Area Plan were both developed under the authority of the 1971 Wild Horse and Burro Act (as amended). Both plans were prepared in accordance with the BLM Manual, Section 4710. The BLM would consider the consistency of the proposed Project with the management objectives and constraints included in both plans when deciding whether to grant, grant with conditions, or deny the Echanis application for use of public land managed by the BLM Burns District Office. No buffer areas were created with the creation of the Steens Mountain Wilderness as well as the WSAs situated near the Project. The BLM did consider effects to Wilderness parcels managed by the BLM and mitigation measures have been

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			proposed for the FEIS. The BLM, however, does not have the authority to implement mitigation measures on private lands.
19.01	GEN1	<i>Please build the Transmission line on the Steens Mountain. This will create Power and much NEEDED jobs our country is in desperate need of.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
23.01	WIL	<i>I am against wind generators and transmission lines being built on or near this special area. They negatively affect wildlife.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 44.02.
23.02	VIS	<i>Furthermore they would greatly degrade the aesthetics of that wonderful, wide-open steppe environment. Please keep Steens Mountain wild and powerline free.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
32.01	GEN1	<i>I support the wind project and the power lines if they can be built with minimal damage or impact to the land and wildlife. I have been in and around that area many times. I do not see this as having a huge impact on the wildlife IF it is done with care. Please move forward with the utmost care and concern for the habitat, with as small a foot print as can possibly be done, but please move forward.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
33.01	WIL	<i>I support Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative. The proposed transmission line and associated wind turbines are unacceptable in their impacts on wildlife and the landscape. The placement of the turbines and lines pose a threat to both breeding and migrating birds. We know impacts of such structures that invade "air space" are negative in any area but especially in areas of concentrated wildlife use such as the proposed site.</i>	See the responses to Comments 3156.02 and 39.02.
33.02	WIL	<i>Research also shows that such structures fragment the landscape as grouse and mammal populations react to lines of turbines or transmission lines as impassable/unusable space.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 44.03.
33.03	WILA	<i>The BLM must not issue a Right of Way for the proposed transmission line based on the unacceptable impacts to federally-protected lands in the Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area, other federal lands, and the wildlife that live there.</i>	Comment acknowledged
39.01	WIL	<i>I support Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative. The proposed transmission line and associated wind turbines are UNACCEPTIBLE in their impacts on wildlife and the landscape. Placing over 100 wind turbines on Steens Mountain will forever degrade the ecological integrity and unspoiled beauty of the Mountain and jeopardizes numerous wildlife species.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
39.02	WILT	<i>Steens Mtn is home to re-introduced Big Horn Sheep and native Mt. Goats. Malheur Wildlife Refuge is on an important migration route for numerous native birds. The line and associated turbines, roads and substations will FRAGMENT dozens of square miles of sage grouse, elk, and mule deer habitat.</i>	The BLM has worked diligently to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the potential negative effects from the proposed Project (see DEIS Section 2.5, Project Design Features, Best Management Practices and Comparison of Environmental Effects and Appendix A) upon wildlife, and has considered and consulted with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) during the EIS process. Furthermore, additional information regarding the existing environment and impacts to raptors, greater sage-grouse, golden eagles, big game, and general wildlife have been added to Sections 3.5.3.2 and 3.5.3.3. Impacts to big game are discussed in Section 3.5.3.2. Please note in Section 3.5.2.1 that there are no mountain goats native to the Steens Mountains. Additional descriptions of big game impacts, including fragmentation, have been provided in the FEIS. Additional avian use data, including data collected for the MNWR, has also been added to Section 3.5.2.3. Fragmentation effects to sage-grouse are discussed in Section 3.5.2.3 of the FEIS. Greater sage-grouse would be displaced from an area beyond the turbine footprint, but for how far and during which seasons has not been adequately researched. Until empirical data are available that quantify the effects of such developments on greater sage-grouse populations, interim guidance from

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			<p>the ODFW (Mitigation Framework) is being used to quantify areas of impact of projects on greater sage-grouse (Hagen 2011b). Section 3.14.3.2 discusses the effects to traffic from the Project. Six to eight technicians would travel to and from the Project site daily in a vanpool, resulting in one round trip per work day. Traffic volumes on Project roads would therefore be minor. The Sage-Grouse Strategy (Hagen 2011a) and accompanying rules are implemented by the ODFW. The BLM recognizes the ODFW Sage-Grouse Strategy habitat categorization map and considers the recommendations for disturbances contained in that document, such as Project-related roads, power collection line, and turbines, and would implement the Sage-Grouse Strategy to the extent possible. The mitigation framework for the core area approach outlined in the Sage-Grouse Strategy is outlined in a document titled Implementing Habitat Mitigation for Greater Sage-Grouse Under the Core Area Approach ("Mitigation Framework"; Hagen 2011b). The effect of the presence of turbines in late brood rearing habitat is not certain at this time. As described in the FEIS, fragmentation by rarely-traveled dirt roads has not been shown to have a negative influence upon lek persistence (Walker et al. 2007), nor has presence of secondary roads (Monograph Ch. 17). However, frequently-used roads associated with coal bed natural gas development in Wyoming and Montana did negatively influence lek persistence (Walker et al. 2007). The presence of roads would not necessarily reduce greater sage-grouse use, but the timing and amount of road use would determine the extent that greater sage-grouse and other wildlife would avoid the road. Application of the Mitigation Framework to the proposed Project is discussed under Mitigation in Section 3.5.3 of the FEIS. The Applicant has committed to implement a greater sage-grouse mitigation plan consistent with the four phases of the Mitigation Framework, which are: assessment, mitigation site identification, conservation project identification, and creation and implementation of a monitoring and management plan. Additionally, as described in the FEIS, to reduce impacts to big game, operational activity in big game winter range between December and March would be limited to conducting required maintenance or use during emergency situations. Other routine activities would be avoided.</p>
39.03	WILT	<p><i>Part of the transmission line and most of the turbines planned for the four generating sites lie within areas that the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife has deemed "Category 1" sage grouse habitat, OFF-LIMITS to any INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 155.13.</p>
39.04	CME	<p><i>The current draft EIS only analyzes the impacts of ONE turbine site, while the developer, Columbia Energy Partners, has made it clear that it intends to develop FOUR wind energy generation sites on or near Steens. By granting a ROW to this transmission line the BLM is opening up the path for the construction of 138 wind turbines within the Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.009.</p>
39.05	GEN2	<p><i>The BLM must not issue a Right of Way for the proposed transmission line based on the unacceptable impacts to federally-protected lands in the Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area, other federal lands, and the wildlife that live there.</i></p>	<p>Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.</p>
40.01	GEN2	<p><i>I think it is a travesty, abominable, unthinkable, and just horrible to even consider much less undertake a project of this kind, both the turbines and the transmission line, within the Steen Mountain CMPA. I say, just say NO. This is MY land, OUR land, public land and this is what I want. Alternative 1 NO ACTION</i></p>	<p>Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.</p>
41.01	GEN2	<p><i>Count me as one more eastern Oregonian who supports Alternative A, the no build option. History will prove the project to be a short sighted response to our energy challenges and not worth the environmental degradation to the public at large.</i></p>	<p>Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.</p>
42.01	VIS	<p><i>I support Alternative A---NO ACTION. I just returned from a weekend at Malheur NWR. As a photographer, the idea of these towers would detract from the natural setting.</i></p>	<p>Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.</p>

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
42.02	WILA	<i>As a person interested in wildlife, the towers would prove a great detriment to the thousands of birds that migrate through this area, and disrupt the natural habitat there.</i>	See the response to Comment 156.02.
43.01	GEN2	<i>I am in favor of Alternative A.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
44.01	GEN2	<i>The BLM and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service should not grant a Right of Way for the Proposed North Steens Transmission Line. The likely harm to the ecological integrity of Steens Mountain from the proposed wind turbines and transmission line is too great for the federal agencies to sign off on the project.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
44.02	WILA	<i>The proposed transmission route crosses the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, a refuge dedicated over 100 years ago to native and migrating bird populations. The presence of 70-120 ft poles with tiered power lines poses flight hazards to large birds, such as pelicans, sandhill cranes, white-faced ibis, snow geese, Ross' geese and Golden eagles, through strikes against the new infrastructure.</i>	BLM acknowledges that the Proposed Action would change the landscape, and would cause negative effects to wildlife where the transmission line would cross the Malheur Refuge. The potential effects of the transmission line upon wildlife, including birds specifically, was described in the DEIS Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife). As described in the FEIS, use of line marking devices similar to those described in <i>Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006</i> (APLIC 2006) would make the transmission line more visible and less likely to cause waterfowl mortality. Line marking devices would be placed on all wires crossing and bordering the Malheur Refuge and on guide wires and substation lines at intervals suggested by the manufacturer. Line markers would extend at least 0.5 mile outside of each Refuge boundary to minimize the potential for collision. The marking devices have been reported to reduce collision mortality from 40 to 90 percent (DOE 2008). Additional survey data were made available to the cooperating agencies, and incorporated into the FEIS. Under existing regulations, projects such as the Echanis Project can only be approved if it is determined that they contribute to the achievement of the Malheur Refuge purposes, or National Wildlife Refuge System mission. The Malheur Refuge would utilize available information to determine the Project's appropriateness and compatibility.
44.03	WIL	<i>The transmission line, turbines, associated roads and substations will fragment sage grouse, elk, and mule deer habitat. Disturbance to sagebrush habitat in this area will greatly impact sage grouse populations associated with four known sage grouse leks in the area. Sage grouse numbers are decreasing and the federal government recently announced the listing the sage grouse on the endangered species list warranted, though it is not officially listed yet. There is also the potential for increased predation on sage grouse as the transmission towers and lines provide perches and nesting sites for raptors.</i>	The potential effects of access roads upon habitat fragmentation were analyzed in the DEIS Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife). Additional text describing the effects of fragmentation upon greater sage-grouse and big game have been added to that section. Because monitoring has shown that the Little Kiger greater sage-grouse lek is active, no construction activities would be allowed during the March 15 – May 1 time period. Increased raptor and corvid abundance have been documented in landscapes fragmented by man-made structures, and power poles have been identified as a threat to greater sage-grouse and other prey species (Prather and Messmer 2010). Predator perch deterrents would be installed to discourage raptors from perching on transmission towers in sage-grouse habitat on public lands. While the effectiveness of predator perch deterrents is inconsistent (Prather and Messmer 2010, Slather and Smith 2010), the effectiveness of the devices that would be used would be monitored by the TAC, and modified if needed. On private lands, the need for predator perch deterrents would be determined based upon an overall increase in perching by raptors. Additional information related to sage-grouse based on the information contained in the Sage-Grouse Strategy has been added to Section 3.5.3.2, and implementation of the accompanying sage-grouse Mitigation Framework is discussed in the mitigation section.
45.01	VIS	<i>It is an absolutely magnificent place and putting these ugly structures anywhere near there is beyond any realm of consideration. ... Its beauty should NEVER be touched by these objects. There are a lot of places which can be used for this source of power, without ruining this truly magnificent location.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
46.01	EIS	<i>Rather than being impartial in stating the facts, I find the tone of this DEIS highly biased ill favor of approving the right- of-way across BLM land. It's not that the factual information isn't provided, it's more the slant on its presentation. It seems each section starts out with positive comments supporting the project, One has to read to the end of each section to see the negative impacts of the project.</i>	Comment acknowledged.

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46.02	GEN2	<i>After reviewing this DEIS, as well as the Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee recommendation provided to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar on 03-0"- 2010, I would request that BLM select Alternative A - No Action, and not grant the ROW as currently submitted.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
46.03	WILA	<i>A study published in the United Kingdom's Journal of Applied Ecology found seven of twelve bird species exhibited significantly lower frequency of breeding close to wind turbines. The study also found that raptors did not alter their flight height when close to turbines. Additionally, there was no evidence of consistent avoidance of overhead transmission lines by nesting birds.</i>	The cited study has been reviewed and the commenter's summary of the article is accurate. However, no change was made to the Final EIS because more site-specific information was available for the Echanis Project.
46.04	WILA	<i>Wind farm sites and their associated infrastructure should never be placed in sensitive bird areas or near Wildlife Refuges</i>	See the response to Comment 44.02.
46.05	WILA	<i>The DEIS reports numerous species of small and medium sized mammals in the project area that would be prey species for raptors. With a high number of ground squirrels in the project area, raptors will be lured to the area of the turbines, using the transmission lines as hunting perches. I believe the wildlife section in this DEIS is not vigorous enough in stating that additional raptors will be attracted to this area should the above ground transmission lines be installed. They will be attracted because perching opportunities would then be available, along with available prey species living below. This would not only bring more raptors into the near vicinity of the turbines, but the increased number of raptors would also be hunting IWcy ?? species with populations already on the decline (sensitive species: Greater Sage grouse, Pygmy Rabbit, Northern Sagebrush Lizard, Preble's Shrew).</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.03 and 76.113.
46.06	WILA	<i>I find it discouraging that the BLM does not consider the Golden Eagle a species of concern. Available studies show Golden Eagle populations declining. The DEIS states, "Given the potential for a lethal collision of a golden eagle with the proposed transmission line or wind development components, a Programmatic Agreement permit would be required to provide operational protection of the Project. " (Section 3-5). It is unacceptable that the BLM's answer to the high possibility of Golden Eagles being killed by this wind power project is to get a take permit. This goes to show the BLM is more interested in protecting the project than the Golden Eagle.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.24 and 46.09. The Applicant is coordinating with the USFWS and BLM to create an ABPP/ECP that would provide compliance with the BGEPA.
46.07	WILA	<i>Golden Eagles for many miles. The fact that they were seen at and around the Echanis site says much about the peril these birds would be in should this wind power project be built. The DEIS Section 3.5 makes several references to our inactive large stick nests sufficiently large to have been constructed by golden eagles. Since no other bird in our region would build this type of nest in this area, the DEIS is misleading, and should be more direct in stating the obvious fact that Golden Eagles are active in this project area, for breeding, hunting and regional migrating.</i>	See the response to Comment 46.09
46.08	WILA	<i>I find your map on Figure 3.5-1 very misleading. It gives the impression that this area is rarely used as a nesting area because the vast majority of nests are labeled, "inactive." The number of nests goes to demonstrate the high use of this area by raptor's and other bird species. These birds range much farther than your study area, which is evidence they will be in direct conflict with the turbine blades.</i>	The potential effects of the proposed Project on wildlife were analyzed in DEIS Section 3.5.3 (Wildlife), and included the impacts described in this comment. The presence of inactive nests should not be interpreted to indicate that the area is rarely used for nesting. A description of "inactive" nests has been added to Section 3.5.2.3. As described in the FEIS, both active and inactive raptor nests were recorded during avian use surveys. Active nests were defined as those with signs of activity, including the behavior of adults and the presence of eggs, young, or whitewash, while inactive nests did not display these signs of activity. The presence of both active and inactive nests is important because not all raptor pairs breed every year, or utilize the same individual nest within a nesting territory (Scott 1985). Individual raptor nests have been reported to be reused over a period of 7 +/- years for species such as golden eagles or ferruginous hawks (C. White, BYU, 1988, personal communication, in USFWS 2002).

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46.09	WILA	<i>This statement is made in the DEIS Section 3.5, "Given the potential for elevated raptor mortality along the eastern turbine string at the Echanis site, post -construction monitoring would be important for determining whether additional protective measures would need to be implemented. " We know from looking at the Altamont Wind Power Project in California, that once the turbines have been installed and are spinning, it's almost impossible to shut them down, regardless of how many birds they are killing. The time to fix a problem is not after the turbines have been in stalled, but before construction is allowed to begin. Obviously the BLM knows the eastern turbine string risks having a high migratory bird collision rate. This by itself should he enough to decline the transmission line casement.</i>	The BLM has worked diligently to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the potential effects from the proposed Project. We acknowledge that the proposed Project could have an effect upon raptors, and would rely on the TAC (which would include the BLM) to develop mitigation measures to offset the mortality of raptors. The site has been analyzed and it has been determined that it does not have the attractive features of a site like Altamont Pass in California, which was developed very early in the wind development history, For the Echanis Project, turbines would be located at least 500 feet from the cliff-top edge, which would reduce the potential for collisions with raptors. The effectiveness of this placement to protect birds from collisions has been supported by the USFWS in Project discussions regarding the Avian and Bat Protection Plan/Eagle Conservation Plan (ABPP/ECP). The Applicant is working with the USFWS to develop an ABPP/ECP for the Echanis Project site (Appendix F). This plan would be used to ensure compliance with both the MBTA and the BGEPA, and would be implemented under guidance from the TAC. This plan would apply to species covered under the MBTA and BGEPA. Under direction of the ABPP/ECP, together with recommendations of the TAC, the Applicant would monitor wildlife impacts through post construction monitoring and implement additional mitigation measures if impacts exceeded threshold levels. The Applicant is proposing to offset any golden eagle mortalities at the Echanis Project site with conservation measures in or near the Project Area. Specifically, the Applicant would implement conservation actions that would prevent mortalities at the same rate or greater within 10 to 20 miles of the Project Area, as described in the ABPP/ECP (Appendix F).
47.01	WILA	<i>Malheur Wildlife Associates is a nonprofit, 'Friends Group' for Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Our group supports the "No Action", Alternative A. If Alternative B or C is selected, significant habitat mitigation should be provided to compensate for mortalities of migratory birds and other wildlife due to the lines and wind turbines.</i>	See the responses to Comments 52.01 and 46.09.
47.02	WILA	<i>The proposed transmission route for Alternative B would cross through the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, an extremely important high desert oasis for native bird populations. With its location on the Pacific Flyway and its abundant food and water resources, Malheur provides a wayside for a great variety of migrating and nesting waterfowl, waterbirds and shorebirds. Several waterfowl species, such as trumpeter swans, white-fronted geese, northern pintails, canvasbacks, ring-neck ducks, and American wigeon, all defined as priority species by the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, use the refuge for breeding and during their yearly migrations. High numbers of waterbirds, including sandhill cranes and colonial nesting species such as Clark's and western grebes, American white pelicans (all considered priority by the Intermountain West Waterbird Conservation plan) occur on the refuge. For example, Malheur supports the highest number of breeding greater sandhill cranes, also listed as a 'sensitive' species in Oregon, of any refuge in the western states. Powerline collisions are a significant mortality factor for large birds such as cranes and pelicans, as referenced in the Intermountain West Waterbird Conservation Plan and also for waterfowl such as trumpeter swans. Such lines can kill any migratory bird. The presence of 70 - 120 ft. poles with associated tiered power lines poses severe mortality risk to these birds.</i>	See the response to Comment 44.02.
47.03	WILA	<i>Recently, the Refuge solicited feedback from the public on its Comprehensive Conservation Plan, which will guide management for the next 15 years. The majority of respondents indicated that the Refuge is special to them, not just for the diverse, abundant wildlife, but also for the unique, natural setting. Commenter's place a high priority on the undeveloped setting of the Refuge.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
47.04	WILA	<i>Alternative C would also cause a significant threat to migratory birds, as the Harney Basin is a very important migration corridor for waterfowl and cranes within the Pacific Flyway, supporting over half the Flyway populations of some species during spring migration.</i>	See the response to Comment 156.02. Existing powerlines, such as the double poles that are present in much of the basin, might be causing problems in some of the areas. However, they do not have a significant impact to the flyway populations.

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48.01	GEN1	<i>I would like to comment on the Echanis Wind Energy Development on Steens Mountain and any where else in Harney County they find feasible. This is a tremendous financial undertaking and I applaud and support them in all of their efforts. As for the transmission lines going across BLM managed acres, I support this also. In the past the BLM has allowed power lines to go across thousands of miles of this desert country without any opposition, so why should we oppose this Echanis project when it is so environmentally friendly. I would like to go on record of supporting the proposed route or any other route that would be advantageous to this project.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
49.01	GEN1	<i>I would like to comment on the Echanis Wind Energy Development on Steens Mountain and any where else in Harney County they find feasible. This is a tremendous financial undertaking and I applaud and support them in all of their efforts. As for the transmission lines going across BLM managed acres, I support this also. In the past the BLM has allowed power lines to go across thousands of miles of this desert country without any opposition, so why should we oppose this Echanis project when it is so environmentally friendly. I would like to go on record of supporting the proposed route or any other route that would be advantageous to this project.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
50.01	LND	<i>We support both Echanis Wind Energy Project and transmission line construction; however both the Hog Wallow and Alternative B would impact our private property.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
50.02	ECO	<i>Property Value Effect and Figure 3.11-4 The research used in this study is based on residential property, which correlates with cities, towns and suburbs. Therefore conclusions based on such research would be inconclusive, misleading and inappropriate when attempting to draw conclusions for rural dwellings and land. Bonneville Power Administration published another study in 1996 regarding transmission lines. The BPA study agrees with this EIS draft regarding residential properties; however, BPA states that the greatest impacts have been measured on agriculture, rural, and second (vacation) home developments. If you accept figure 3-11-4 and Property Value Effects as fact you could conduct your Archaeological study along the Columbia River in Portland and apply it to rural Harney County Transmission Line EIS. Research in the EIS should be comparing apples to apples - not oranges to apples. Research must take into consideration Rural Recreation Values, Visual Resources, types of Land, etc.</i>	The literature presented in the property value effects of the Project analysis refers to both rural and non-rural residential properties, which can include both primary and secondary residences. For example, the Sterziner et al. study examined multiple communities that were primarily rural and/or agricultural based, and took into account property sales of up to 25 acres with a single-family home, whether the home was the a primary or secondary residence. The Bonneville Power Administration study (Cowger, Bottemiller, and Cahill, 1996, <i>Transmission Line Impact on Residential Property Values: A Study of Three Pacific Northwest Metropolitan Areas</i> , Right-of-Way Journal, September/October) found a range of impacts, from a small decrease to a slight increase in home values from transmission lines, though no results were statistically significant. In the 'Background Literature' discussion, the study points to a Knoll and Priestly (1992) report suggesting that "Overhead transmission lines can reduce the value of residential and agricultural property." The impact is usually small (0 to 10 percent) for single-family residential properties. The greatest impacts have been measured in intensively managed agricultural property (irrigators, etc.) and in rural, second (vacation) home developments. In truth, the Knoll and Priestly (1992) report, which is simply a review and analysis of previous literature, indicated that impacts on agricultural property is the same as residential property -- they vary widely from negative, to zero, to positive effects of transmission lines on agricultural property values. The effects of transmission lines on secondary residences are not definitive in the report, and the models used to estimate the effects are limited, but the reported effects ranged from a negative effect of transmission line views to a positive effect from the presence of a transmission line ROW easement. Because these reports are more than 15 years old, they were not included in the analysis of potential property value effects from the Project.
50.03	LND	<i>Short-Term (Initial Construction Phase) Income Effects We notice that approximately \$580,000 were set aside for local landowner easements. However, there was no basis by which these easement payments would be allocated. The minute BLM as the lead agency, approves the EIS, Oregon State Law regarding land condemnation becomes germane. What basis will be used to negotiate just compensation to the landowners?</i>	BLM is not a party to, and has no jurisdiction over, contractual commitments made between the Applicant and private parties. BLM understands that CEP is working with landowners to acquire easements across private lands. For the purposes of the analysis of economic impacts, CEP estimates that the fair market value of all of the easements required would total approximately \$580,000. CEP anticipates that payments would be allocated on the basis of the acreage of the easements required.

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50.04	H&S	<i>Question- Currently Scientific investigation is inconclusive regarding Health Hazard and Transmission Lines. Please include in your EIS if at a later date science reaches a conclusion that Transmission lines are a health hazard, what is the Plan? Who is responsible for Transmission lines adjustments and liability i.e. burying, etc.</i>	The DEIS used the best available information to assess the potential effects to human health and safety from the Proposed Action. Speculation regarding the implications of future research on the health effects of exposure to EMF is beyond the scope of this analysis under NEPA. As described in DEIS Section 3.15 (Public Health and Safety), the electric fields from the proposed line would meet regulatory limits for public exposure in Oregon and all other states that have limits, and would meet the regulatory limits or guidelines for peak fields established by national and international guideline setting organizations. The magnetic fields from the proposed line would be within the regulatory limits of the two states that have established them and within guidelines for public exposure established by the International Committee on Non-ionizing Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc. (IEEE). The state of Oregon does not have limits for magnetic fields from transmission lines.
51.01	LND	<i>1.7.1.2 USF&WS regulations 50-CFR 29.1 states "economic use of natural resources of a Refuge may only be authorized when a determination is made that the use contributes to the achievement of the National Wildlife Refuge purposes or the National Wildlife Refuge Systems Mission". The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 requires that "any activity on a refuge must be compatible with the Refuge System Mission and Refuge purpose(s)". We have been unable to find anywhere in the EIS that these Refuge requirements would be met with the installation of power transmission lines on or across Malheur Refuge property.</i>	As stated in DEIS Section 1.4.2 (Introduction), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would decide whether or not to grant the ROW request for the Applicant to cross Federal lands within the Malheur Refuge following a separate agency evaluation of the transmission line proposal. As part of its review, the USFWS would determine the Project's consistency with the policies and procedures in Part 603 National Wildlife Refuge System Uses, as well as Rights-of-Way-Specific regulations and policies found in 50 CFR 25.21, 29.21, and 29.22; 340 FW 3; 603 FW 2; and the Specialized Uses policy found in 5 RM 17.
51.02	LND	<i>1.7-15: Echanis Wind Energy Project modification includes the height of the turbine tower at 18 feet in excess of the Harney Co. Planning Commission Order #20070853 height limitation of 397 feet. Has the Harney Co. Planning Director approved this variance?</i>	As stated in DEIS Section 1.7.1.3 (page 1.7-15), any design change of the turbine height exceeding that approved by Harney County would require that CEP seek an amendment of their Conditional Use Permit. This would occur once the final turbine model was determined.
51.03	REG	<i>1.7.2.5: The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) directs USF&W specifically to focus on (among other things) migratory bird habitat management. Installation of power transmission lines on or over Malheur Refuge property does not improve bird habitat. and may have negative consequences or effects on migratory and resident birds.</i>	It is acknowledged that the proposed transmission line across Malheur Refuge would affect migratory bird resources, however, through the Right-of-Way grant and compatibility processes, appropriate mitigation can be crafted using the best available science.
51.04	WILA	<i>1.8-20: USF&W Pacific Region: Must examine and resolve any issues with effects on birds protected by the MBTA and/or effects on nongame fish and wildlife species and their habitats pursuant to the Fish & Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980 and the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934. Has this been done and documented?</i>	Information specific to the Malheur Refuge, gathered during the NEPA process, was used to evaluate the effects to wildlife species through the compatibility and right-of-way processes. If a right-of-way permit were to be issued, this process would ensure its consistency with the Refuge Improvement Act and other acts directing management of National Wildlife Refuges.
51.05	CUL	<i>2.2.1.1: 1.32 miles crossing Malheur Wildlife Refuge property also includes a permanent 150 foot wide right-of-way (ROW) along the entire route. Does this mean that even if transmission towers span above Refuge property with 1,400 feet of aerial lines at the Hog Wallow Option, there will still be 150' ROW on the ground? Because if it does, important archaeological sites that exists in the Hog Wallow area could be damaged or destroyed.</i>	Yes, there would still be an on-ground ROW across the Malheur Refuge for the aerial wires. However, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) could make it a condition of the ROW that there would be no ground disturbance within the ROW. This information was added to Section 2.0 (Project Description) of the FEIS. See response to comment 51.07.
51.06	CUL	<i>2.2.1.2: Specifies that poles up to 130 feet high will be located on either side of the Blitzen valley to span the Malheur Wildlife Refuge land, with over 1,400 feet of aerial lines between them. The poles would be secured on BLM land. In rocky areas, excavation by controlled blasting would be done. Cranes would be used to place the poles. with about 400 square feet surrounding each pole required to anchor and secure the poles. Construction of access roads would be required to reach the proposed pole sites, to allow vehicles including flatbed trucks carrying in the heavy equipment, cranes, poles, etc. We have performed archaeological pedestrian surveys of the Refuge property above Hog Wallow on both the west and east ends. The tops of the buttes at both ends have very little soil depth above the basalt bedrock. The only way excavation could be done in both areas would be by blasting and drilling, with both actions having a very negative effect on historical and prehistoric archaeological sites in the immediate region. (See our more detailed comments under Section 3.10 Cultural Resources.)</i>	The potential effects of blasting on archaeological and historic resources were added to Section 2.2.1.2 (Project Description) of the FEIS. The following text was added to FEIS Section 2.2.1.2, paragraph 2: "In rocky areas, excavation by controlled blasting may be required. Blasting would not be used near rimrocks where rockshelters or historic stacked rock features are located to preserve the integrity of these resources."

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51.07	CUL	2.2.1.3: States that approximately 0.59 miles of access road improvement would be within the Malheur Wildlife Refuge, west of hwy. 205. There are archaeological artifacts and sites on Refuge property west of hwy. 205; any access road work would have to avoid sites, which could lengthen the amount of necessary roadway.	Potentially NRHP-eligible archaeological resources and historic cultural features within the Project APE would be avoided, if possible, by relocating or reconfiguring Project-related facilities, roads, and transmission line pole sites. If avoidance was not possible, further testing and formal evaluations for eligibility for listing in the NRHP would be conducted for each identified resource, as described in Appendix A.
51.08	CUL	2.2.1.5: States that only 2.19 miles of new and improved access roads and approximately 26.07 miles and unimproved overland access routes would be needed for initial construction. How many of the overland routes have been documented as being free of any risk to any culturally sensitive sites and areas?	Archaeological Services, an archaeological contractor for the Applicant, completed a survey of proposed routes for Alternative B. Their findings were added to the discussion and tables in Section 3.10.2.4 of the FEIS. Potentially NRHP-eligible archaeological resources and historic cultural features within the Project APE would be avoided, if possible, by relocating or reconfiguring Project-related facilities, roads, and transmission line pole sites. If avoidance was not possible, further testing and formal evaluations for eligibility for listing in the NRHP would be conducted for each identified resource, as described in Appendix A.
51.09	WAT	2.2.1.6: Proposes the relocation of 1.35 miles of an existing power line presently crossing Malheur Refuge property south of Diamond Lane. This sounds good, but the method of burying the lines by boring under the Donner & Blitzen river channel seems somewhat risky, relative to the soils there and the riparian habitat. Also, given a history of damaging floods through that river channel, have flood control issues been given sufficient consideration?	Directional boring can typically be used in a manner that would minimize, or avoid altogether, impacts to riparian habitat. Directional boring technologies can be used in soils, geological conditions, and habitats such as those that might be encountered at the Donner and Blitzen channels.
51.10	OPS	2.2.1.8 Operations and Maintenance : Regular air patrols from helicopter would be performed as part of routine maintenance . Would this include low-level flights over Refuge property? Even low-level patrols outside of Refuge air space could have detrimental effects on birds and other wildlife. Also, maintenance includes the relocation or removal of bird nests. While we understand the necessity of doing this for maintenance of the power and transmission equipment, it could hardly be beneficial to the birds.	Any ROW crossing of the MNWR approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would be subject to stipulations designed to ensure that wildlife are protected from harm during routine and/or emergency maintenance activities. See the responses to Comments 155.25 and 155.34.
51.11	ALT	Figure 2.0-7: Laydown Areas Although longer, we believe the Route C North Route would present fewer difficulties for laydown areas than the Alternative B West Route, using either the S. Diamond Lane Option with boring under the Donner & Blitzen river channel and especially not the spanning of the Hog Wallow option.	Your support for the Alternative C - North Route is acknowledged.
51.12	TRA	Figure 2.0-8: Access Roads map shows optimistically labeled roads accessing the Hog Wallow Option route. We have personally driven over some of the barely discernible 2-tracks leading out to the proposed eastern tower site, and they were difficult to navigate in a 4-wheel-drive pickup truck. Longer, less difficult routes will still entail considerable road improvement. There are also potentially more cultural sites to be concerned about. Access to the western end of the Hog Wallow Option route would likewise entail access road improvements to reach the proposed western tower site location.	Road corridors on the Malheur Refuge would be inventoried in advance of improvements or construction to ensure that existing or newly identified cultural resources would not be impacted by the Project. Road corridors would be realigned to avoid cultural resources on the Refuge. Law enforcement patrols would be increased, as needed, to address the increased potential for looting of sites on the Malheur Refuge or adjacent to the Refuge.
51.13	WIL	2.2.2: South Diamond Lane Route Option: includes 6 "pulling and tensioning sites" on Malheur Refuge land. Will these be located so as to not disturb any bird or wildlife habitats or damage any riparian areas?	Temporary disturbances from tensioning sites on MNWR lands would include 1.5 acres for the South Diamond Lane Route Option and 0.75 acre for the Hog Wallow Route Option. No surface preparation would be required for the tensioning sites. Any resulting surface disturbance would be restored following construction. No impacts would likely occur to wildlife or bird habitats or riparian areas. Pulling and tensioning site locations were illustrated in Figure 2.0-7 of the DEIS.
51.14	ALT	2.2.3: Hog Wallow Route Option: crosses only 1.9 miles of Refuge land, but it would require extensive road building and improvements just to access the Refuge land. It would require the placement of "several" (how many?) poles on Refuge land, plus 3 pulling and tensioning sites also on Refuge land.	See DEIS Section 3.6.3.5 (Land Use) for specific information about land use effects upon the Malheur Refuge, related to transmission line poles and access roads for the Alternative B - Hog Wallow Route Option. DEIS Section 3.6.3.3 addressed pole placement for the Alternative B - West Route and Section 3.6.3.4 addressed pole placement for the Alternative B - South Diamond Lane Route Option.

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51.15	GEO	<i>Table 2.1-1 Summary of Effects of Geology and Soils: The West Route Option including both the S. Diamond Lane and Hog Wallow Options crosses 7 mapped earthquake faults, any of which could cause potential damage to the equipment and lines thereon. Especially vulnerable would be the Hog Wallow Option with its very tall towers supporting 1,400 feet of transmission lines spanning the Blitzen Valley at this point.</i>	As discussed in DEIS Section 3.1.3.2 (Geology) Alternative A - No Action, Section 3.1.3.3 Alternative - West Route, Section 3.1.3.4 Alternative B - South Diamond Lane Route Option, Section 3.1.3.5 Alternative B - Hog Wallow Route Option, and Section 3.1.3.7 Alternative C - North Route, the faults mapped and the evaluation of seismic epicenters in the Project Area would not likely pose significant seismic hazards for the proposed Project. Additionally, as stated in Appendix A (Project Design Features and Best Management Practices), turbine towers and other structure locations would be surveyed for active faults and landslide hazards prior to finalizing site locations. Construction of the turbine towers and transmission line towers would incorporate standard earthquake protection measures and would be built to seismic specifications consistent with the region.
51.16	WIL	<i>Tables 2.1-4 & 5: Summary of Effects to Wetlands and Riparian Areas: Both the S. Diamond Lane and the Hog Wallow Route Options would result in some permanent loss of wetland areas and wildlife habitat. Both routes cross Malheur Refuge in areas where birds, including Special Status species, could potentially result in increased mortality. Neither of these factors is compatible with Refuge requirements.</i>	See response to comments 51.01 and 51.17.
51.17	LND	<i>Table 2.1-6: Summary of Effects to Land Use and Realty: The S. Diamond Lane route option would involve approximately 37 power poles on Malheur Refuge land. The Hog Wallow route option would involve approximately 17 or more poles on Refuge land. Power poles and aerial lines are not compatible with Refuge goals and requirements.</i>	The concern regarding the compatibility of proposed power poles and aerial lines with the management objectives and constraints of the Malheur Refuge would be addressed during a separate evaluation process to be conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) prior to deciding whether or not to grant the ROW request from the Applicant to cross Federal lands within the Refuge. As stated in DEIS Section 1.4.2 (Introduction), the USFWS would reach that decision by evaluating the appropriateness and compatibility of the transmission line proposal with the policies and procedures in Part 603 National Wildlife Refuge System Uses; as well as Rights-of-Way-Specific regulations and policies found at 50 CFR 25.21, 29.21, and 29.22; 340 FW 3; 603 FW 2; and Specialized Uses policy found at 5 RM 17.
51.18	CUL	<i>Table 2.1-10: Summary of Effects to Cultural Resources: The Summary states that no archaeological survey has been done (for this report) on the S. Diamond Lane route. However, given the amount of cultural sites there are in the surrounding areas, cultural resource data must be included in assessing this potential route. For the Hog Wallow route, there would be permanent or long-term damage done to a National Registry of Historic Places (NRHP) eligible archaeology site, and avoidance is recommended. Further documentation and inventory must be done. No testing has been done. The report has not identified any historic NRHP sites in the area. However, a wooden gate from the Peter French era (1880s-1900s) is located on the north side of the butte that is proposed for the west end transmission line tower. There is also a rock wall or alignment extending north from this gate. Either of these historic features could be damaged by blasting and drilling to erect and secure the 130 foot high proposed tower.</i>	The Peter French era wood gate and stacked rock wall were added to the Architectural/Historic Resources inventory in Section 3.10.2.4 of the FEIS. The potential effects of blasting on archaeological and historic resources were added to Section 2.2.1.2 of the FEIS. Table 2.1-10 was revised to show that an NRHP eligible Historic Resource is present. The Applicant completed a survey of the three proposed routes crossing the Malheur Refuge after the DEIS was submitted for public comments. These findings were added to the discussion and tables in Section 3 of the FEIS. Information about the historic gate and stacked stone wall were added to FEIS Section 3.10 historic resources table. The following text was also added to FEIS Table 2.1-10 Alternative B - Hog Wallow Route Option - Architectural/Historical Resources section: "No adverse temporary effects to the NRHP historical resource. There would be permanent or long-term effects to the NRHP eligible historic site through direct disturbance and/or indirect visual effects. Avoidance is recommended for all potentially eligible sites. If avoidance is not possible, further documentation and formal evaluation for NRHP eligibility should be conducted for this site. Formal evaluations would include further documentation and inventory." The following was added to FEIS Section 2.2.1.2, paragraph 2: "In rocky areas, excavation by controlled blasting may be required. Blasting would not be used near rimrocks where rockshelters or historic stacked rock features are located to preserve the integrity of these resources."
51.19	GEO	<i>3.1 .2.1 Geology Seismic activity has been recorded for this area. Lake County recorded a 5.1 magnitude earthquake in 1968. Harney County has recorded at least 4 in the 4.0-4.9 magnitude, and at least 4 in the 3.0-3.9 magnitude range.</i>	See the response to Comment 51.15.

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51.20	GEO	3.1 .3.5: The Alternative B West Route option crosses 7 mapped faults. The S. Diamond Lane option crosses 6 faults; the Hog Wallow option crosses 7. Since these routes "go over rock buttes", it is clear that some blasting would be necessary to place and secure transmission line poles. Could blasting act as a seismic trigger, with resulting earthquake damage and/or landslide potential?	Blasting would not act as a seismic trigger, but could act as a trigger for landslides if unstable slopes or unstable soils are present in the immediate area. Blasting would only be employed during foundation excavation for transmission line poles, where bedrock would prohibit excavation by drilling methods. Safeguards would be put into place, as described in Section 7.3.5 of the Plan of Development (POD). Additionally, as summarized in Section 9.1 of the POD, appropriate safety guidelines would be followed, as required by state and federal regulations.
51.21	VEG	3.3: Vegetation: There is a stated potential for the introduction of and/or spread of noxious weeds, simply through construction and later maintenance, throughout the entire project. 21 different potential plants are listed in table 3.3-2. This would be particularly troublesome on Refuge lands, as it interferes with Refuge management of its land for the benefit of birds and wildlife .	On MNWR lands, noxious weed control would be consistent with integrated pest management protocols, including steam cleaning of equipment prior to entering Refuge lands, seeding (with approved seed mix) of all disturbed sites, and chemical/mechanical treatments of invasive plants per Refuge authorization.
51.22	WET	3.4: Wetlands and Riparian: Field delineations were not done on Refuge land for this report. Instead data was taken from the National Wetlands Inventory. Why was data not secured from the Malheur Refuge specifically, since the Alternative B West Route goes through wetland areas of the Refuge?	Use of the National Wetland Inventory dataset is standard for an EIS. The Malheur Refuge has not conducted a delineation on Refuge lands and, therefore, does not have these data available. A field determination would be necessary during the 404 permitting process. CWM plans would apply to these and all wetlands that were impacted by the Project, to ensure that there was no net loss of wetlands due to Project activities.
51.23	WET	3.4-23: With the Hog Wallow route option. in order to avoid planting towers or poles in the Donner and Blitzen wetland areas, towers would be placed on adjacent upland areas to span over the wetlands . While laudable in intent, this would still place a very long run of about 1,400 feet of aerial power lines over the Blitzen Valley and Malheur Refuge. This would not be compatible with Refuge goals and requirements.	See the response to Comment 51.17.
51.24	WILA	3.5.1 : Wildlife and Fish: The bird survey for the project area was not obtained from Fish & Wildlife or the Malheur Refuge. Will one be included in the final EIS Report?	Bird survey data was obtained from the MNWR and was added to the FEIS.
51.25	WILA	3.5-4: Some bats forage hundreds of feet in the air, so could be subject to wind turbine mortality.	Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife) of the DEIS discussed bat mortality. Bat mortality would be evaluated during post-construction studies, and the results would be provided to the agencies for review and determination of the significance of the effects. Additional text describing the ABPP/ECP has been added to the FEIS in Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife), and the ABPP/ECP is included in Appendix F. In implementing the ABPP/ECP, the TAC would consider mitigation measures, including curtailment, to reduce bat mortality. Based upon data provided in the ABPP/ECP, the average avian mortality per turbine of wind projects with habitat types similar to the Echanis Project has been 2.70 birds and 2.56 bats per year, or mortality at any one turbine is 10.0 bats or birds per year. If these thresholds are exceeded, mitigation would be initiated. Mitigation would be conducted in phases, to be implemented chronologically as avian and/or bat thresholds were exceeded.
51.26	WILA	3.5.6: Both active and inactive raptor bird nests were found in the project area. This could potentially place raptors in danger of increased mortality. The report states that "Proposed Alternate B West Route and variations have valuable habitat used by tens of thousands of migratory and resident waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds. Alternate B and variations have important nesting habitat for sandhill cranes and swans." Risking damage to any of these should rule out selection of the West Route Option.	See responses to Comments 44.02 and 156.02.
51.27	WILA	Table 3.4-4 shows 16 birds listed in a PARTIAL list of waterfowl and shorebirds seen in the project area. If these were all that were seen, it was clearly not a very timely or lengthy survey.	Additional survey data has been added to the FEIS in Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife). Waterfowl and shorebird data was captured through survey data obtained from the MNWR, and small plot avian surveys for Alternative B. Summary tables from all avian surveys have been added into a new Appendix E in the FEIS.

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51.28	WILA	<i>Table 3.5-6 discusses the Greater Sage Grouse. There is a known lek within 2 miles of the project area, and yearlong habitat lies within the project area. With the population of this bird declining, and as it is a Federal Candidate species, it would not be appropriate to further endanger it with disturbance in or near any of its habitat.</i>	See the response to Comment 44.03.
51.29	WILA	<i>3.5-14: Both bald and golden eagles have been seen in the project area. Possible nests have been found in the project areas . Neither of these species can afford any disturbances to their habitat.</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.06 and 155.26.
51.30	WILA	<i>3.5.3: Environmental Consequences: The report states that "Environmental consequences can be both permanent and temporary". It also says "The effects on wildlife will extend well beyond the footprint (of the project) because wildlife are sensitive to noise and activity from individuals and vehicles, and structures that are higher than the vegetation in an area." Neither of these is compatible with Wildlife Refuge goals and requirements, so the Alternate B West Route option should be taken off the table .</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02 and 51.04.
51.31	WILA	<i>3.5-22 : The report states that "Permanent effects on wildlife resources from the Echanis Project would be from the wind turbines, the overhead power collection system, operations and maintenance, building , substation, and access roads." Some of the negative effects on wildlife would include habitat loss, noise, displacement, disruption of breeding , and aerial mortality of birds and bats. The report projects up to 22 raptor deaths per year , up to 690 passerine bird deaths per year, and up to 234 bat deaths per year. It also notes that there are 10 special status species that could be found within the project area. None of these are compatible with Refuge goals and requirements.</i>	The Echanis Project wind turbines, power collection system, buildings, and other Project facilities that the narrative refers to would not be located on MNWR lands. Thus, the potential impacts that were identified in the DEIS Section 3.5.3 (Wildlife) would not occur on the Wildlife Refuge. Only the transmission line poles connecting the Echanis Project to the electrical grid, and the associated potential impacts, would be located on Refuge lands. Also, see the response to Comment 44.02.
51.32	REC	<i>3.7 Recreation - Environmental Consequences: there is a failure to account for any potential harm to the Central Patrol Road of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge , which is the main bird and wildlife viewing scenic drive from one end of the Refuge to the other. This scenic drive crosses the S. Diamond Lane route , and follows hwy. 205 through the Blitzen Valley over which the Hog Wallow option route would string 1,400 feet of aerial transmission lines. Recreational damage could come from reduction of bird and wildlife viewing opportunities and increased noise and disruption.</i>	Section 3.7.4.3 (Recreation) in the DEIS acknowledged the temporary effects to recreation from construction activities, noise, and visual disruption along South Diamond Lane and associated with the South Diamond Lane Route Option. These impacts could include possible delays and disruptions for visitors to the MNWR using Central Patrol Road, South Diamond Lane, and Highway 205 during periods of construction. Over the long-term, no reduction in bird and wildlife viewing opportunities within the Refuge would be likely with any of the alternatives.
51.33	CUL	<i>We have first-hand knowledge of the cultural resources in the area of the Malheur Wildlife Refuge impacted by the Hog Wallow Option of the Alternate B West Route Option , and strongly believe that this option cannot be executed without irreparable damage to significant cultural sites in the immediate vicinity. In October 2009, we were authorized by Refuge staff to do a cultural heritage survey of the uplands of Refuge property on the east and west sides of hwy. 205, surrounding the proposed Hog Wallow route through and over Refuge lands...we made the somewhat arduous drive overland to access the survey area on the east side, and climbed the basalt butte to survey the area for the proposed tower on the west side. We performed pedestrian surveys over the areas, finding , recording, and mapping sites, features, and artifacts (including several Project survey stakes). In addition to prehistoric lithic scatters and thousands of flakes , 62 formed chipped and ground stone tools were recorded and several possible rock shelters were found. There are already at least 3 previously recorded sites in the immediate area of the Hog Wallow route, including the NRHP-eligible site 35HA08.</i>	Archaeological Services, an archaeological contractor for the Applicant, completed a survey of the three proposed routes crossing the MNWR after the DEIS was submitted for public comments. These findings were added to the discussion and tables in Section 3.10.2.4 of the FEIS. Potentially National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible archaeological resources and historic cultural features within the Project APE would be avoided, if possible, by relocating or reconfiguring Project-related facilities, roads, and transmission line pole sites. If avoidance was not possible, further testing and formal evaluations for eligibility for listing in the NRHP would be conducted for each identified resource, as described in Appendix A.
51.34	CUL	<i>There is also an historic site on the west side of hwy. 205, containing a Peter French era wooden gate which is anchored to the rocks on the north side of the butte that is the proposed base for the west end tower. Extending north from the gate there is a rock alignment , a wall or barrier to keep cattle from going up or down the side of the lower slopes.</i>	The Peter French era wood gate and stacked rock wall were added to the Architectural/Historic Resources inventory in Section 3.10.2.4 (Cultural Resources) of the FEIS.

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51.35	CUL	<i>We found that many sections of the upper areas atop the rocky buttes have only thin layers of wind-blown loess and soil over the basalt bedrock. There would not be enough depth of soil to allow excavation to set and secure the transmission line poles except by drilling and/or blasting. The disturbances from these construction methods could have very damaging effects on the nearby cultural sites, particularly the historic gate which is below where the lines would come across the valley to be supported by the proposed tower on the butte above the gate.</i>	The Peter French era wood gate and stacked rock wall will be added to the Architectural/Historic Resources inventory in Section 3.10.2.4 of the FEIS. The potential effects of blasting on archaeological and historic resources were added to Section 2.2.1.2 (Project Description) of the FEIS. The following text was added to FEIS Section 2.2.1.2, paragraph 2: "In rocky areas, excavation by controlled blasting might be required. Blasting would not be used near rimrocks where rockshelters or historic stacked rock features area located to preserve the integrity of these resources."
51.36	CUL	<i>Access to the Refuge and BLM lands where the proposed support towers would be located is quite difficult. It was challenging in a 4-wheel-drive pickup, and bringing large trucks and heavy equipment in would certainly require improving overland road access. Cultural artifacts and sites all along potential access road routes would have to be located, recorded and avoided.</i>	Archaeological Services, an archaeological contractor for the Applicant, completed a survey of the three proposed routes crossing Malheur NWR after the DEIS was submitted for public comments. Their findings were added to the discussion and tables in Section 3.10.2.4 (Cultural Resources) of the FEIS.
51.37	CUL	<i>Laws and regulations contained in the Federal Antiquities Act of 1906 and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and Oregon State Regulations all mandate controlling, reducing, or avoiding any negative impacts to cultural resources. therefore this project should abandon the Alternate B West Route, especially the Hog Wallow route option, as the environmental, wildlife, and archaeological costs are simply too high.</i>	Potentially National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-eligible archaeological resources and historic cultural features within the Project APE would be avoided, if possible, by relocating or reconfiguring project-related facilities, roads, and transmission line pole sites. If avoidance is not possible, further testing and formal evaluations for eligibility for listing in the NRHP would be conducted for each identified resource, as described in Appendix A, Cultural Resources section.
51.38	CUL	<i>3.10-11: Reports that 24 new sites were identified along the Alternative B West Route, Hog Wallow option. 40 isolates were also found along the same route. Previously identified sites were not reassessed. This confirms and reinforces what is written above.</i>	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would make eligibility determinations for sites on the MNWR. Potentially NRHP eligible archaeological resources and historic cultural features within the Project APE would be avoided, if possible, by relocating or reconfiguring project-related facilities, roads, and transmission line pole sites. If avoidance is not possible, further testing and formal evaluations for eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) would be conducted for each identified resource, as described in Appendix A.
51.39	WHB	<i>3.12: Wild Horses & Burros: What studies have been made on the long-term effects of transmission line noise, possible vibrations, electro-magnetic fields, on the breeding and foraging of the wild horses and burros?</i>	See the response to Comment 51.41.
51.40	TRA	<i>3.14-12: Transportation. The report states that "almost 26 miles of overland roads would require no roadbed improvements" to access the Alternative B West Route, [letter difficult to read]...we experienced rough...roads, sometimes mere 4-track trails over and down the sides of basalt buttes. They were difficult to navigate in a 4-wheel drive pickup. The report specifies that trucks, sometimes over 105,500 GVW would be needed to haul heavy equipment to sites for transmission pole installations. Such vehicles would surely require better access roads than presently exist to reach the east side of the Hog Wallow route on the east side of the Blitzen valley.</i>	The large specialized trucks described in DEIS Section 3.14.3.2 (Transportation, Echanis Project Effects Common to All Action Alternatives) would only be used to transport the large wind turbine components to the Echanis site (via the main access road). Smaller more maneuverable trucks would be used to transport transmission line components via the proposed overland access roads.
51.41	WIL	<i>3.15: Public Health and Safety: 3.15-7: All the electrical field data are based on humans - what about effects on birds and wildlife, especially small animals? What data is there on the long-term effects on human health?</i>	Many studies have been conducted in the laboratory and in the field to study the effects of EMF exposures on plants and wildlife. Research and years of operating experience have not shown that electric and magnetic fields cause any adverse effects in livestock, wildlife, or plants (source: http://www.pplreliablepower.com/faq+++emf.htm). Evaluations of research findings by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences, the U.S. National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, the U.K. National Radiological Protection Board, the International Agency for Research on Cancer and the World Health Organization, among others have concluded that there is not a demonstrated cause and effect relationship between exposure to EMF and cancer or other diseases. Information about EMF is available from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and can be accessed online at http://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/emf/ .
51.42	WIL	<i>3.15-10: Again, the magnetic field data are all based on humans. What about effects on wildlife, especially on birds, some of which use magnetic fields for navigation?</i>	See the response to Comment 51.41.

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51.43	H&S	<i>3.15-10 Under Fire Hazards, what safeguards are there against lightning strikes, often the cause of wildfires in this desert region? The turbines and transmission poles will likely be the tallest things in their vicinity, and thus possible targets for lightning.</i>	<p>As described in DEIS Section 2.2.5.7 (Project Description), operation and maintenance of the proposed Project and alternatives would include lightning conductor/protection testing, installation, and repair.</p> <p>Wind turbines are protected from lightning damage by a comprehensive lightning protection system in accordance with international standard IEC 62305-1-4 EC 1.0.2006 lightning protection level 1. Blades are protected with a dedicated protection system. Each blade has lightning receptors fitted close to the tip and, for lengths 40m and up, at other locations along the blade. The receptors project slightly above the blade surface on both sides. A flexible integrated metal conductor located inside the blade provides the conduction path from the receptors to the hub. The hub casting is used as a natural bonding conductor to the main shaft. Lightning currents from the blades are discharged through a pick-up system in order to protect the bearings. Each pick-up can carry a level 1 lightning strike and is backed up by at least one parallel system. The tower acts as a natural bonding part providing conduction from the nacelle to the earth. [Lightning Protection, Siemens Wind Turbines – Document ID E R WP EN-10-0000-0109-04]</p> <p>The transmission line is supported by steel structures that carry the power conductors and an optical ground wire (OPGW). The OPGW is placed at the top of the conductor configuration and acts as a receptor for lightning strikes. Ground conductors and the steel structures provide a path to ground for lightning. The substation and interconnection station are similarly protected from lightning strikes by an overhead ground wire system connected to the ground grid at each location.</p>
51.44	NOI	<i>3.17: Noise - this report does not address the short and long-term effects on wildlife , only on "residents", as in human. Nor does it address the effects of vibration on wildlife , their breeding and foraging patterns. Would the timing of any blasting and drilling for excavation and construction at the S. Diamond Lane and Hog Wallow route options be coordinated with wildlife experts relative to wildlife nesting and breeding?</i>	Portions of the transmission line route that would cross the MNWR where drilling and blasting activities would occur would be coordinated with the Refuge relative to wildlife nesting and breeding. Additional information on effects of noise on wildlife has been added to Section 3.5 (Wildlife). Since the little kiger lek is active, construction would not be allowed during the March 15 to May 1 time period, in order to avoid the lekking season.
51.45	ENR	<i>3.18: Energy: We support the exploration of alternative energy sources, but any development must address and resolve questions and problems such as the above.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
51.46	CME	<i>3.19: Cumulative Effects: resolution of all those issues and questions raised above.</i>	See all responses to Comment Letter 51.
51.47	ALT	<i>In summary, we believe there are too many unanswered or unacceptable issues relative to the Alternate B West Route option, especially the Hog Wallow route option. The route over or through the Malheur Wildlife Refuge poses too many problems relative to the wildlife and natural habitat and environment, that are counter to Refuge goals and requirements. If this project goes forward , the North Route should be given primary consideration.</i>	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) would conduct a separate evaluation process prior to deciding whether or not to grant the ROW request from the Applicant to cross Federal lands within the refuge. As stated in DEIS Section 1.4.2, the USFWS would reach that decision by evaluating the appropriateness and compatibility of the transmission line proposal with the policies and procedures in Part 603 National Wildlife Refuge System Uses; as well as Rights-of-Way-Specific regulations and policies found at 50 CFR 25.21, 29.21, and 29.22; 340 FW 3; and 603 FW 2; and Specialized Uses policy found at 5 RM 17.

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52.01	WIL	<p><i>Mitigation The Department is encouraged that the applicant has committed to mitigate for affected fish and wildlife habitat consistent with the guidelines set forth under the Department's mitigation policy. However, the DEIS lacks specific details of what is proposed for mitigation if an action alternative is chosen. The Department recommends that the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), as described in the DEIS, be assembled as soon as possible to begin developing the Habitat Mitigation Plan (HMP). Language should be included in the FEIS that prohibits initiating construction until a HMP that meets the Department's Habitat Mitigation Policy (OAR 635.415) has been completed.</i></p>	<p>The Applicant has drafted and submitted to BLM a draft Habitat Mitigation Plan that is included in the new Appendix F of the FEIS, and would also implement the Mitigation Framework associated with ODFW's Sage-Grouse Strategy. Additional information regarding mitigation that the Applicant would implement has been added to Section 3.5.3 (Wildlife). A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) would track Project activities and monitoring data, and would determine the need for additional mitigation or minimization. The TAC would consist of representatives from the USFWS, BLM, ODFW, Echanis LLC, and Harney County. The TAC would provide advice and recommendations for developing and implementing effective measures to monitor, avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to avian species and their habitats during operation. The TAC would be formed prior to Project operations. The TAC is a component of the ABPP and the HMP, and is further described in those plans (Appendix F). - Before beginning construction of the Project, the Applicant would provide Harney County, BLM, and ODFW a map showing the final design of the Project and the total permanent and construction area impacts. The size of the mitigation area would be approximately 8,734 to 9022 acres, depending on the alternative chosen. This acreage includes mitigation for noise from the turbines, as well as disturbance from project roads and transmission lines to greater sage-grouse. This mitigation acreage calculation would be finalized and agreed upon between the Applicant, ODFW, and USFWS. While the selection of the specific mitigation area would be made as part of the implementation of the HMP, the Mitigation Framework provides guidance as to what criteria should be used when identifying a potential mitigation area. Specifically, the Mitigation Framework states that when selecting a mitigation area, the following factors should be considered: (a) the greater sage-grouse population size in the impact area; (b) the habitat quality of the mitigation area; (c) and the potential to restore the mitigation area to high quality habitat through conservation actions. In addition, the Mitigation Framework states that "the [u]se of ecological site data and current vegetation condition is recommended to assist in targeting appropriate mitigation sites." The ODFW has also stated that because the mitigation area is intended to mitigate for "landscape scale" impacts, it is appropriate that a mitigation area be in a contiguous parcel.</p>
52.02	WIL	<p><i>Alternatives. The DEIS indicates that wildlife survey data from the west route (alternative B) is incomplete, and that there is no wildlife survey data included for the north route (alternative C). Without completed wildlife survey data, the department is unable to compare potential affects on wildlife between alternative B and C. If an action alternative is selected the Department recommends the route that has the least impact to wildlife and their habitats, especially habitats that are limited or provide habitat for special status species. The Department requests the opportunity to review the wildlife inventory data when completed.</i></p>	<p>Please see the response to Comment 156.02. Additional bird surveys were conducted for the portion of Alternative B occurring on the MNWR, and were added to the FEIS Sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2 (Wildlife), and a new Appendix E. These surveys were conducted by the Applicant's contractor and by the MNWR.</p>
52.03	WIL	<p><i>Pg. 3.5-28 Greater Sage-Grouse – The second paragraph in this section describes how preconstruction lek surveys would be conducted to determine if the Little Kiger lek was active, and hen ascertain if there was a need for timing restrictions during project construction. Given that breeding activity was documented on this lek in 2010, the Department considers this lek site active, and timing restrictions should be implemented. The Department recommends that construction and maintenance of roads and other infrastructure (i.e. power lines, turbines, ect.) should be restricted not to occur near breeding habitats (2 miles from lek) between 1 hour after sunset to 2 hours after sunrise from 1 March to 15 June to minimize impacts to nesting and breeding behaviors of sage-grouse. If adopted, the restriction would need to be incorporated elsewhere in the DEIS where the same issue arises.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 44.03.</p>

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52.04	WIL	<i>Pg. 3.5-21 Fish Resources – The final sentence in this paragraph states that a fish salvage permit will be acquired from ODFW prior to construction if ODFW determines that it is required. As a point of clarification, the Department will require fish salvage permits when constructing stream crossings over any fish bearing streams.</i>	The text in the FEIS (Section 3.5.3.2, Wildlife) was updated to correctly describe the permit as a "Scientific Take Permit" and the text now describes that the permit would be necessary for any fish bearing streams.
53.01	GEN2	<i>It is disheartening and discouraging to have one of our greatest resources, scenic beauty, slowly eroded and cluttered with manmade structures and to have roads built in some of our more remote areas. If the ROW is granted my children & grandchildren, when horseback riding with me in the Steens, will only be able to imagine what an uncluttered view this area once had.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
53.02	SOIL	<i>Five sites located on BLM land identified in this paragraph do not require surface preparation but would be damaged. The last sentence in this paragraph says, "Any resulting temporary surface disturbance would be restored following construction." What is temporary? What restoration plans are considered for these areas? To what extent will the land be restored? 10%, 30%, 50%, 100%? There are areas in this state with a fragile environment such as this which were damaged over 100 years ago. The scars are still visible...[see letter]...Damage to this fragile environment cannot be repaired by any man.</i>	Restoration and reclamation measures are described in Sections 7.3.12 and 9.3 of the Plan of Development (POD) and in Appendix A to the DEIS (Project Design Features and Best Management Practices). As stated in these references, the disturbed surface would be restored to the original contour of the land surface. BLM and State of Oregon Agricultural Department-approved seed mixes along with salvaged native vegetation would be used for re-vegetation. To the extent practical, 100% of the disturbed areas would be restored using these methods. Measureable damage would be repaired as soon as weather, ground, and scheduling conditions permit. The amount and type of reclamation required would be discussed and agreed to with BLM.
53.03	VIS	<i>1.3.1 Bureau Of Land Management. (a) Protects the natural resources associated with public lands and adjacent lands, whether private or administered by a government entity. ...Approving the ROW for transmission lines would in effect approve the installation of wind turbines on adjacent land. This would be a devastating blow to the natural & scenic beauty of the Kiger Gorge, a unique geological feature in our state....</i>	Comment acknowledged.
53.04	LND	<i>1.3.1 Bureau Of Land Management... (b) Prevents unnecessary or undue degradation to public lands. Is the degradation to our public lands which will result if the request is approved absolutely necessary? For the greater public or for the benefit of the electrical power companies involved?</i>	Mitigation was described at the end of each alternative in DEIS Section 3.6 (Land Use) and in Appendix A. Pursuant to 43 C.F.R. § 2805.10, if BLM issues a grant, it may include terms, conditions, and stipulations that BLM determines to be in the public interest. This includes modifying the proposed use or changing the route or location of the facilities on public land.
53.05	SOIL	<i>3.1.3.2 & 3.1.3.3 talk of increased runoff due to soil compaction and removal of vegetation. This fragile, arid environment needs every opportunity to absorb ALL the moisture it can. Increasing runoff can only can lead to damage, i.e. erosion, in other areas.</i>	See the response to Comment 53.02. Additionally, as described in Appendix A of the DEIS, sediment control structures would be used to minimize erosion. These measures would include sediment fences, berms, straw wattles, slope drains, and check dams. Slope stabilization measures would also be employed including covering exposed soil with plastic sheeting, straw mulching, or other approved methods. An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) would be developed and implemented for the proposed Project, as required by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Discharge Permit (ODEQ 2005) and pursuant to Oregon Revised Statutes 468B.050 and Section 402 of the Federal Clean Water Act.
53.06	SOIL	<i>One important point missing is how the areas, damaged by heavy equipment, will be restored, to what degree they will be restored, & how long it will take this fragile environment to recover. These questions should be answered before proceeding.</i>	See the response to Comment 53.02.
53.07	VIS	<i>3.9.3.2 Permanent Effects. In paragraph 1.3.1 (a) mentioned above says, "Protects the natural resources associated with public lands and adjacent lands, whether PRIVATE or administered by a government entity." The last sentence in 3.9.3.2 Permanent Effects is a direct contradiction to 1.3.1(a). Approving the ROW for the transmission lines will assure the installation of the wind turbines altering one of the greatest natural resources of this area, Scenic Beauty. Installation of the transmission line towers, even though colored to blend with the landscape, will clutter the views & degrade pristine nature of this rugged area. Not even in one of the pictures, 3.9-10, 3.9-12, 3.9-14, 3.9-17, 3.9-21, was the landscape enhanced by the power transmission lines or associated towers.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.148.

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53.08	VIS	<i>There was no reference to the visual effects from Frenchglen or the Alvord Desert. Although outside the 5 mile radius the nighttime sky will be altered by the approval of the ROW. The red & white flashing lights installed on the turbine towers will be visible for many miles. The feeling of aloneness one gets when stargazing in this remote part of our state will be gone.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.139 for a discussion about the impacts caused by obstruction lighting. Figure 3.9-8 was added to the FEIS to illustrate the extent of visibility of the strobes up to 20+ miles from the Echanis Project. As this figure illustrates, the visible range of the strobes would be minimal because of the use of a narrow vertical beam spread.
53.09	VIS	<i>In addition to this one of the greatest visual impact areas will be from the southern viewpoint of the Kiger Gorge. Figure 3.9-5 depicts a view from Mann Lake if the ROW is approved & the turbines are installed, yet on file you have a to scale picture of what the view will be from the south rim of the Kiger Gorge. It is much more graphic. Views are greatly altered. The towers are huge, figure 2.1-10, in comparison to the view of them from Mann Lake. It is a discredit to the BLM and to the Burns office to have that picture omitted from this report. I strongly suggest it be added to the report so all interested parties can see what a devastating blow those turbines will have on the view of the Kiger Gorge.</i>	Previous simulations were prepared by the Applicant during their various applications for county permits. The analysis conducted by the BLM indicated that wind turbines from the Echanis Wind Project would not be visible from the southern viewpoint of the Kiger Gorge. However, under the cumulative effects section, a simulation was developed for the Kiger overlook. This revealed that with the addition of other reasonably foreseeable and future actions, such as the East and West Ridge wind turbines a moderate impact would occur. The analysis completed for visual resources was completed consistent with BLM VRM guidance that included BLM Manuals H-8400, H-8410-1, H-8431.
53.10	GEN2	<i>I believe the environmental impact will be greater than anticipated. The scars we put in the fragile environment in Central & Eastern Oregon including the Steens Mtns. do not repair quickly....In my estimation it would be in the best interests of the BLM, the citizens of Oregon and any future visitors to this area for the BLM to purchase all land adjacent to the study area in an effort to preserve the uniqueness of this valuable asset....I strongly support the "No Action" Alternative, Alternative A. A Right Of Way should NOT be granted through this fragile area.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
54.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
55.01	GEN1	<i>I would like to express my support for the proposed windfarm in Harney County, in eastern Oregon near the Steens Mountains, which will be located on private property. I would like to encourage the BLM to approve either the B or C alternative corridors for the proposed North Steens transmission line. This important renewable energy project cannot move forward without this approval by the BLM.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
56.01	GEN1	<i>My husband and I both fully support the North Steens Transmission Line; either alternative A or B. We sincerely hope that the BLM will allow the applicant to move forward with this project. The green jobs, benefit to the US economy, and avoiding global climate change are positive impacts of the North Steens Transmission Line that cannot be overlooked. Additionally, I am aware that the proposed area has faced staggering unemployment rates for many years, and the jobs created by this project would help not only the immediate area; but Oregon State as a whole.</i>	Your support for the project is acknowledged.
56.02	GEN1	<i>Finally, the minimal impact to views in the Steens Wilderness are surely worth the cost when you consider the environmental benefits of such a project. As a country, we need to focus on creating green power, green jobs, and rebuilding our economy; all of which would be accomplished by moving forward with the North Steens Transmission Line.</i>	Your support for the project is acknowledged.
57.01	GEN1	<i>I support either Alternative B or Alternative C in the North Steens Transmission Line EIS. Due diligence was demonstrated in the volume of data within the EIS and I see nothing that would not warrant the approval of either of the two alternatives. This is an opportunity for the Harney County community to realize positive economic growth for the first time in decades as well as making a positive contribution to renewable energy resources that are necessary into the future.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
58.01	WIL	<i>A transmission route in the Steens mountain area will impact an area already stressed by the introduction of invasive species (grass carp in the Malheur refuge),...</i>	Noxious weeds were addressed in Section 3.3 (Vegetation) of the DEIS. Additionally, protection measures are described in the Plan of Development (POD) for the transmission line (CEP 2009) and were detailed in Appendix A of the DEIS.
58.02	WILA	<i>A transmission route in the Steens mountain area will ... further disrupt the habitat of the sage grouse ...</i>	See the response to Comment 44.03.

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58.03	WIL	<i>A transmission route in the Steens mountain area will...further clutter the unique open range of that area. Please take whatever steps are necessary to prevent its construction</i>	Your comment is acknowledged.
59.01	GEN1	<i>I support either Alternative B or C for the North Steens Transmission Line. I sincerely hope the BLM will expeditiously direct the applicant to move forward with an environmentally sensitive route for this transmission line needed to develop wind energy resources that will allow our country and the state of Oregon to achieve its goals of increasing domestic energy sources, creating sorely needed jobs in Eastern Oregon, and helping to reduce the carbon footprint of our existing energy mix.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
59.02	ECO	<i>The project will provide hundreds of jobs in a region of the state suffering from chronic high unemployment.</i>	The potential employment-related benefits of the proposed Project were discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.3 (Social and Economic Values).
59.03	ECO	<i>It will allow large landowners to maintain their property intact without selling off parcels to meet operating expenses. It will also provide a large tax base to Harney County. I urge the BLM to approve this project</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
61.01	GEN1	<i>Support for the Proposed Transmission Line (either Alternative B or C) for the N. Steens Mountain Area... To disallow something as elementary as power transmission, for whatever reason, would not be in the best interest of the Private property of Public property; and therefore, private/public land management.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
61.02	ECO	<i>To diminish the ability of private property to capitalize in any reasonable economic endeavor within the Steens area is not in accordance with BLM's direction in the Steens legislation more the Cooperative Landscape Management Agreement. Compatible economic development and/or livestock grazing are two of the highest and best uses of the resources on the Steens.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
62.01	GEN1	<i>I strongly support the N. Steens Transmission Line, either Alternative B or C. I hope the BLM will move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that allows our county to slow the impact to climate change will gaining 'green jobs'. The wind projects proposed by CEP will produce more than half of their output in the winter months when the region needs 'green power' the most. There are few projects with the potential to produce significant renewable power in those periods, which is important to shutting down the coal-fired power plants that are the single largest source of pollution in the region... The EIS is exhaustive in its review and points conclusively towards approving the transmission line in either of the two main routes proposed.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
62.02	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative. 1) private landowners will be forced to break up their ranches; 2) Revitalization of the local economy; 3) Oregon has above average unemployment and faces a \$3 billion budget gap in the next legislative session; and 4) Oregon has set a policy on building a "green economy" - these project are essential to continuing that forward momentum.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.04.
62.03	VIS	<i>CEP has considered visual impacts and we cannot have the boundaries of a wilderness be the wilderness itself. After all, the boundaries of most Oregon wildernesses are clear cuts.</i>	No buffer zones are created around wilderness areas to protect them from the influence of activities on adjacent land. When activities are proposed, the BLM must identify the specific impacts upon wilderness resources and upon public use of the wilderness area (BLM Manual 8560)(see also page 3.1.3-2).
63.01	WAT	<i>The DEIS fails to give adequate consideration to likely impacts to water and wetlands resources in violation of NEPA and FLPMA. The DEIS give only cursory treatment to the anticipated impacts to waterbodies, riparian areas, and wetlands associated with the proposed project, and fails to provide more than the vaguest of mitigation proposals... Additionally, the insufficient analysis fails to comply with the requirements of the FLMPMA, the Clean Water Act, and Oregon state Law.</i>	The DEIS was prepared meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQs) Guidelines, the BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (H-1790-1), Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Clean Water Act, applicable Oregon State Law, and other regulations as outlined in DEIS Section 3.2 (Water Resources). It also was carefully reviewed by the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to ensure that the DEIS met applicable agency requirements. See response to comment 63.15.

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63.02	ALT	<i>The DEIS fails to adequately explore alternatives and to take the requisite hard look at impacts. The DEIS does not provide adequate information for the public or federal and state agencies to make informed decisions about the proposed project.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
63.03	WET	<i>The DEIS fails to include terms and conditions to adequately protect waterbodies, wetlands and riparian areas affected by the project, or evaluate any alternatives that consider potential conditions. The DEIS contains none of the mandatory terms and conditions to carry out the purposes of FLPMA and "minimize damage to scenic and esthetic values and fish and wildlife habitat and otherwise protect the environment".</i>	See the responses to Comments 63.01 and 63.15.
63.04	ALT	<i>The DEIS does not demonstrate that any ROW would "prevent unnecessary or undue degradation" of the lands BLM manages on and near Steens Mountain, including the rare and essential aquatic resources there.</i>	As stated in DEIS Section 1.4, the BLM will decide whether or not to grant the ROW request from the Applicant, and if so, under what terms and conditions to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation of BLM-administered lands. The Applicant has proposed a variety of measures to protect aquatic resources on BLM-administered lands which were described on page A-7, A-17 to A-20 and page A-21 in Appendix A of the DEIS.
63.05	WAT	<i>The DEIS fails to provide adequate information on clean water act compliance... The proposed action would cause unacceptable adverse impacts both individually and in combination with known and/or probable impacts of other activities affecting the ecosystem of concern. The DEIS lacks essential information for the agencies to determine whether the proposed action would comply with the 404(b)(1) guidelines. In numerous essential aspects, sufficient information does not exist in the DEIS to make a reasonable judgment as to whether the proposed wetland fill activities will comply with these Guidelines. The applicant has failed to provide the requisite information (i.e. location of transmission line poles have yet to be determined).</i>	The proposed Project would obtain and comply with all necessary permits, including those required under Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). See response to comment 63.15.
63.06	SOI	<i>The required Erosion and Sediment Control Plan has yet to be drafted.</i>	A Draft Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) has been developed and is included in Appendix F. The ESCP would be implemented for the proposed Project, as required by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System Stormwater Discharge Permit (ODEQ 2005) and pursuant to Oregon Revised Statutes 468B.050 and Section 402 of the Federal Clean Water Act.
63.07	WET	<i>The proposed action would alter wetlands that perform functions important to the public interest...The wetlands proposed for destruction are important..because wetlands serve significant biological functions, contain important environmental characteristics, are groundwater discharge areas, serve significant water purification functions, and are scarce in quantity in this region.</i>	The DEIS is straightforward about the benefits of wetlands, stating that "Wetlands and riparian areas are of critical importance to the protection and maintenance of a large array of plants and animals, including threatened and endangered species, because they provide essential habitats. Wetlands and riparian areas help protect the quality of surface water by impeding the erosive forces of moving water and trapping waterborne sediment and associated pollutants, protecting water supplies by assisting the purification of surface water and groundwater resources, maintaining base flow to surface waters through the gradual release of stored floodwaters and groundwater, and providing a natural means of flood control and storm damage protection through the absorption and storage of water during high-runoff periods" (Section 3.4, second paragraph). Minimal alteration to wetlands is expected and with the proposed mitigation, no net loss of function of the wetland system is expected. See response to comment 63.15.
63.08	WET	<i>The DEIS fails to assess all potential impacts to wetlands and riparian area.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.07.
63.09	WET	<i>The DEIS states that "most springs are typically dry by May (3.4-2), yet field visits to the proposed project site to determine the presence of wetlands and riparian areas were conducted in late May and June 2008 - the dry season.</i>	Wetland criteria will be met even if spring/stream flow is absent. For sites to be wetlands under jurisdictional definition, two of the three wetland indicators (wetland hydrology, soils, and vegetation) must be met. Therefore, the jurisdictional definition of a wetland need not include hydrology.
63.10	WET	<i>Conducting wetland delineation field visits during the dry summer months likely led to improperly low count of wetland areas. Delineation field visits should have occurred during the</i>	See the responses to Comments 63.09 and 76.180.

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		<i>wet season in this dry area of the state.</i>	
63.11	WAT	<i>The high water mark of streams was determined through direct observation. This observation should have occurred during wet months when stream flow is at its peak.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.180.
63.12	WET	<i>There is a complete lack of analysis on wetlands within the project footprint... Indirect effects of this construction on adjacent wetlands are entirely possible and should have been analyzed. All wetlands in the project area should have been analyzed. Small adjustments in the proposed project route could affect these wetlands, yet they are entirely ignored by the DEIS.</i>	Indirect effects of the Project, including road building, are discussed in Section 3.4 (Wetlands) as well as Section 2 (Project Description). For example, Section 3.4 states "Roads would not be paved with impervious surfaces, but would be cleared and graded. Permanent effects would include reduced interception and infiltration of precipitation. In addition, the grading of roads and construction of the bridge has the potential to increase erosion near and in stream channels. These potential effects would be minimized by the design practices described in Section 2." Additionally, temporary indirect effects to wetlands from construction would be minimized by the use of BMPs, as discussed in Section 3.4, Section 2, as well as the Project's Conditional Use Permit application, erosion and sediment control plans, stormwater pollution prevention plans, and any other necessary permits.
63.13	WET	<i>The DEIS ignores wetlands that would "be completely spanned by the transmission line." Both potential direct and indirect effects to these wetlands are part of any complete environmental analysis of the project.</i>	Wetlands that are spanned by the transmission lines are shown in Figure 3.4-1 (shown in red and noted in the Figure as "T-Wetland type-Wetland number"). The discussion of permanent effects of Alternative B discussed the details of spanning 1.16 miles of wetlands, including five wetland crossings and 10 riparian areas; discussions of other alternatives include similar analyses (see Sections 3.4.3.3, 3.4.3.4, and 3.4.3.5).
63.14	WAT	<i>The DEIS refers to directional drilling as a proposed technique for stream crossings, yet has no discussion of the potential impacts of this activity.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.20.

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63.15	WET	<p><i>The DEIS fails to provide the public with adequate information on proposed mitigation for loss of wetlands. It only states that these specific mitigation measures 'will be described in the Compensatory Wetland Mitigation (CWM) Plan'. The lack of this information deprives the public an opportunity to comment.</i></p>	<p>The Compensatory Wetland Mitigation (CWM) Plan would be developed after the alternative is chosen. Development of the CWM Plan is not a public process. Section 230.10(a)(3) of the Wetland MOA sets forth the presumption that "Compensatory mitigation may not be used as a method to reduce environmental impacts in the evaluation of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative..."</p> <p>DEIS Section 3.4.3 (Wetlands) states, "During development of the Project plan, the Project proponent worked with wetland biologists to minimize the effects of project development on wetlands and riparian areas. For example, the original design for the main access road to the Echanis site would have required five stream crossings, but the current plan has only three. In addition, bottomless arch culverts would be used instead of round culverts at several stream crossing locations along the access road to maintain the integrity of the streambed. These bottomless arch culverts were chosen because they can be installed without impacting the active stream channel."</p> <p>Other Project-specific minimization and mitigation measures are discussed in Section 2 and Appendix A, and include: Transmission line: The Applicant would exercise care to ensure protection of all aquatic, riparian, and wetland habitat on the BLM- and USFWS-administered land. To minimize the amount of disturbance, structure locations would be chosen to avoid features such as riparian areas and watercourses and/or to allow conductors to clearly span the features, within limits of standard pole design. During future O&M activities, if woody vegetation within 100 feet of streams needs to be managed, it would be cut with a chainsaw. Herbaceous plants and low-growing shrubs would be left in place (Appendix A-7).</p> <p>Additional BMPs and Design Features (Appendix A-21) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly mark wetland boundaries and buffers in the field until construction is complete; • Conduct construction in wetland areas during the dry season, to minimize water flow through exposed soils; • Use sediment barriers to prevent sediment flow into wetland and riparian areas; • Prohibit the storage of hazardous materials and equipment refueling within 100 feet of any wetland, riparian areas, or waterbody (500 feet on BLM and/or USFWS land); • Restore disturbed areas to preconstruction contours, restore or replace damaged vegetation, and implement any required vegetation monitoring plans; and • Develop and adhere to the Erosion and Sediment Control Plan. • Riparian vegetation would be avoided to the extent compatible with construction objectives. • If riparian vegetation has been trampled or otherwise disturbed, revegetation planting would include riparian meadow species. • "End haul" construction methods would be considered for portions of the main access road to Echanis where the road parallels riparian and wetland areas. End haul construction refers to situations where a cut is made in a side slope and the spoils are hauled to a disposal site or used for fill in less critical areas. This method helps to avoid placing fill above water features and ensures downslope vegetation remains intact between the road and water feature to act as a buffer and sediment filter.
63.16	WET	<p><i>The DEIS lack information on the proposed location of mitigation, timing and any detail beyond the proposed 1:1.5 mitigation ration.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 63.15.</p>

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63.17	WET	<i>The application fails to incorporate practicable steps that will minimize potential adverse impacts of the discharge on the aquatic ecosystem... Simply stating that BMPs will be used is insufficient for evaluation of mitigation measures specific to this site.</i>	The Project would utilize industry standard BMPs, as stated in DEIS Section 3.4.3 (Wetlands). These industry standard BMPs are accepted by regulatory agencies as adequate, and would include monitoring to ensure compliance with DSL and ACOE regulations. Additional information has been added to the FEIS in Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife - Fish Resources) to describe the permits that would be required. This text states, "As required by the Project's Conditional Use Permit from Harney County, reasonable erosion and siltation controls would be provided within 100 feet of riparian areas during construction. The road widening could cause sedimentation in Mud Creek if BMPs were overwhelmed by heavy rainfall, occurred at a rate that the BMPs could not process, or if there was improper installation of protective barriers. As required by the Project's Conditional Use Permit from Harney County, facilities would be designed to operate so as to minimize erosion and disturbance to natural drainages. The Applicant would be required to obtain a NPDES 1200-C permit from ODEQ prior to commencement of construction. This would require the Applicant to maintain any and all stormwater, flood control, and drainage facilities required by that permit in a safe condition, in good repair, and in a manner capable of being operated as designed."
63.18	WAT	<i>The listing of BMPs to be used is inadequate for a proper analysis of the effectiveness of the vague proposed sediment control measures. The description of a general BMP without site specific considerations is worthless to the public and agencies for proper evaluation of the measures to be used for mitigation of environmental impacts caused by construction activities.</i>	The proposed Project would obtain and comply with all necessary permits (Section 3.2, Water Resources), including those required under Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Sediment control measures would be compliant with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction permit requirements, and the Project's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), which would be developed after an alternative is chosen.
63.19	WAT	<i>Mitigation lacks specifics regarding the water quality and habitat impacts of the improvements to roads</i>	See the response to Comment 76.124.
63.20	WAT	<i>Mitigation lacks design specifics and analysis of potential impacts of directional drilling</i>	Directional drilling is an avoidance measure. Residual effects from directional drilling are discussed in Section 3.2.3 (Water Resources).
63.21	WAT	<i>Failure to assess how much of an increase in semi-impervious surfaces will result from road improvements, and how surface flow runoff will be affected by said road improvements. These forms of pollution could be increased sedimentation due to increased surface flow runoff, or debris and hydrocarbons such as oil washed from the road surfaces during storm events. The DEIS should evaluate the effects of greater semi-impervious areas and changes in storm water drainage dynamics resulting from road widening and construction, and also evaluate the potential from increased pollutants entering riparian areas, streams, and wetlands, from the resulting increased storm water runoff.</i>	See the responses to Comments 63.17 and 63.18.
63.22	WAT	<i>Lack of specific work windows.</i>	The proposed Project would obtain and comply with all necessary permits, including those required under Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). Work windows would be in compliance with these permits.
63.23	WAT	<i>Lack of timeline for replanting and habitat restoration</i>	The timeline for replanting and habitat restoration would be developed as a part of the permitting process. Also see response to comment 52.01 regarding a Habitat Mitigation Plan.
63.24	WAT	<i>Lack of specific information on use of herbicides in wetland and riparian areas</i>	Impacts from spraying to control for noxious weeds are described in the DEIS Section 3.3 (Vegetation). Additionally, as stated in Appendix A of the DEIS, the Applicant would treat vegetation and weeds under State and Federal herbicide application guidelines. In the event any pesticides or herbicides would be used on the site, the facility operator would comply with all State of Oregon and federal laws and regulations regulating the handling, storage, use, and disposal of those pesticides or herbicides. Pesticides or herbicides would be applied only by the landowner or, upon consultation with the landowner, by a professional charged with observance of all regulations governing use and selection of herbicides.
63.25	WAT	<i>Lack of specific information on tower placement in wetlands and riparian areas.</i>	See the responses to Comments 63.12, 63.13 and 63.15.

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63.26	WAT	<i>The proposed project would violate Oregon's water quality standard for temperature by removing riparian vegetation that shades streams, causing stream heating and long a wide construction easement.</i>	Any impacts to water quality would be managed through the Project's 401 Water Quality Certification, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) construction permit, Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, Restoration and Re-vegetation Plan, and the Project's Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). To the extent possible, removal of riparian vegetation would be avoided. Increased turbidity due to sedimentation would be managed through implementation of BMPs and PDFs (Appendix A) as required under the Project's NPDES construction permit and the Project's SWPPP.
63.27	WAT	<i>The proposed project would violate Oregon's water quality standard for turbidity by causing an increase in turbidity levels in stream segments impacted by the installations.</i>	See the responses to Comments 63.17 and 63.26.
63.28	WAT	<i>The DEIS fails to analyze specific impacts to impaired streams or to explain how the applicant will or can comply with Oregon's water quality standards.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26. Section 3.2.2.4 (Water) and Table 3.2-1 of the DEIS provided a discussion and listing of impaired streams and water quality issues in the Project Area.
63.29	WAT	<i>The applicant has failed to demonstrate that the beneficial uses of resident fish and aquatic life will be protected and that the waters will no be further degraded by the project.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26. Section 3.2.2.4 (Water) and Table 3.2-1 of the DEIS provided a discussion and listing of impaired streams and water quality issues in the Project Area.
63.30	P&N	<i>The applicant has failed to prove the necessity of this project, and therefore the state will not be able to determine that the benefits of the diminished water quality outweigh the environmental costs of the reduced water quality.</i>	The Project Design Features (PDFs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) listed in Appendix A of the DEIS (particularly those on pages A-17 through A-19) are expected to effectively address water quality concerns (as stated in DEIS Section 3.2, Water Resources). Federal permits required that would minimize water quality impacts include the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit and the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Stormwater General Permit. State permits required include the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Section 401 Water Quality Certification. These permits in conjunction with an EIS review provided by ACOE as a cooperating agency would ensure that water quality is protected. Additional information regarding the necessity of this Project has been added to Section 3.18 (Energy).
63.31	WAT	<i>No complete analysis of turbidity impacts is include in the DEIS. Instead the DEIS relies on BMPs, yet the DEIS gives little specific information to justify the assumption that, particularly in steep areas, BMPs will be adequate to prevent turbidity impacts to streams.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26 and 63.17. Section 3.2.2.4 (Water) and Table 3.2-1 of the DEIS provided a discussion and listing of impaired streams and water quality issues in the Project Area.
63.32	WAT	<i>The proposed action would violate the state of Oregon's antidegradation policy for already impaired waterbodies. Under 340-041-0004...</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26. Section 3.2.2.4 (Water) and Table 3.2-1 of the DEIS provided a discussion and listing of impaired streams and water quality issues in the Project Area.
63.33	WAT	<i>The DEIS fails entirely to demonstrate that the project will comply with FLMPA, the CWA, or Oregon state law. The failure to analyze the impacts to wetlands, riparian areas and streams in any detail, the total lack of a mitigation plan and erosion and sediment control plan, and the heavy reliance on general and unspecific BMPs is entirely inadequate under NEPA.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.01, 63.17 and 63.26.
66.01	X	<i>Email introducing attached documents</i>	No response required.
67.01	GEN2	<i>I am writing to urge the BLM to adopt "Alternative A - No Action" in the Draft EIS on the proposed North Steens Transmission Line...Oregon has plenty of other land suitable for wind development - just not here.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
68.01	GEN2	<i>I have reviewed Section 3.12 -- Wild Horses and Burrows -- and Section 3.19 -- Cumulative Effects (which covers every area of consideration) -- of the draft EIS. I support Alternative A -- No Action. There would be many detrimental effects on the environment from this Project right from the start.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
68.02	WIL	<i>New access roads would fragment the area. Heavy equipment operations would bring noise and disruption to wildlife.</i>	See the response to Comment 39.02.
68.03	VEG	<i>Noxious weeds and invasive plants would be spread by the incoming traffic, causing infestations and increasing the risks of fire.</i>	While increased traffic has the potential to increase opportunities for noxious weed introduction and spread, an aggressive approach to monitoring and treatment, coupled with the Best Management Practices would reduce the potential for spread.

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68.04	WIL	<i>Once the transmission line is installed, collisions causing the deaths of migratory birds would occur. Raptors would be afforded additional perches from which to dive down on their victims, thereby increasing the number of avian predators while diminishing the ranks of prey fowl such as grouse.</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02 and 44.03.
68.05	WHB	<i>Wild horses and burros would be disturbed by the presence of humans.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
68.06	SOI	<i>Graded and paved access roads...would lead to increased flooding and erosion.</i>	As summarized in DEIS Appendix A, measures would be employed to minimize potential flooding and erosion. Roads would be constructed with crossroad drainage to minimize the amount of channeling or ditches required. Water bars would be installed in areas where curves and significant grade changes are present. To limit access into the area following construction, all new or improved access roads not required for maintenance would be closed using the least environmentally damaging methods appropriate. During construction, access roads would be watered to avoid generation of dust. Water, weed-free straw, wood chips, dust reducer, or gravel may also be used to reduce dust and erosion.
69.01	X	<i>Email introducing attached documents</i>	No response required.
70.01	GEN2	<i>As a falconer, sportsman, naturalist, and conservationist with a high personal interest in sage grouse, I request that BLM not permit or allow the use of public lands for anything which creates a proven long-term hazard to sensitive species or degradation of their habitat. There are routes and techniques which can be taken for transmission line infrastructure that do not have high environmental costs to sensitive species.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
70.02	EDT	<i>I could not find the citation for "Strickland 2010" in the reference section. Support for some aspects of the project which rely on assertions in the DEIS for which a complete citation could not be found is of a serious concern... If those citations are in the document I retract my comment.</i>	The citation was added to the References section of the FEIS.
70.03	WILA	<i>Regarding the impact of energy development in sage grouse habitat, there are many very closely related studies which, getting back to the title of Secretary of Interior Salazar's press release about "Common-Sense Efforts", are essentially equivalent to the issue of the negative impact of wind development on sage grouse. Specifically regarding transmission lines, (which is what the DEIS was basically written to address), the study by Walker, B.L., D.E. Naugle, and K.E. Doherty, published in 2007, "Greater sage grouse population response to energy development and habitat loss" in the Journal of Wildlife Management 71(8):2644-2654 found that lek persistence was negatively influenced by the proportion of transmission lines and CBNG development within 6.4 km of the lek (considered as two separate factors).</i>	This article briefly discusses a "weakly supported" model showing that there are negative effects to lek-persistence from power lines. However, the article's focus is on coal bed natural gas development, and mainly discusses impacts from roads as opposed to transmission lines. This article is now discussed in the FEIS, Section 3.5.2.3, as follows, "Fragmentation by rarely-traveled dirt roads has not shown a negative influence on lek persistence (Walker et al. 2007), nor has presence of secondary roads (Sage Grouse Monograph Ch. 17). However, frequently used roads associated with coal bed natural gas development in Wyoming and Montana did negatively influence lek persistence (Walker et al. 2007)." See also the response to Comment 39.02.
70.04	WILA	<i>If the ROW is allowed through the BLM managed lands, then BLM should require that the transmission lines should be installed underground (Avoidance behavior by prairie grouse: implications for development of wind energy" by Prueett CL, Patten MA, Wolfe DH). Additionally, if ROW permitting is allowed by the BLM, there needs to be an ODFW or USFWS sponsored 5 to 7-year post-construction monitoring study to determine the impact of the project development compared to pre-construction populations of sage grouse. The funding for this study needs to be paid for by the ROW applicant. Any finding of a decline in sage grouse as a result of the study needs to then be followed by an additional 2-3% of the projected value of this project per year for a minimum of 10 years, paid for by the applicant, to be used for sage grouse habitat enhancement or easements protecting leks in eastern Oregon. The labor involved in creating these types of habitat improvements (such as building guzzlers or removing western junipers) will also help the economic well being of the eastern Oregon, through both the jobs created, as well as to improve wildlife habitat in the region to stimulate future wildlife recreation in the area. Additionally, these habitat improvements need to occur on public lands, not private lands, as the request for a ROW permit is to degrade wildlife habitat critical to sensitive species on public</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 52.01.

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		<i>lands.</i>	
70.05	WILA	<i>Any time the BLM considers granting transmission line easements across sage grouse habitat it needs to assess a user access fee up front on the overall project cost of this type of a for profit venture, something in the 2-3% of total project value could be used for mitigation work. US taxpayers will be subsidizing wind energy development via tax incentives; an access fee to pay for mitigation seems more than reasonable.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
70.06	WILA	<i>In general, in all cases, if permitting is allowed through any public lands it should be through routes which are less desirable to sage grouse, such as land which is hilly and not desirable habitat as sage grouse leks and not through relatively flat sage steppe which are highly desirable as lek habitat</i>	See the response to Comment 155.13.
70.07	WILA	<i>The recent US Fish and Wildlife Service commissioned studies on golden eagle populations in the American West which resulted in the publication of a Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) in April of this year concluded there is reason for concern at this time about golden eagle populations. If there truly is a concern about golden eagle populations by the US government, then creating situations that are likely to result in anticipated loss of any golden eagles would seem to be too much at this point in time. Perhaps in the future, when the USFWS deems the American golden eagle population to be able to absorb human-caused loss, construction of a commercial wind farm ROW would be more appropriate for consideration.</i>	See the responses to Comments 46.09 and 155.24. The Applicant has consulted with the USFWS and has conducted pre-construction surveys to assist in minimizing the impacts to eagles through micro-siting.
71.01	GEN2	<i>I am completely opposed to wind tower and transmission lines on the Steens. This will be a big regret in the near future. The only ones to have significant long term gain are the land owner where the wind farm goes up and the energy company. The Federal Government should not allow this in or around the Steens Mountain. The impact of development and commercialization will destroy the Steens. There are no routes for the transmission lines that are favorable. Alternative C has a stretch where the transmission line proposed to run from Anderson Valley and Princeton to Crane know as (Raptor Alley) would be a huge Error. I have seen as many as 10 or more Bald and Golden Eagles on a single drive through this stretch. This would be very poor Planning to run a transmission line in this stretch.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
72.01	GEN1	<i>We support the North Steens Transmission Line Project. This Transmission line is necessary for this wind project to be a reality and wind generation located where the best resources are important not only to this community but to the whole country and also the earth. This project will help support this county with tax revenue and much needed jobs. We all hope that the line can be built on a route with the least environmental impact but it needs to be built. We have been a local business owner in this county for the past 17 years and I feel that any new jobs can only be a much needed asset to the county.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.

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73.01	REQ	<i>Each of the military components operate low-level military training routes within the vicinity of the project location, including Instrument Route (IR) 316 and IR 319, and Visual Route (VR) 1301, VR 1301, and VR 1352. After an initial assessment, this office requested and received GIS files in an attempt to conduct additional analysis on the effect of both the proposed transmission project alternatives and the approved and proposed wind farm locations considered as connected actions and as a part of a cumulative effects analysis within the DEIS. Unfortunately we were unable to open and use the files in such an analysis.</i>	In response to this comment, BLM initiated informal consultation with the DoD concerning the Echanis Project. Additional versions of Echanis Project shape files were provided to DoD on December 14, 2010, as requested. No additional response from DoD has been received since that time. Also see the response to Comment 73.02.
73.02	CME	<i>The Department of Defense requests that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) utilize previously provided data on low-level military training routes in conducting an analysis of the both the proposed project alternatives, the approved wind farm location addressed as a connected action within the DEIS, and the proposed wind farm locations considered within the cumulative effects analysis. Data on low-level military training routes has been previously provided to the BLM pursuant to the DoD-BLM Wind Energy Protocol (July 2008). While transmission projects are not subject to the referral and review protocol established in the subject agreement, the DoD seeks full consider and disclosure of the impacts of the proposed project within the FEIS, including the connected and anticipated wind farm development which could be served by the proposed transmission line.</i> <i>In the event that GIS data on the MTRs are not readily available, please contact me and we will arrange for it to be provided. Our office can also arrange to provide other data needed to assess impacts on MTRs effected by the proposed alternatives and connected actions, as well as within the cumulative effect analysis.</i>	BLM has included additional analysis about military training routes and operating areas in the FEIS. See Section 3.15 (Public Health and Safety) and Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects). In addition, BLM notes that in April 2009, the Applicant secured FAA Determinations of No Hazard to Air Navigation (DNE) for each of the proposed wind turbine locations on the Echanis Project site. During this process the Applicant was asked by FAA to consult with DoD about the Project. According to the Applicant, the outcome of this consultation was that DoD agreed to raise their flight floors in and around the Echanis Project to avoid conflicts to military air operations.
74.01	WILA	<i>The DEIS document states "The National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, which amended National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966, requires that any activity on a refuge be determined to be compatible with the Refuge System mission and refuge purpose(s)." We fail to see how approving a transmission line across the major north-south flyway corridor of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is compatible with refuge purposes when it is acknowledged that there will be hundreds of birds and bats killed annually by this same transmission line. The intended purpose of the refuge remains to be the protection of wildlife rather than promoting the unnecessary taking of such life, however incidental. Allowing the power lines to cross the refuge, especially at a narrow corridor connecting prime habitat used by cranes, pelicans, geese, eagles, and other large birds, is in fact clearly contrary to the mission and refuge purpose. Birds will be killed.</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02 and 158.05.
74.02	CME	<i>In the variety of scoping comments summarized in the DEIS document there are concerns or requests that a comprehensive evaluation include cumulative impacts of all four of the proposed wind developments expected to utilize this transmission line, yet there seems to be uneven efforts to evaluate these cumulative effects. While there is mention only of the Echanis project and environmental impacts its development will create, there is direct acknowledgement that this transmission line will eventually service the other three proposed wind developments (i.e. the extensive evaluation of views done for all four sites). Despite these projects being sited on private land as in the case of East and West Ridge as well as Echanis, the impacts of these developments will cross over to public land and this is acknowledged only for the Echanis project. The impacts of the power line and Echanis will spill over into the overall ecosystem including the CMPA which the BLM is required to manage for the overall and sustained health of the ecosystem, its "ecological integrity". Although there are many examples referring to the impact of the Echanis project such as "Greater sage-grouse would likely be displaced from their summer and winter habitats in the Echanis Project" there is no mention of the impact on the birds (warranted for endangered species protection) from the impending and expected development of the other wind projects. These cumulative impacts cannot be ignored if the EIS process is expected to actually evaluate the environmental impacts of the transmission lines.</i>	The BLM has worked diligently to avoid, minimize, and mitigate the potential negative effects from the transmission line and wind turbines. We acknowledge that the proposed Project would change the landscape. The potential effects upon fish, wildlife, and special status animals from these Projects were acknowledged on pages 3.19-15 to 3.19-17 (Cumulative Effects) of the DEIS. See response to comment 76.009.

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		<i>Each impact alone may be inconsequential, but taken as a whole the impacts become unacceptable and it is improper to avoid such an analysis.</i>	
74.03	WIL	<i>While visual impacts of all 4 projects are described to great extent, the ecological impacts of the adjacent proposed East and West Ridge developments are not mentioned even though the transmission lines are intended to serve these projects as well. The fragmentation of the landscape from roads, the impacts to big game, raptor strikes, the displacement of sage grouse from foraging habitat not to mention the category 1 habitat surrounding nearby impacted leks, etc. may be considered acceptable losses in the DEIS by some, but they are only acceptable because these impacts are not being fully analyzed as required by NEPA. There may be no leks on the Echanis site for instance, but there certainly are several documented leks directly effected by the other proposed sites and they will certainly be negatively impacted by the additional development that the transmission lines will foster. In short the DEIS needs to analyze cumulative impacts on wildlife, streams, habitat etc. for all four wind developments associated with the transmission lines, just as such analysis was completed for view impacts. Were these broader and real impacts to be considered and analyzed, we believe they would be unacceptable to the public interest.</i>	Additional text has been added to the Cumulative Effects section (3.19.2.5) of the FEIS to describe nearby greater sage-grouse leks, as well as core and low-density habitat in the areas of the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Projects.
74.04	CME	<i>Columbia Energy Partners has stated numerous times that the Echanis project as a stand-alone project is economically unviable and there is every assumption that development of the other projects is intended and in fact must be pursued. Without evaluating the cumulative environmental impacts of all four developments as well as the transmission line itself, the whole EIS process is woefully insufficient and incomplete.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.009.
74.05	WIL	<i>It appears that a certain aspects of the DEIS were prepared by outside consultants and we believe that more direct input by BLM and USFW conducting their own studies or in consultation with ODFW to assess the impacts to wildlife such as sage grouse, raptors, big game, etc would yield more reliable and trustworthy data. If in fact a great deal of the wildlife and environmental data presented in the DEIS was derived by studies commissioned and paid for by Columbia Energy Partners, then there is clearly an inappropriate conflict of interest in relying solely on that data.</i>	Although the wildlife studies were conducted by the Applicant's consultants, the study results were reviewed by the BLM, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for adequacy and scientific rigor. Additional data was collected and relied upon to complement the results of the Applicant's field studies. The FEIS will include a more complete list of preparers.
74.06	VIS	<i>While the visual impacts of the transmission lines and collection of all proposed turbines are well documented in the document, the conclusion that "surface-disturbing activities and structures are in harmony with their surroundings" seems incongruent with public perception, however subjective. Steens Mountain is an iconic Oregon landmark because of its incomparable and stunning views, protected by the Steens Act in part because of these views. While the power lines may not be the most visible aspect of these developments, the associated wind turbines of course will mar forever the sweeping views from the mountain and numerous locations, views intended to be protected by the Steens Act. The fact that the DEIS provides so much detail and coverage of the visual impacts only underscores the enormous negative impact these developments will have.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.148.

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74.07	GEN2	<i>The Sierra Club must support the "No Action" Alternative A and believes the BLM and USFW should not grant the ROW for construction of the transmission line.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
75.01	CST	<i>Section 2.2.5.1 - Please note that the concrete used for the foundation will come from a duly-permitted batch plant to be located on-site, and the source for water used for construction will be a combination of groundwater and surface water obtained pursuant to a limited license or exempt well, as appropriate to the withdrawal conditions, from the Oregon Water Resources Department (ORWD).</i>	Your comment is acknowledged. Concrete Batch Plant and Aggregate Quarry information has been added to Section 2.4.6 of the Final EIS.
75.02	CST	<i>Section 2.2.5.4 - Please note that the aggregates referred to in this section will come from a quarry located on site. The quarry will be duly permitted under state and local requirements appropriate to the amount of materials being withdrawn and their intended use.</i>	Your comment is acknowledged. Concrete Batch Plant and Aggregate Quarry information has been added to Section 2.4.6 of the Final EIS.
75.03	WAT	<p><i>Section – 3.2.3.2 - This section does not account for the water resources that will be used during construction. Specifically, Echanis, LLC has applied to the Oregon Water Resources Department for a limited license to withdraw 110 gallons per minute (gpm) from Pasture Creek, a tributary of Kiger Creek, for the period from 4/1/2011 until 11/30/2011.</i></p> <p><i>Impacts resulting from surface withdrawals are reviewed by both ORWD and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to ensure protection of fish species. Echanis LLC will implement any mitigation measures required by ODFW such as screening of the water withdrawal line to prevent fish entrapment.</i></p> <p><i>Please include the effects, if any, of this withdrawal on the water resources in this section.</i></p>	<p>Water required to support the construction of the Echanis Project including concrete batching, road construction, and dust control is estimated as follows:</p> <p>Month 1- 3,000,000 gallons Month 2 - 3,400,000 gallons Month 3 - 3,400,000 gallons Month 4 - 3,000,000 gallons Month 5 - 1,500,000 gallons Month 6 - 1,500,000 gallons (source: Blattner Energy August 25, 2010)</p> <p>The above water requirements would be obtained by temporary extraction from Big Pasture Creek on the Project site. The extraction volume is estimated to be less than 10 percent of stream flow and that location and the extraction method would employ adequate screening to prevent damage to fish populations.</p> <p>Water required to support construction of the transmission line is estimated to be less than 12,000 gallons per day on an as-required basis for dust control. The total number of gallons to be used is estimated to be 240,000 gallons. The water required to support the transmission line construction effort would be obtained from existing storage facilities on Otley Bros. ranch.</p> <p>The O&M building on the Echanis Project site would be served by a domestic well. The estimated use for hand washing and lavatory facilities is estimated to be less than used by a typical household 69.3 gallons per person per day. At that use rate a maximum on-site staff of eight persons would use less than 554 gallons per day. (Source: American Water Works Association web site). This information has been added to Section 3.2.3.2 of the FEIS.</p>
75.04	WIL	<i>Section 3.5.2.2 - Please correct the wording as follows: "post-construction monitoring will be implemented to more accurately identify how some of the special status species are affected" should read "post-construction monitoring will be implemented to more accurately identify whether any of the special status species are affected."</i>	The text was changed in the FEIS, as requested in the comment.
75.05	WIL	<i>Section 3.5.3.2 (P, 3.5-25) - Please change the wording as follows: "implementation of the Habitat Mitigation Plan developed by the TAC will be necessary for ensuring proper compensation for lost grouse habitat" should read "implementation of a Habitat Mitigation Plan will be useful in determining proper compensation for lost grouse habitat".</i>	The text has been modified as follows: "Given this uncertainty, implementation of a Habitat Mitigation Plan developed by the TAC would be undertaken to ensure proper compensation for lost grouse habitat."

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75.06	WIL	<i>Section 3.5.3.2 (p. 3.5-26) It is unclear whether a take permit for golden eagles will be required for the Echanis Project. Accordingly, please change wording as follows: "a Programmatic BGEPA would be required to provide operational protection to the Project" to "the Applicant will develop an avian protection plan for the transmission line and the Echanis Project in consultation with USFW."</i>	See the response to Comment 155.24.
75.07	Public Services	<i>Section 3.8.4.2 - Please evaluate in greater detail the effects, if any, construction of the Echanis Project will have on public services of communities adjacent to the Echanis project, including Diamond and Crane, Oregon</i>	Section 3.8.4.2 (Public Services) has been enhanced in the FEIS to discuss the communities of Crane and Diamond, Oregon specifically. There would be no notable effects on the public services of these communities from the construction of the Echanis Project.
75.08	WHB	<i>Section 3.12.3.6 (p. 3.12.10) Please give examples of restrictions on construction activities that BLM may impose if foaling mares are present in the construction area.</i>	If foaling mares are observed to be present in the construction area, all construction activities in the immediate area would be temporarily halted until the foaling has been completed and the mother and offspring have departed the construction area.
75.09	TRA	<i>Section 3.14.3.2 - The construction personnel figure is not accurate; approximately 100 workers would be engaged in construction activities, with a maximum of approximately 36 workers on the site at one time.</i>	The text in Section 3.14.3.2 (Transportation, Echanis Project Effects Common to All Action Alternatives) of the FEIS was revised to reflect this information.
75.10	AIR	<i>Section 3.16.3.2 - Construction of the Echanis Project will require a quarry on-site and a concrete batch plant, both of which will be duly permitted. Both of these activities may result in fugitive dust that will be mitigated in the permit conditions associated with these activities. The estimated emissions should be included in Table 3.16-8.</i>	No quarry or concrete batch plant data were included in the equipment list/construction schedule (i.e., project description) dataset ENTRIX received from the Applicant (or fiduciary) at the outset of the Project and thus were not part of the analysis. Assessing such emissions is out-of-scope pursuant to the project description.
75.11	NOI	<i>Figure 3.17-1 - Mann Lake Campground and the campgrounds on the Loop Road should be included as noise receptors, and the noise from the Echanis Project, if any, at these receptors should be analyzed</i>	The BLM has analyzed additional information obtained from CEP regarding the proposed wind turbines for the Echanis Wind Turbine Project. As a result of this analysis, the noise effects disclosed in the Draft EIS exceed what is currently anticipated. New information pertaining to noise effects has been updated in Sections 3.5, 3.7, 3.13, 3.17, and 3.19. Permanent noise impacts would only exceed ambient noise levels and could exceed OEQC for the limited number of recreational users in the Lower Stonehouse WSA and LWC.
75.12	NOI	<i>Section 3.17.3.3 - Please clarify whether the corona noise would result in an increase of 38dB or a modeled amount of 38 dB; if it is an increase, please clarify how this is in compliance with the OARs that prohibit any 10 dB increase</i>	The perceived noise levels caused solely by corona noise was estimated to increase, but remain within 18 to 38 dBA, and would be only 3 dBA above existing ambient noise levels (assumed to be 26 to 35 dBA for wilderness areas, see Section 3.17.2.1 of the DEIS). There are currently no standards for transmission lines connected to wind energy facilities.
75.13	EDT	<i>Appendix A - As noted in the DEIS, the BLM's jurisdiction is applicable only to BLM lands where the transmission line will be located. Accordingly, please remove all references in Appendix A to BLM's approval of any aspect of the Echanis Project.</i>	The text on pages A-27 and A-28 was revised to eliminate references to BLM, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the Department of Interior (DOI).
76.001	LND	<i>The transmission line and the associated generation sites would significantly harm sage-grouse and raptors which depend on habitat on Steens Mountain, industrialize and destroy the scenic beauty of Steens Mountain, and irretrievably damage the long-term ecological integrity of Steens Mountain. Construction of a transmission line across the Refuge is incompatible with the purposes for which the Refuge was established.</i>	See the responses to Comments 52.01 and 39.02.

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76.002	ACK	<i>Because of the unique factors present on Steens Mountain and at the Refuge, the agencies must take a close and exhaustive look at the likely impacts of the transmission line and associated generation sites. Instead, the DEIS is inadequate to inform the public about the actions that Bureau of Land Management ("BLM") and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service ("USFWS") (collectively "the agencies") are considering, in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") and their substantive legal obligations. The DEIS improperly narrows the scope of impacts evaluated, ignores essential information regarding sage-grouse, raptors, and other impacts, presents biased information regarding potential impacts, and was largely drafted at the instigation of the applicant without any evidence of the agencies supplying substantive input or expertise</i>	The BLM analyzed the effects of the transmission line and associated generation site, including effects to greater sage-grouse and raptors (see DEIS Section 3.5.3, Wildlife). Further analysis has been added to the FEIS in Section 3.5.3. See the response to Comments 13.07 and 74.05 regarding the review by BLM and USFWS technical staff and the responsibilities, conditions, and procedures followed during the preparation of the Draft and Final EISs.
76.003	WIL	<i>The specific locations of turbines within the four generation sites is not disclosed, making it difficult to evaluate with precision the likely impact from generation associated with the proposed transmission line. Almost no detail is disclosed regarding the likely impacts to resources, including wildlife, at three of the four generation sites. Discussion of mitigation measures is incomplete and inadequate, indicating that mitigation will be postponed to some indeterminate future process. No information is presented regarding potential conditions which the agencies are considering imposing on the transmission line ROW to protect the environment and the resources on private and public lands affected by the project. Yet the DEIS repeatedly concludes that the environmental impacts of the transmission line and associated generation can be mitigated despite the lack of complete mitigation plans for issues such as sage-grouse, raptors, visual impacts, and other impacts to protected areas of public land.</i>	DEIS Section 3.19.2.5 (Cumulative Effects) analyzed reasonably foreseeable actions that could occur near the proposed Project area. No plans have been provided for any other developments for analysis. Also see the response to Comment 52.01.
76.004	CST	<i>The DEIS is also inadequate and incomplete because many of the basic design features of the generation sites which the transmission line would connect to the grid are incomplete. The absence of detailed and precise descriptions of the proposed generation sites and mitigation measures renders the agencies' conclusions regarding the project's impacts invalid because the agencies do not disclose impacts from the undetermined elements of the project's design. Merely including this information in a final Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") does not satisfy NEPA unless a supplement is prepared and the public is given a full and fair opportunity to comment on the missing information. See 40 CFR § 1500.1(b) ("NEPA procedures must insure that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken.")</i>	DEIS Section 2.0 (Project Description) included sufficient details about the various Project components proposed on the Echanis Project site. Information about the Project features that may be proposed for West Ridge and East Ridge Projects were described on pages 3.19-2 and 3.19-3 of the DEIS, and reflect the level of information on these possible future projects available at the time.
76.005	REQ	<i>An agency cannot withhold information from public review until just before (or after) it makes a decision. Because of the deficiencies in the DEIS, the agencies must issue a Supplemental DEIS that adequately discloses completely the likely environmental impacts that will flow from a decision authorizing a ROW over public lands to carry electricity down from Steens Mountain and Riddle Mountain. The Supplemental DEIS also must disclose what alternative conditions BLM is considering imposing on any ROW grant to allow the public to review and comment on whether they are adequate to mitigate the dramatic ecological and visual effects of the transmission line and associated generation sites on Steens Mountain and the federally-protected lands on the Mountain</i>	The DEIS was prepared meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQs) Guidelines, the BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (H-1790-1), Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Clean Water Act, or applicable federal regulations, applicable Oregon State Law, and other regulations. It also was carefully reviewed by the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to ensure that the DEIS met applicable agency requirements. Thus, the DEIS was deemed to be sufficient under these requirements. Although additional information was added to the FEIS to better explain the conclusions that were reached, it did not change the types or significance determinations for effects to technical resource areas and, therefore, did not require preparation of a Supplemental DEIS. Mitigation measures are included throughout the DEIS and FEIS which BLM may impose as conditions of approval on any ROW grant. See response to comment 76.007.

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76.006	P&N	<i>Even without the additional disclosure required by NEPA, it is apparent from the preliminary information presented in the DEIS that Steens Mountain is the wrong place to develop an industrial-scale wind energy generation and transmission project. The agencies' statutory obligations to manage federal lands on and near Steens Mountain preclude them from approving ROWs for any transmission line that would allow industrial wind energy development on Steens Mountain, notwithstanding the generation sites would be on private land.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.029.
76.007	REQ	<i>BLM must prepare and distribute a supplemental DEIS for public comment... an agency's failure to disclose a proposed action before the issuance of a final EIS defeats NEPA's goal of encouraging public participation in the development of information during the decision making process. Half Moon Bay Fishermans' Marketing Ass'n v. Carlucci, 857 F.2d 505, 508 (9th Cir. 1988). A draft Environmental Impact Statement must provide the public with sufficient information to permit meaningful consideration of the action under agency review. Cal. v. Block, 690 F.2d at 772. The DEIS here fails to provide sufficient information in several regards and requires supplementation.</i>	A supplemental DEIS must be prepared if "there are significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its effects [40 CFR 1502.9(c)(1)(ii)]" (H-1790-1 NEPA Handbook, page 29). As an example, if the new circumstances or information would result in significant effects outside the range of effects already analyzed, supplementation would be needed (H-1790-1, page 30). Supplementation would also be needed if substantial changes are made to the Proposed Action that are relevant to environmental concerns or a new alternative is added outside the spectrum of alternatives already analyzed (H-1790-1, page 29). The CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1508.27) provide criteria that can be used for determining significance (context and intensity).
76.008	CME	<i>The agencies must supplement the DEIS because it omits any detailed information about the environmental impacts from three of the four wind energy generation sites—West Ridge, East Ridge, and Riddle Mountain—which Columbia Energy Partners ("CEP") plans to connect to the transmission line. These sites are not speculative: CEP has been working consistently in their planning and development since July 2008, when it filed applications for county conditional use permits ("CUPs") for all three of these site (copies of these applications are provided on the attached CD-ROM). The DEIS's failure to include detailed information about the likely environmental impact from these sites, and the potential conditions which the agencies are considering placing on any transmission ROW to comply with the agencies' responsibilities with respect to these sites, violates NEPA... The DEIS frankly acknowledges that the ROW grant here would authorize all of the additional lines necessary for transmitting the energy from all four sites, without any further. ROW grant or future environmental review by the agencies. DEIS at 3.3-31, 3.6-15. The DEIS describes these as future "phases" of the transmission line development. E.g. DEIS at ES-2</i>	See the response to Comment 76.009.
76.009	CME	<i>The DEIS acknowledges that the transmission line is planned for development in "phases." DEIS at 1.2-2. The East Ridge and West Ridge sites cannot be developed without this transmission line. Yet almost no detailed information about the impacts of these sites as "connected actions" is presented in the DEIS, even though the DEIS also states that the second phase of construction—to upgrade the transmission to a full double-circuit 230-kV line—"would not require any additional ROW." DEIS at 3.3-31, 3.6-15. If there is no additional ROW to be granted, there will be no further opportunity for review of impacts under NEPA. Because the agencies are considering granting a ROW that would allow electricity generated at the four sites to pass along a planned double-circuit 230 kV line strung in the ROW, they must disclose in detail and analyze the impacts of all four sites in this DEIS. The need for detailed evaluation of the West Ridge, East Ridge and Riddle Mountain sites in this DEIS is also clear from the inclusion of a "reduced capacity" (115 kV) option that would carry power from the Echanis site only, but would not allow expansion of the line to carry power from other sites. To the extent that the agencies are now evaluating a 230 kV option for the ROW grants, they must fully disclose and evaluate the impacts of the West Ridge, East Ridge, and Echanis sites—the 230 kV line which is the "proposed action" is only necessary if more sites that just Echanis are attached to the line. Because the agencies have not evaluated the</i>	The East Ridge, West Ridge, and the Riddle Mountain Projects are not active development proposals and, therefore, cannot be considered connected non-federal actions pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.7 and 40 CFR 1508.25(a). As stated in Section 6.5.2.1 Connected Actions in the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790: "Connected actions are limited to actions that are currently proposed (i.e., ripe for decision). Actions that are not yet proposed are not connected actions, but may need to be analyzed in cumulative effects analysis if they are reasonably foreseeable." In compliance with federal requirements and guidelines (also see the response to Comment 76.005), these three wind energy projects as well as several other reasonably foreseeable future actions, were included in the analysis of cumulative effects as "reasonably foreseeable future actions" (DEIS Section 3.19). The Cumulative Effects section (3.19) of the FEIS has been modified to include additional explanations about the potential cumulative impacts of those potential projects, to the extent that information about them was available. Each of those three wind energy projects would have to meet additional permitting and environmental review in compliance with applicable federal, state, and/or county regulations and requirements. Any reasonably foreseeable future actions discussed in the Cumulative Effects section requiring a Federal action, along with any related connected actions, would be subject to the appropriate level of NEPA review, if and when, they become active development proposals.

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		<i>other three sites in sufficient detail, they must issue a supplemental DEIS which includes that information.</i>	
76.010	CME	<i>In discussing cumulative effects on energy, the DEIS states that, “[combined, the four wind energy [sites] and the HEC 115-kV Upgrade will contribute approximately 416 megawatts of wind energy production, which would provide enough power for approximately 124,000 homes annually.” DEIS at 3.19-57. Besides violating NEPA, the representation of certain benefits from the four generation sites without detailed discussion of their likely impacts to the environment is frankly hypocritical.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
76.011	EIS	<i>Because CEP continues to move ahead with its plans for all four sites, because the ROW is requested for a line with capacity to carry all power from all four sites, and because the Echanis, East Ridge, and West Ridge sites cannot exist without a 230-kV transmission line coming down from Steens Mountain, the agencies must prepare a supplemental DEIS that evaluates the other three sites in the same detail as the Echanis site.</i>	See the responses to Comments 154.08 and 76.007 (regarding supplementation).
76.012	EIS	<i>The four generation sites are part of a larger action which includes the transmission line, and none of the generation sites can be built unless the transmission line is built. Besides being a “single action” under NEPA case law, all four generation sites are also “connected actions” under NEPA which must be evaluated in this EIS. 40 C.F.R. § 1508.25(a)(ii)-(iii). Development of the West Ridge and East Ridge sites cannot proceed independently of the requested 230-kV ROW: they have no independent utility without the transmission line ROW. They “cannot or will not proceed unless other actions [the transmission line ROW] are taken previously or simultaneously. 40 C.F.R. § 1508.25(a)(1)(ii) (defining “connected” actions); see White Tank Concerned Citizens, Inc. v. Strock, 563 F.3d 1033, 1040–42 (9th Cir. 2009). In these circumstances, all of the generation sites and transmission line constitute a single action or connected actions under applicable law—all of which must be discussed in sufficient detail in the DEIS. The relative lack of detail in the discussion of the other sites and the Echanis site renders the DEIS inadequate and requires supplementation.</i>	See response to comment 76.009
76.013	WILA	<i>The DEIS fails to disclose significant new information, including more recent studies of sage-grouse by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (“ODFW”) and recent avian surveys in the Steens Mountain area. The agencies have acknowledged that new data exists regarding raptor impacts and that new data is being collected on species at the Refuge that would be impacted by a transmission line. This new information triggers the agencies’ responsibility to produce a supplemental DEIS disclosing this data to the public and providing the agencies’ evaluation of the data. 40 C.F.R. § 1508.25(a).</i>	See the responses to Comments 156.02 and 76.007 (regarding supplementation).

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76.014	WILA	<i>...significant portions of all transmission line alternatives and all four of the generation sites lie within sage-grouse core habitat identified as Category 1 and/or Category 2 habitat areas. Large portions of the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle sites fall within Category 1 habitat, areas which both USFWS and ODFW agree should not be developed for wind energy generation and transmission under any circumstances...The agencies must evaluate the new information in a supplemental DEIS, particularly with respect to the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain sites, where dozens of wind turbines would be located within 5 miles of sage-grouse leks within habitat ODFW has designated as "no development" zones.</i>	See the response to Comment 155.13.
76.015	WILA	<i>In addition, the DEIS notes that certain bird surveys and other environmental studies are not completed. See, e.g., DEIS at 3.5-1 (noting that avian surveys where transmission line alternatives cross the Refuge are still being conducted and are not included in the DEIS); DEIS at 3.5-2 (noting that surveys for avian use are being conducted along Alternative B and for habitat and special status plants and wildlife along Alternative C); see generally DEIS section 3.19 (failing to disclose any detailed avian, plant or wildlife survey information for East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain sites despite ongoing surveys). CEP, ODFW and other biologists working for the agencies have continued to conduct avian surveys on Steens Mountain and in the vicinity of the proposed transmission and generation sites. The BLM Burns District has collected additional information on raptors on Steens Mountain. None of this recent data is presented in the DEIS. The agencies must disclose this data for public review and evaluate this new information in a supplemental DEIS. Prematurely publishing a DEIS that lacked critical information regarding environmental impacts violates NEPA.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.007 and 156.02.
76.016	WILA	<i>Finally, BLM and USFWS have available a wide variety of surveys of sage-grouse and other avian species from the area that would be impacted by the transmission lines and associated generation sites, some as recent as last year. Yet none of these agency surveys are reflected in the DEIS. The agencies must disclose their own survey information in a supplemental DEIS that also evaluates their survey data to determine the likely impacts on wildlife and avian species from the proposed project.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.007 (regarding supplementation) and 156.02.
76.017	ALT	<i>As described in more detail in Section II.C, the DEIS fails to discuss adequate alternatives. The DEIS contains no discussion of alternative conditions the agencies are considering to satisfy its obligation under the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act ("FLPMA"), the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act ("Steens Act"), the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997 ("Refuge Administration Act"), the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, and other statutory obligations. By failing to disclose potential conditions that could be applied to the ROW grants to mitigate environmental impacts and comply with the agencies' substantive statutory obligations, the agencies have failed to prepare an adequate DEIS, and must issue a supplemental DEIS which adequately evaluates alternatives for complying with the statutory objectives which bind the agencies. Or. Natural Desert Ass'n v. BLM, 531 F.3d 1114, 1130 (9th Cir. 2008) ("ONDA v. BLM"). The DEIS fails to consider a variety of factors that derive from the statutes which the agencies are implementing and under which they have specific statutory obligations.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.171 and, regarding BLM's Purpose and Need and the range of alternatives. The Project Design Features (PDFs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) listed in Appendix A of the DEIS represented a preliminary list of terms and conditions that would be applied to the ROW request from the Applicant. If the ROW request were to be approved, the Records of Decision issued by BLM and the USFWS at the conclusion of the EIS process would include the final terms and conditions applied to the ROW requests. In making the decision whether to grant, grant in part, or deny the ROW application submitted by the Applicant, the BLM would consider decision factors provided by law including, but not limited to, those outlined in 43 CFR 2804.26. The USFWS would reach a decision in response to the Right-of-Way grant application by evaluating the appropriateness and compatibility of the transmission line proposal consistent with the policies and procedures in Part 603 National Wildlife Refuge System Uses; as well as Rights-of-Way-Specific regulations and policies found at 50 CFR 25.21, 29.21, and 29.22; 340 FW 3; and 603 FW 2; and Specialized Uses policy found at 5 RM 17.

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76.018	P&N	<p><i>The DEIS Improperly Defines the Purpose and Need for the ROWs, Fails to Evaluate Compliance with the Agencies' Statutory Obligations, Presents Inadequate Alternatives, and Lacks Adequate Agency Input.</i></p> <p><i>The Purpose and Need statement is improperly narrow and driven by the applicant's economic needs and fails to consider whether there is a need for the project.</i></p> <p><i>...The chosen statement of purpose and need effectively dictates the range of alternatives evaluate in an EIS. Id. "[A]n agency cannot define its objectives in unreasonably narrow terms." City of Carmel-By-The-Sea v. United States Dep't of Transp., 123 F. 3d 1142, 1155 (9th Cir. 1997). "An agency may not define the objectives of its action in terms so unreasonably narrow that only one alternative . . . would accomplish the goals of the agency's action, and the EIS would become a foreordained formality. Nat'l Parks & Conservation Ass'n v. Bureau of Land Mgmt., 606 F.3d 1058, 1070 (9th Cir. 2010). Moreover, an agency may not allow the economic needs and goals of a private applicant to define the purpose and need, and hence the inevitable outcome, of an EIS. Id</i></p> <p><i>...An agency cannot define the purpose of a project in such a way as to foreclose the ability of any alternatives to meet the stated purpose. Se Simmons, 120 F.3d at 669.</i></p>	<p>See the responses to Comments 76.171, 76.017 and 76.049 , regarding BLM's Purpose and Need and range of alternatives.</p>
76.019	P&N	<p><i>The DEIS describes the applicant's "need" for transmission from its four generation sites, but lists no agency-defined objectives or needs other than complying with applicable laws. The DEIS fails to even acknowledge that the agencies have no obligation or responsibility whatsoever to meet the applicant's needs or desires. As a result, the applicant-identified needs are defining and driving the characteristics of this project and the alternatives thereto. This approach is inappropriate and unlawful. The DEIS must identify whether there truly is a need for energy transmission and generation facilities on North Steens Mountain. The agencies must evaluate whether wind energy generation and transmission is an appropriate use for the federally-protected lands and adjacent private lands that the project would affect.</i></p>	<p>See the responses to Comments 76.171 and, regarding BLM's Purpose and Need and the range of alternatives.</p>
76.020	P&N	<p><i>In this DEIS, the "purpose and need" is defined as simply approving, conditionally approving, or denying the ROW applications. DEIS at 1.4-3. This is a breathtaking abrogation of the agencies' obligation to consider "all reasonable alternatives" and whether there is truly a need for CEP's wind energy complex. Any "need" for this federal action, beyond satisfying the applicant's request, is not described at all. In particular, there is no evidence presented in the DEIS that it is necessary to generate wind energy on Steens Mountain, and consequently no evidence that this transmission line is needed at all. No quantitative data on wind suitability is presented in the DEIS, and the agencies have not evaluated alternative regional systems for generating and transmitting electrical power from renewable sources that would not involve crossing protected areas. CEP has not demonstrated that there is a need to construct the generation facilities at the Echanis, West Ridge, East Ridge, and Riddle Mountain sites based on the availability of wind resources at those locations. The agencies must disclose meteorological information from these sites and include this information for public review in any supplement to the DEIS. Without this information, there is no basis for the public to evaluate the claim that there is a "need" for the transmission line and the associated generation sites</i></p>	<p>See the responses to Comment 76.171 and, regarding BLM's Purpose and Need and the range of alternatives. Additional information regarding wind resources in Harney County has been added to Section 3.19 (Energy).</p>

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76.021	ALT	<i>The DEIS also fails to evaluate whether relying on or expanding other renewable energy alternatives would be a practicable alternative and adequately or accurately analyze the full range of reasonable project alternatives. See 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(a); NRDC v. USFS, 421 F.3d 797 (9th Cir. 2005); Simmons v. U.S. Army Corps of Eng'rs, 120 F.3d 664 (7th Cir. 1997); Env'tl. Law & Policy Center v. U.S. Nuclear Reg. Comm., 470 F.3d 676 (7th Cir. 2006); Davis v. Mineta, 302 F.3d 1104 (10th Cir. 2002). The agencies have not considered whether there exist potential alternative sites for generating wind energy that would involve less ecologically sensitive areas than Steens Mountain, including generation sites that are closer to existing transmission lines or distributed generation alternatives that would involve little or no additional new transmission line construction</i>	See the response to Comment 76.171, regarding alternative locations for industrial-scale wind energy sites and BLM's purpose and need, and the response to Comment 76.48 regarding PDFs, BMPs, and mitigation. Because the construction and operation of the Echanis Project site is not a BLM action, the BLM does not need to consider alternatives to the Echanis Project site, alternative configurations, or capacity (size). The BLM and USFWS are not responsible for the permitting of the Echanis Project. This responsibility is Harney County's. The East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Projects are considered reasonably foreseeable future actions. Please refer to Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects) for more information about these additional Projects.
76.022	P&N	<i>The DEIS has also failed to consider whether the lower efficiency and higher maintenance cost of wind energy generation and long-distance electricity transmission, compared to other renewable generation alternatives (solar, geothermal, hydropower, distributed generation) would obviate any need for this project. The DEIS also does not evaluate whether there really is a need for long-distance transmission, when other wind energy generation sites with suitable wind (and other renewable energy generating sites) are located closer to existing transmission lines. The DEIS also has not evaluated whether the relatively limited estimated lifespan of a wind energy generation project (25-40 years) justifies the construction of a transmission line and related generation facilities on federal lands and within the boundaries of a congressionally-designated protected area.</i>	DEIS Section 3.18 (Energy) includes a discussion about the relationship between the proposed Project and the current renewable portfolio standards (RPS) required for major utilities in Oregon and California. DEIS Section 3.18 also describes how the power produced at the Echanis Project site would be integrated into the regional power grid. The evaluation of other wind energy generation sites with suitable wind located closer to existing transmission lines is beyond the scope of this EIS, as is other renewable generation alternatives such as solar, geothermal, hydropower, and distributed generation. See response to comment 76.171. The BLM ROW grant would include appropriate stipulations regarding decommissioning and restoration of BLM lands within the ROW corridor should the transmission line no longer be needed.
76.023	P&N	<i>Although the DEIS provides some description of the necessary process for interconnection, the DEIS fails to evaluate whether CEP will be able to actually connect its proposed infrastructure to the grid in determining whether there is a need for the transmission line (and associated generation). The main power grid to which the transmission line would connect is already near capacity; the DEIS fails to evaluate whether other projects which have interconnection priority (e.g. the West Butte Wind Project near Bend) will preclude CEP from connecting the transmission line to the main grid.</i>	CEP's Echanis Project has transmission service and interconnection reservations with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). The BPA has committed to accommodate 104 MW of transmission service on the Harney-Redmond Line.
76.024	P&N	<i>The DEIS also improperly and incorrectly suggests that there is a need for wind energy from Steens Mountain to satisfy the Oregon Renewable Portfolio Standard ("RPS"). DEIS at 3.18-1. However, the DEIS acknowledges that CEP has already signed a power purchase agreement to sell power from the Echanis site to Southern California Energy. DEIS at ES-1. From the standpoint of the Oregon RPS, the DEIS has not shown there is a need for this project. Nor can the DEIS assert that meeting the Oregon RPS is a "need" for the project when the power is being sold to California. The DEIS also repeatedly asserts that Echanis is a site that will produce 104 MW of power, and that the other generation sites are comparable in size. In fact, wind energy facility typically produce about 30% of the rated capacity, meaning each of the sites will produce only about 35 MW of electricity. Any evaluation of the "need" for this project must take into account this lower figure and correct the generation capacity cited in the DEIS.</i>	The discussion of the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in Oregon and California was included in DEIS Section 3.18 (Energy) as background about one of the primary driving forces behind wind energy development in the Pacific Northwest.
76.025	P&N	<i>The DEIS also has not evaluated whether there is a need for this transmission and generation complex due to plans in the Pacific Northwest to meet 85% of new demand for electricity with conservation and efficiency measures over the next 20 years</i>	Comment acknowledged.
76.026	LND	<i>The DEIS does not disclose how the agencies intend to exercise their authority and satisfy their obligations under the substantive statutes which apply to the lands they manage on and near Steens Mountain and within the Refuge.</i>	The decisions to be made by BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regarding the ROW request from the Applicant were described in DEIS Sections 1.3 (Purpose and Need), 1.4 (Agency Decisions to be Made), and 1.7 (Conformance with Land Use Plans, Laws, Regulations and Policy).
76.027	LND	<i>The DEIS does not consider significant factors related to the agencies' compliance with their obligations under the substantive statutes which govern the proposed ROW grants and which cover the agencies' management obligations on Steens Mountain, within the Steens CMPA, and within the Refuge.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.026.

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76.028	LND	<p><i>The DEIS does not demonstrate that a ROW grant by BLM would comply with FLPMA...43 U.S.C. § 1765. Of note, a ROW must contain terms and conditions that will "carry out the purposes of FLPMA" and "minimize damage to scenic and esthetic values and fish and wildlife habitat and otherwise protect the environment. Id. § 1765(a). FLPMA also requires that a ROW contain terms and conditions necessary to "protect Federal property and economic interests," efficiently manage the lands that are subject to the ROW "or are adjacent thereto, and "otherwise protect the public interest" in the ROW lands or lands "adjacent thereto." Id. § 1765(b) The DEIS nowhere describes how any ROW grant would comply with these obligations under FLPMA</i></p>	<p>See the responses to Comments 76.031 and 76.017.</p>
76.029	LND	<p><i>Simply because the transmission line does not cross public lands within the CMPA does not relieve the BLM from the obligation to assess the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed action (i.e., construction and operation of the Echanis site, the other generation sites, and associated transmission lines), "regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions." 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7. By applying for a ROW across private and public lands, the entire set of generation sites have been federalized, which requires the BLM to assess the environmental consequences of the project on the surrounding federal public land. Nat'l Forest Preservation Group v. Butz, 485 F.2d 408, 411-12 (9th Cir. 1973). This requirement is consistent with FLPMA, which states that the ROW contain terms and conditions necessary to "protect Federal property and economic interests," efficiently manage the lands that are subject to the ROW "or are adjacent thereto, and "otherwise protect the public interest" in the ROW lands or lands "adjacent thereto." 43 U.S.C. § 1765(b).</i></p> <p><i>The DEIS, however, fails to include such terms and conditions that are protective of federal property and the associated public interest, or evaluate any alternatives that consider potential conditions. The DEIS contains none of the mandatory terms and conditions to "minimize damage to scenic and esthetic values and fish and wildlife habitat and otherwise protect the environment." Id. § 1765(a). The DEIS recognizes that there will be significant adverse effects from the transmission line and generation sites on scenic values, recreational values, and wildlife on protected lands within the CMPA boundaries. See, e.g., DEIS at 2.5-35, - 42, -44. But the DEIS does not disclose and evaluate what terms and conditions will "minimize" such damage.</i></p>	<p>As stated in DEIS Section 3.6.2.3 (Land Use), BLM would not be responsible for siting the portions of the transmission line within the Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPA) because all of the transmission line within the CMPA would be located on private property (see 16 U.S.C. § 460nnn-42 "[n]othing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law."). Despite this, and as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Guidelines, the DEIS evaluated the potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed transmission line, the Echanis Project, and other reasonably foreseeable actions. Potential mitigation measures (in addition to project design features and best management practices) identified in Appendix A that could be implemented, if the proposed Project was constructed, are described for each technical resource in Section 3 of the DEIS. The formal terms and conditions of the ROW would be determined if the proposed Project or one of the action alternatives is selected, and would be included in the Record of Decision (ROD) and the Right-of-Way Grant. Also see responses to comments 76.017 and 76.031.</p>
76.030	LND	<p><i>DEIS, 3.7-16. This means that access roads on private inholdings within the CMPA are likely to introduce additional people to the surrounding public land; but the DEIS does not address what environmental impacts increased access will have on the CMPA.</i></p>	<p>As explained in Section 3.7.4.3 (Recreation), it is expected the creation of many miles of access roads would provide increased access to areas that were previously inaccessible. The public use of access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis by the BLM and USFWS. To limit new or improved recreationist accessibility into areas, all new access roads not required for maintenance would be closed as appropriate and in coordination with the BLM or USFWS Authorized Officer. In the event of a conflict between the Applicant's road requirements and the BLM or USFWS, BLM or USFWS requirements would take precedence. For those roads where access to public lands can be obtained, it is expected that given these lands principal recreation use is for dispersed recreation, no changes to recreation resources would occur. BLM would retain the right to decide permanent road closures for its land.</p>

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76.031	LND	<p><i>In sum, the BLM has attempted to ignore the environmental consequences that stem from private inholdings within the CMPA, and has not adequately addressed how the activities on those private inholdings will affect the surrounding public lands within the CMPA. The DEIS fails to disclose how BLM has complied with its statutory obligations under Sections 504 and 504 of FLPMA. 43 U.S.C. §§ 1764–65. Nor has the DEIS demonstrated that any ROW would “prevent unnecessary or undue degradation” of the lands BLM manages on and near Steens Mountain. Id., § 1732(b). Nor does the DEIS explain how any ROW would be consistent with BLM’s statutory obligations in light of the policy for protecting Greater sage-grouse described in Instruction Memorandum 2010-071 (discussed in more detail in Section 2.B.4 below). Instead, the DEIS mentions only that the ROW fits into BLM’s multiple-use mandate under FLPMA. DEIS at 1.7-15.</i></p>	<p>The DEIS evaluated the environmental consequences that the North Steens Transmission Line Project and the Echanis Project would have on publically-owned land as well as privately-owned lands within the CMPA. Specifically, Section 3.9 (Aesthetics and Visual) in the DEIS analyzed the visual effects the transmission line and wind turbine towers would have on several Key Observation Points (KOPs) located on public land within the CMPA. For example, as mentioned in DEIS Section 3.9.3.2, the Echanis Project would have a moderate effect on KOP 61 (the East Rim Overlook by introducing “strong vertical, moving, human made elements into the largely stationary landscape” thereby affecting distant views. While the effects on KOP 61 would be moderate and not meet BLM visual resource management objectives for VRM Class I lands, the Echanis Project would be located on private lands and, therefore, would not be subject to BLM’s visual resource management objectives. It should be noted that none of the transmission line alternatives (including the Alternative B - West Route options) would be visible from a KOP located on public land within the CMPA.</p> <p>Title V of FLPMA that includes Sections 504 and 505, primarily provides authorities and procedural requirements for grants of ROWs on public land. Other sections of FLPMA contain general policies applicable to ROWs including the requirement to prevent undue and unnecessary degradation. 43 CFR 2801.2 provides as the objective of BLM’s ROW program to grant ROWs on public lands in a manner that prevents unnecessary or undue degradation, among other requirements. Any grant of a ROW for the North Steens transmission line would include terms and conditions required to prevent unnecessary or undue degradation to public lands. As stated in DEIS Section 3.6.2.3, BLM would not be responsible for siting the portions of the transmission line or any wind turbines within the CMPA, as the transmission line and wind farms within the CMPA would be located on private property (see 16 U.S.C. § 460nnn-42 “[n]othing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law.”).</p> <p>With regard to greater sage-grouse, see FEIS Sections 3.5 and 3.19.2.5, and also the responses to Comments 39.02, 52.01, and 155.15.</p>
76.032	LND	<p><i>The DEIS fails to evaluate whether the combined transmission project and generation sites are consistent with BLM’s management responsibilities under the Steens Act. At least six miles of each transmission route variation lies within the boundaries of the Steens CMPA, as do two of the three generation sites on Steens Mountain...</i></p>	<p>The portions of the alternative transmission line routes that pass through the CMPA would be located on privately-owned land not subject to the regulatory provisions in the Steens Act. The BLM has no management authority regarding the siting of transmission lines or wind energy developments on private property located within the boundaries of the CMPA (see 16 U.S.C. § 460nnn-42 “[n]othing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law.”).</p>
76.033	WIL	<p><i>...how does BLM plan to ensure the “conservation” of wildlife resources in the CMPA so that “ecological processes are functioning to maintain the structure, composition, activity, and resilience of the landscape over time” when the ROW would allow dramatic fragmentation of the landscape and construction of up to 207 industrial-scale wind turbines within or near the boundaries of the CMPA? How does BLM plan to ensure a “sustainable” population of Greater sage-grouse on North Steens Mountain when sage-grouse core habitat within the CMPA is being riddled with turbines, new access roads, transmission lines, and other industrial infrastructure? More than 10 miles of transmission line, and at least 80 wind turbines, are planned for location within five miles of sage-grouse leks that lie within the CMPA. Two of the cooperating agencies (USFWS and ODFW) recommend no construction of any energy infrastructure within five miles of these leks.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comments 39.02 and 155.15.</p>

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76.034	LND	<i>...How does BLM plan to use its authority and obligations under FLPMA Sections 504 and 505 to conserve and protect the "long-term ecological integrity of Steens Mountain" as BLM must do under the Steens Act? The DEIS does not tell us. This represents a dramatic failure by the agencies to disclose relevant factors to the public and obligates the agencies to issue a supplemental DEIS that addresses these issues.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.031 and 76.007 (regarding supplementation).
76.035	LND	<i>The DEIS fails to identify whether construction of a transmission line and the connected generation sites is "different from the current character and uses of the lands" within the CMPA. There is no adequate description of what the current character of the lands within the CMPA is. The DEIS's description of current uses of the lands describes a rural and wild setting, where no industrial or commercial activities other than livestock grazing are present. DEIS at 3.6-2 to 3.6-3. However, the DEIS does not evaluate whether these uses are the same as those specified in the Steens Act itself, including "grazing, recreation, historic, and other uses that are sustainable," "traditional access to cultural, gathering, religious, and archaeological sites," and the conservation and protection of "geological, biological, wildlife, riparian, and scenic resources."</i>	Additional information describing the current character of the lands within the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area (CMPPA) has been added to FEIS Section 3.6.2.3 (Land Use). The text in DEIS Section 1.7.2.4 (Introduction) described the 13 purposes of the Steens Act. Additional information has been added to FEIS Section 1.7.2.4 to further describe provisions in the Steens Act that promote cooperative efforts to control development and encourage conservation on public and private lands within the boundaries of the CMPA. The BLM is bound to comply with the provisions in the Steens Act as well as other laws, regulations, and policies and would consider these requirements when deciding whether or not to grant the ROW request from the Applicant and, if so, under what terms and conditions. Section 122 (a) of the Steens Act states, "Development on public and private lands within the boundaries of the Cooperative Management and Protection area which is different from the current character and uses of the lands is inconsistent with the purposes of this Act." The Steens Act goes on to say under Section 122 (d), "Nothing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law". There are no facilities proposed on public lands within the CMPA.
76.036	LND	<i>The DEIS fails to evaluate whether the proposed transmission line and generation sites construction within the boundaries of the CMPA would be different from the current character and uses of those lands. BLM must prepare such an analysis as part of a supplemental DEIS, If BLM finds that the proposed construction is different than the current character and use of those lands, BLM must also find that such construction is "inconsistent with the purposes of [the Steens Act]" and deny the right-of-way application and authorization to construct the transmission line...</i>	See the responses to Comments 154.06, 76.035 and 76.007 (regarding supplementation).
76.037	LND	<i>BLM must explain how any ROW grant that would authorize a transmission line allowing construction of industrial-scale wind turbines on North Steens Mountain to dominate the skyline and obliterate the dark night sky is not different from the current character and use of those lands.</i>	While Section 122(a) of the Steens Act does state that "Development on public and private lands within the boundaries of the Cooperative Management and Protection Area which is different from the current character and uses of the lands is inconsistent with the purposes of this Act." it should be noted that this provision of the Act is limited by Section 122(d) which states: "Nothing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law." Also see response to comment 76.035.
76.038	LND	<i>Because the effects of the project on wildlife, on noise, on scenic values, and on other protected resources do not stop at the private property lines, BLM's duties under the Steens Act obligate the agency to consider those effects in the DEIS and prevent or minimize those effects by denying a ROW or imposing restrictive conditions consistent with Congress's purpose in establishing the CMPA.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.037.
76.039	LND	<i>BLM fails to disclose in the DEIS whether it can, consistent with its management obligations for the CMPA under the Steens Act, authorize the use of any federal land for a transmission line that will pass through the CMPA and link to generation sites within the CMPA....The DEIS also fails to disclose and evaluate the significance of the congressional intent to prohibit industrial-scale energy development within the CMPA evidenced by the withdrawal of federal lands and interests in lands within the CMPA from the operation of the mineral and geothermal leasing laws. Id. § 460nn-81(a)(2).</i>	See the response to Comment 76.037. In regard to the Congressional intent of the Steens Act, there is little in the legislative history or other documentation available that would provide any insight into congressional intent relative to renewable energy development within the CMPA or the mineral withdrawal area. For this reason, BLM must primarily rely upon the plain meaning of the law itself to provide guidance in its decision making process. Further, none of the project components are located on Federal lands within the mineral withdrawal area or the CMPA. The referenced Section of the Steens Act, Section 401 states: " ...the <i>Federal lands and interests in lands</i> included in the withdrawal boundary...are hereby withdrawn from 1) location, entry and patent under the mining laws; and 2) operation of the mineral leasing and geothermal

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			leasing laws and from the mineral material laws and all amendments thereto..."
76.040	LND	<i>The DEIS does not disclose whether construction and operation of any of the transmission route variations that would affect the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is compatible with the purposes of the Refuge pursuant to the National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act ("Refuge Administration Act")...There is no evidence in the DEIS that routing a transmission line on or near the Refuge is compatible with the purposes for which the Refuge was established.</i>	See the response to Comment 51.17.
76.041	LND	<i>Indeed, the DEIS states that avian surveys of the Refuge are not yet complete, DEIS at 3.5-1. Accordingly, the DEIS does not demonstrate that USFWS can issue a ROW consistent with the Refuge Administration Act.</i>	Additional wildlife field studies have been conducted since issuance of the DEIS, and the findings of those studies have been included in Section 3.5 (Wildlife) of the FEIS. Also see response to comment 51.17.
76.042	LND	<i>The DEIS does not disclose whether BLM's approval of a ROW is consistent with BLM's obligations under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 which established the National Landscape Conservation System, or what conditions are required for the ROW to make it consistent with those obligations. The 2009 Act established the NLCS to include the Steens Mountain CMPA based on its status as an "area designated by Congress to be administered for conservation purposes.</i>	Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Public Law 111-11 specified that nothing in the Act "enhances, diminishes, or modifies any law or proclamation" including FLPMA and the Steens Act. This would include BLM's authority under FLPMA to grant ROWs across public land. As stated in DEIS Section 3.6.2.3 (Land Use), BLM would not be responsible for authorizing the portions of the transmission line or any wind turbines within the CMPA because these facilities are proposed on private land. (see 16 U.S.C. § 460nnn-42 "[n]othing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law.")
76.043	WILA	<i>As discussed further below, the transmission line and generation sites will have significant impacts to avian species, killing potentially hundreds of raptors, Golden Eagles, and other migratory birds protected by federal statute, and displacing Greater sage-grouse from priority habitat. The DEIS does not demonstrate that the agencies can issue ROWs that are consistent with these statutory obligations. The DEIS does not show, for example, that the agencies have complied with, or could authorize any ROW consistent with, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act ("MBTA"), the Bald & Golden Eagle Protection Act ("BGEPA"), or the Endangered Species Act ("ESA")."</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02, 46.09 and 56.02. There are no federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed species in the Project Area, so the Endangered Species Act does not apply. See Section 3.5.2.5 and Table 3.5-7.
76.044	WILA	<i>The DEIS does not demonstrate that BLM would comply with Instruction Memorandum No. 2010-071 and the special status species policy (BLM Manual 6840) if it approves a ROW for a transmission line within sage-grouse priority habitat and which would allow construction of wind turbines within sage-grouse priority habitat. Bureau of Land Management, IM 2010-71, Gunnison and Greater Sage-grouse Management Considerations for Energy Development (Supplement to the National Sage-Grouse Habitat Conservation Strategy), Mar. 5, 2010.</i>	The text was modified in Section 3.5.2.5 (Wildlife) of the FEIS to include reference to the Instruction Memorandum.

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76.045	WILA	<p>ODFW mapped core areas for sage-grouse throughout their habitat in Oregon. <i>Id.</i> at 88; see also Exhibit 10 (reproducing core habitat map). On North Steens Mountain, at least seven miles of any transmission line variation, and about 80% of the turbines proposed for the West Ridge and East Ridge generation sites, fall within the “no development” Category 1 sage-grouse habitat. See Exhibit 6 (map showing overlap of the project with Category 1 and Category 2 habitat). Approximately four miles of transmission line, and almost all of the turbines on the Echanis site, fall within Category 2 habitat, in which ODFW recommends a variety of measures to minimize impacts to sage-grouse. The DEIS does not evaluate the USFWS and ODFW 5 mile buffer recommendations. DEIS at 3.5-25.</p> <p>Because the vast majority of the transmission line and associated generation sites on North Steens Mountain lie within sage-grouse “priority habitat,” BLM is obligated to implement a variety of management actions where a project the agency is reviewing falls within priority habitat. For wind development, BLM must determine whether a new ROW application lies within priority habitat and either deny the application or impose terms and conditions on the ROW grant to protect priority habitat. Transmission projects must be re-routed to avoid priority habitat. IM 2010-071 recognizes that “it is imperative that fragmentation and degradation of Gunnison sage-grouse and greater sage-grouse habitat not continue to the point that sustainable sage-grouse populations can no longer be supported,” and accordingly that an application for a ROW grant may be denied if it is not in the public interest. See also 43 C.F.R. § 2804.26. The DEIS does not disclose how or whether BLM can comply with IM 2010-071 and its ROW regulations in issuing a ROW that would allow transmission lines and wind turbines to be constructed within sage-grouse priority habitat.</p>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 52.01 regarding the Habitat Mitigation Plan and ODFW data, and 76.017 regarding terms and conditions association with granting of ROWs.
76.046	ENR	<p>BLM has also not demonstrated in the DEIS that it has complied with BLM Instruction Memorandum 2010-077, LR 2000 Data Standards for Renewable Energy Cases (Mar. 16, 2010). Under IM 2010-077, BLM must collect detailed data on resource conflicts for “[e]lectric transmission rights-of-way cases that facilitate, support, or have capacity to distribute power from renewable energy projects.” IM 2010-077, Appendix, Revised Data Standards for Renewable Energy Cases. BLM does not appear to have collected the required data for the transmission line and associated generation which the requested ROW will facilitate and support. Acknowledging this obligation and disclosing resource conflicts data in the DEIS is particularly important because it provides BLM with better information to evaluate potential alternatives, as discussed in the following section.</p>	LR2000 is a BLM database used for tracking ROWs, realty and minerals use authorizations, land adjustment actions, and other lands and minerals activities on public land. In compliance with IM 2010-077, all wind testing and development ROWs, both authorized and pending, on public land in the Burns District have been updated and are current. Similarly, all transmission line ROWs and applications, including the North Steens Transmission Line Project (application OR-65891), are up to date. None of the wind generation facilities proposed by the Applicant are on public land and, thus, are not included in the data base and are not subject to the requirements of IM 2010-077.
76.047	WIL	<p>The DEIS also does not reflect that the agencies have fulfilled their obligations under the October 2009 Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) regarding federal agency review of electric transmission facilities on federal lands. Under the MOU, “[c]onsistent with its principal trust responsibility to protect and conserve migratory birds, threatened and endangered species, certain marine mammals, and interjurisdictional fish, the USFWS will consult with applicants for transmission projects potentially affecting any of these resources.” USFWS further has the obligation to “determine whether proposed qualifying projects adjacent to national wildlife refuges will adversely impact the resources and values of such refuges.” There is no evidence in the DEIS that the USFWS has fulfilled these obligations. USFWS should include information in a supplemental DEIS disclosing to the public its preliminary determination regarding the effects of the transmission line and associated generation projects on migratory birds and other sensitive species.</p>	The Applicant, BLM, and USFWS are working to fulfill requirements of the MBTA, BGEPa, and other requirements through completion of an ABPP/ECP and a HMP. These documents are included in the new Appendix F in the FEIS. Additional analysis regarding resources managed by the USFWS was added to Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife) of the FEIS. See also response to comment 76.007.
76.048	ALT	<p>The DEIS fails to consider reasonable alternatives....The DEIS, prepared by the applicant’s consultant, presents three alternatives (with minor route variations on Alternative B), but without any disclosure of potential conditions the agencies could impose. By failing to develop alternatives which incorporate ROW conditions that would be protective of the environment and necessary to comply with the agencies’ statutory obligations, the DEIS violates NEPA.</p>	See the responses to Comments 76.017 and 76.051.

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76.049	ALT	<p><i>The DEIS acknowledges that USFWS and BLM have the authority and obligation to impose conditions on the ROWs that will satisfy the agencies' obligations under substantive laws. However, there is no discussion in the DEIS of alternative conditions. Without a presentation of detailed information about potential conditions, the public is left entirely in the dark about the actual action BLM and USFWS are proposing to take. Part of this failure in the DEIS to discuss alternative conditions is due to the paucity of the DEIS's analysis of the East Ridge and West Ridge sites, located within the boundaries of the Steens CMPA and adjacent to federal land designated for protection under the Steens Act. Dozens of turbines on these sites would be located within five miles of sage-grouse leks—closer than the minimum distance prescribed by USFWS and ODFW to ensure protection of sage-grouse which use those leks. The agencies have not evaluated any alternative that, for example, would impose a condition on the ROW grant that made the transmission ROW conditional on no generation turbines attached to the line being within 5 miles of sage-grouse leks.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.017. The East Ridge and West Ridge Projects are not currently permitted by the county or state. However, both Projects were included in the analysis of cumulative effects (see DEIS Section 3.19) as "reasonably foreseeable future actions." The potential effect upon greater sage-grouse from these Projects was acknowledged on page 3.19-15 of the DEIS. See also responses to comments 39.02, 52.01, 76.051, and 155.15.</p>
76.050	REG	<p><i>The DEIS also fails to discuss any potential conditions that would flow from the USFWS's own Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee Recommendations, issued in March 2010 (available at http://www.fws.gov/habitatconservation/windpower/Wind_Turbine_Guidelines_Advisory_Committee_Recommendations_Secretary.pdf and included on the enclosed CD-ROM). The agencies have the authority to impose conditions on the ROW that would require any energy generation connected to the ROW to comply with the recommendations in these Guidelines. Similarly, the DEIS does not reference the Oregon Columbia Plateau Ecoregion Wind Energy Siting and Permitting Guidelines, available at http://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/LandAndWater/WindEnergy/Documents/OR%20wind%20siting%20guidelines%2009-29-08.pdf and on the enclosed CD-ROM. USFWS has endorsed these guidelines. Please explain why the DEIS does not consider ROW conditions that would comply with these guidelines' specific recommendations for each phase of facility site selection, development, and operation, which are intended to ensure that design, construction, and operation of a wind facility is consistent with Oregon's fish and wildlife habitat mitigation goals. Please discuss whether the recommendations contained in these guidelines should be included as binding conditions in the ROW grant.</i></p>	<p>As mentioned in DEIS Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2 (Introduction), if ROW grants are issued by BLM and/or the USFWS, they would be approved subject to terms, conditions, and stipulations determined to be in the public interest and consistent with applicable agency policies, regulations, and guidelines. Also see responses to comments 39.02, 52.01, 76.017 and 155.15.</p>
76.051	WILA	<p><i>Related to this deficiency in the DEIS is the fact that it contains an overly-narrow definition of the "Project Area." DEIS at 3.6-2. Although this definition describes that "all areas affected by ... operation of ... turbine towers" is within the "Project Area," the DEIS fails to discuss effects on lands and resources that would be affected by turbines, such as sage-grouse inhabiting largely open areas of sagebrush steppe on public land adjacent to private lands where turbines would be erected. The DEIS includes no discussion of reasonable alternatives to minimize harm from generation and transmission facilities to such resources, even though they are clearly within the "Project Area" as the DEIS defines it.</i></p>	<p>The DEIS was prepared meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQs) Guidelines, the BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (H-1790-1), Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Clean Water Act, or applicable federal regulations, applicable Oregon State Law, and other regulations. It also was carefully reviewed by the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to ensure that the DEIS met applicable agency requirements. The DEIS evaluated the No Action Alternative, a western route with two options (Alternative B), and a northern route (Alternative C). In addition, Section 2 of the DEIS considered several other options that were not considered to warrant detailed analysis in the remainder of the EIS. Thus, the DEIS was deemed to be sufficient under this requirements. For more information on sage-grouse, see the responses to Comments 39.02, 52.01 and 155.15.</p>
76.052	VIS	<p><i>Similarly, the DEIS fails to consider any alternative conditions on the ROWs that would require generation sites connected to the transmission line within the ROW to be constructed without turbines which detrimentally affect the scenic character of Steens Mountain—by imposing conditions mandating the maximum number of turbines, the configuration of the turbines, requiring minimum setbacks, setting maximum turbine heights, or mandating different locations. In addition, although the idea of an eventual decommissioning of the turbines and transmission line is discussed (see, e.g. DEIS at 3.22-3), there is no evaluation of whether the agencies should require a bond as a condition of a ROW grant to ensure that the project is, in fact, decommissioned.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.051 Section 2 (Proposed Action and Alternatives) and Appendix A contain project design features and best management practices to reduce the impacts to scenic resources. An analysis of the visual impacts of the Project was provided in DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual). Additional mitigation measures were investigated and proposed pursuant to this and other public comments. The BLM, however, would not have the jurisdiction to implement these mitigation measures on private land. Overall, the visual analysis used conservative assumptions to determine the fullest potential visual impacts. Bonding would be consistent with the requirements for BLM's right-of-way grant permit program. Regarding mitigation on private lands, see the response to Comment 155.16. After workshops</p>

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			for the ABPP/ECP between the Applicant, USFWS, and ODFW, configuration of the turbines was set back from the cliff-top edge 500 feet to avoid impacts to raptors, as discussed in Section 3.5.2.3 and the ECP (Appendix F).
76.053	ops	<i>BLM and USFWS should also evaluate whether, in light of the promised decommissioning, it would be appropriate to condition any ROW grant on a fixed term of years, without any right of renewal</i>	If a ROW is granted, BLM would specify a reasonable term on the ROW as required by Sec. 504(b) of FLPMA, (43 USC 1764). In determining the term of the ROW BLM would take in to consideration the cost of the facility, its useful life and any public purpose it serves. Further, each right-of-way must specify whether it is or is not renewable and specify the terms and conditions applicable to the renewal. By policy, the maximum term that can be applied to ROWs for transmission line purposes is 30 years.
76.054	WILA	<i>The DEIS also fails to consider any alternative that would impose a condition of burying the transmission line where it passes through core sage-grouse habitat, similar to the project which BLM's Lakeview District is currently considering on public lands near Adel for Oregon Community Wind.</i>	Burial of the transmission line was not considered in this area because the proposed route does not have direct line-of-sight to the Kiger lek, and is separated by a deep ravine. Additionally, burial of the transmission line is not the industry standard. DEIS Section 2.4.2.4 (Project Description) discussed an alternative considered but rejected, the Alternative B - West Route Underground Alternative.
76.055	ALT	<i>Instead, the DEIS analyzes what amounts to two alternatives: 1) construction of an unconditioned transmission line in the multi-phase configuration requested by the applicant to serve the four turbine sites (with four different potential routes) or 2) no action. These options advance the applicant's goals, rather than the agencies' goals, to the exclusion of other reasonable alternatives. The DEIS is fatally flawed in its failure to consider an adequate range of reasonable alternatives. See Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Serv., 177 F.3d 800, 913 (9th Cir. 1999) (agency failed to consider an adequate range of alternatives when an EIS considered only a no action alternative along with two "virtually identical" action alternatives). <i>The DEIS should have considered alternative locations for industrial-scale wind energy generation other than the sites leased by the applicant. Under NEPA, the EIS may even have to look at alternatives over which the applicant has no control. NRDC v. Morton, 458 F.2d 827, 835 (D.C. Cir. 1972); NWF v. NMFS, 235 F. Supp. 2d 1143 (W.D. Wash. 2002). It is irrelevant whether an applicant already owns alternative sites for the purposes of NEPA review: "The fact that this applicant does not now own an alternative site is only marginally relevant (if it is relevant at all) to whether feasible alternatives exist to the applicant's proposal." Van Abbema v. Fornell, 807 F.2d 633, 638 (7th Cir. 1986). As stated in the Van Abbema case, other alternatives for a project cannot be eliminated as non-feasible simply because the applicant does not now own or lease the site where an alternative location may exist.</i></i>	See the responses to Comments 76.171.
76.056	ALT	<i>The DEIS fails to consider whether alternative locations could provide comparable energy output. Thousands of wind turbines have been built throughout Oregon and Washington in recent years which pose far fewer resource impacts than the sites on Steens Mountain and Riddle Mountain. The DEIS does not consider imposing conditions that would require alternate configurations (with fewer wind turbines and/or in different locations) for the four generation sites. Rather, the DEIS seems to assume that the Echanis site must be built to its 104 MW capacity. See, e.g., DEIS at ES-1. There are no financial data or projections provided to support this claim, or that the additional three sites CEP plans to build must be constructed as currently planned to be financially feasible. There are no alternatives presented which limit the size of the generation sites that can be attached to the transmission line.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.171, regarding alternative locations for industrial-scale wind energy sites and BLM's purpose and need, and the response to Comment 76.017 regarding PDFs, BMPs, and mitigation. Because the construction and operation of the Echanis Project site is not a BLM action, the BLM does not need to consider alternatives to the Echanis Project site, alternative configurations, or capacity (size). The BLM and USFWS are not responsible for the permitting of the Echanis Project. This responsibility is Harney County's. The East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Projects are considered reasonably foreseeable future actions. Please refer to Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects) for more information about these additional Projects.

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76.057	ALT	<i>The agencies also do not consider other potential renewable energy sources in the DEIS. A dismissal of renewable energy sources other than wind energy, such as distributed generation, does not comport with the agencies' stated goal of acting consistently with their environmental and social responsibilities. No conservation alternatives were considered to eliminate the stated "need" for the 416 MW of installed capacity that the four generation sites would represent. Conservation alternatives, such as demand response technologies, also should have been included in order to meet the agencies' goals of promoting their environmental and social responsibilities. The DEIS fails to comply with this requirement, because it fails to consider the possibility of delaying the development of wind energy until a later date, perhaps at a time when the energy grid will be more equipped to handle the addition of new wind energy sources.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.171, 76.048, and 76.056. Other potential renewable energy sources, conservation alternatives such as demand response technologies, and delaying the development of wind energy is outside the scope of this EIS.
76.058	OPS	<i>Section 2's evaluation of the Echanis generation site is inadequate because it fails to provide a sufficient description of the proposed turbine configuration. The DEIS describes that the Echanis site might have between 40 and 69 turbines. This is not sufficiently precise to allow the public to comment on what the developer is actually proposing, because the effects on the environment can be significantly different depending on whether the low or high range of turbines actually is developed. The map of the "proposed site" for Echanis (Figure 2.0-9) shows only 46 turbines.</i>	The range in the number of wind turbines to be erected on the Echanis Project site is consistent with the Applicant's current proposal. The Applicant has confirmed that the proposed arrangement of the turbine strings, access roads, power collection cables, etc. would be the same whether there are 40 or 69 wind turbines constructed on the site. The only difference would be that the distance between individual turbines would be reduced. The impact quantities presented in Section 3 assumed 69 turbines. Also see response to comment 76.171.
76.059	EIS	<i>The DEIS demonstrates little, if any, input from the agencies, but rather appears to have been prepared almost entirely by the applicant's consultant, invalidating the DEIS as a basis for agency decision-making...The agencies have violated NEPA by allowing the applicant, and not the agencies themselves, to select the consultant to prepare the EIS, and failing to independently verify the information and analysis in the DEIS.</i>	See the response to Comment 13.07. Prior to engaging the consultant, BLM independently verified the consultant's qualifications and approved the consultant for use in the EIS process. Throughout the process the consultant has been under direct oversight and supervision of the BLM pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding between the applicant and BLM.
76.060	EIS	<i>If in fact the agencies have been relying on the applicant's consultants (rather than agency employees) to draft analytical content for the DEIS, then the agencies should immediately withdraw the DEIS, and either retain new consultants unaffiliated with the applicants to prepare a revised DEIS or ensure that a completely revised DEIS is drafted by disinterested agency employees. The applicant and its consultants must not be allowed to continue to play a direct and significant role in the preparation of factual and legal conclusions in the EIS. Such a role is improper and invalidates the DEIS as the basis for further decision-making</i>	See the response to Comment 13.07.
76.061	WIL	<i>The DEIS fails to adequately disclose and evaluate the likely impacts of the transmission line and generation sites on natural resources...the DEIS's discussion of likely impacts to wildlife, both birds and mammals, is cursory, omits discussion of significant scientific information, and fails to evaluate adequately the significant harm which the transmission line and associated generation sites is likely to cause to wildlife. The DEIS's discussion of impacts to sage-grouse that will result if the agencies grant a ROW along any of the action routes is inadequate because it fails to describe and evaluate impacts on three of the four generation sites. The DEIS similarly grossly understates likely impacts to raptors and other avian species from the four generation sites which the ROW grant will allow to be developed and connected to the grid.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 regarding greater sage-grouse and 76.049 explaining information on the other generation sites. The discussion of sage-grouse habitat in the area of the other three wind energy projects discussed in the Cumulative Effects section has been expanded in the FEIS.
76.062	WILA	<i>The DEIS does not adequately address impacts to avian populations including sage-grouse, waterfowl, avian migrates and Golden Eagles and other raptors.</i>	See the responses to Comments 156.02, 155.13 and 46.09 regarding an ABPP/ECP. See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 52.01 regarding sage-grouse.

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76.063	WIL	<i>As an initial matter, the agencies have included a page in the DEIS (3.5-12) that is listed in the caption as a "Map of documented occurrences of special status animals." Figure 3.5-3. The page is blank, except for a statement that "This figure for special status animals contains confidential information not available for public review." The agencies must immediately disclose this page to the public in a supplemental DEIS that will allow the public to understand and comment on the effects of the proposed transmission and generation on sensitive species on Steens Mountain. The actions proposed here are public lands, and there is nothing in NEPA or any other statute that allows the land management agencies to keep information about sensitive species "confidential" and "not available for public review."</i>	Privileged information was used during the analysis of effects on wildlife, which is not available for public review to protect these resources. Some of the data used in the analysis belongs to other agencies and BLM has been asked not to release it to the general public. For example, greater sage-grouse lek locations are considered sensitive data by the owner agency, ODFW. If specific knowledge about lek locations is desired, you can contact ODFW directly for that data.
76.064	WILA	<i>The DEIS is woefully deficient in its evaluation of sage grouse along the various transmission routes, on the Echanis site, and on the other three generation sites.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 regarding greater sage-grouse and 76.049 explaining information on the other generation sites. The discussion of sage-grouse habitat in the area of the other three wind energy projects discussed in the Cumulative Effects section has been expanded in the FEIS.
76.065	WILA	<i>The DEIS incompletely describes threats to the sagebrush habitat necessary for survival of this species (sage-grouse) claiming, "Current threats to sagebrush habitat include fire and encroachment by juniper woodlands." See at 3.5-10. This is a mischaracterization of threats to sagebrush systems and disregards the best available science from the USFWS and USGS.</i>	The quoted text cited information obtained from Hagen (2005). This document was updated in 2010, and the updated version was utilized for this response. The document is available online at: http://www.dfw.state.or.us/wildlife/sagegrouse/docs/20100706_GRSGStrategy_final.pdf . The following text is found at the bottom of page 40, "Wildfire has contributed to conversion of sagebrush communities into sometimes marginal habitat or non-habitat (i.e., cheatgrass or medusahead grasslands). From 1980-2003, over 600,000 acres of sagebrush were affected by wildfire. Combined with juniper encroachment (2 million acres), these are the two largest factors affecting sagebrush habitat loss in Oregon. These factors are followed by invasive weeds."
76.066	WILA	<i>The DEIS fails to address how development of the transmission line and the Greater Echanis project will exacerbate climate change-related impacts sage-grouse and other sagebrush obligates by fragmenting habitat and adding additional stress.</i>	The Echanis Project would contribute to the overall reduction of CO ₂ because it would avoid the potential production of 104 MW of electricity from fossil-based fuel sources. Habitat fragmentation is addressed in Comment 39.02.
76.067	WILA	<i>The DEIS makes the statement that "[n]o leks are known to occur within three miles of the proposed turbine locations on the Echanis site, so courtship and breeding would not likely be affected by the project." DEIS at 3.5-25. This statement is unsupported by any data or scientific literature cited in the DEIS or generally available. By contrast, settled scientific consensus is that effects from energy development projects to sage-grouse can occur up to more than 12 miles from leks, and have been documented to occur. The reason for this is simple: sage-grouse need to move around to forage, spend most of their lives away from leks (which are used during the breeding season in the spring of the year), and move between their nesting/foraging habitat to breed, as well as moving among leks. Any impediment to that movement, such as transmission lines or wind turbine arrays, is likely to significantly adversely affect sage-grouse in all phases of their life cycle, including breeding...</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
76.068	WILA	<i>The DEIS's statement about the relationship of the Echanis site to leks also does not take into account the impacts of the entire "Greater Echanis" project—the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain sites are adjacent to leks, and the fact that about 75% of the turbines on these three sites would lie within 5 miles of leks—with some turbines planned to be as close as to about 2000 feet from a lek...Because Echanis and the transmission line alternatives fall within the parameters of connectivity, there will likely be impacts on the ability for sage-grouse to move across the landscape to lek sites for breeding and courtship. Transmission lines or turbine sites barring the path of sage-grouse between leks will seriously impact sage-grouse.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 regarding greater sage-grouse and 76.049 explaining information on the other generation sites. The discussion of sage-grouse habitat in the area of the other three wind energy projects discussed in the Cumulative Effects section has been expanded in the FEIS.

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76.069	WILA	<i>In 2000, researchers from Oregon State University documented that the 15 female sage-grouse it tagged on the South Long lek on BLM's South Steens Allotment on South Steens Mountain averaged 14.9 km (9.3 miles) from lek to nest. For all tagged birds on South Steens, the average distance from lek to nest was 11.1 km (6.9 miles).8 Why did BLM not disclose this information in its evaluation of sage-grouse habitat and effects from proposed transmission lines and wind turbines on North Steens Mountain? How can the agencies pass the red-face test with their claim that there will be no effects to sage-grouse from turbines on Echanis 3 miles from leks when sage-grouse on South Steens Mountain have been documented to nest an average of nearly 7 miles from leks?</i>	The referenced Oregon State research is as follows: Crawford, J.A., T.H. Bliss, and M.K.D. McDowell. 2000. <i>Habitat Use by Sage Grouse at South Steens BLM Allotment. Final Report</i> . Unpublished report. Game Bird Research Program, Dept. of Fisheries and Wildlife, Oregon State University, Corvallis. Additional information regarding sage-grouse movement has been added to Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife). The average distance from the lek where the female was captured to the nest site observed for the birds in this study was 6.9 miles (Crawford et al. 2000). More recent analysis showed that of the 29 greater sage-grouse nests found during the South Steens Study, 65 percent were within 2 miles of the nearest lek and 83 percent were within 3 miles of the nearest lek. As noted in your comments as well as in this EIS, females have been documented to travel more than 12.5 miles to their nest site after mating (Connelly et al. 2001 in DOI 2010) but distances between a nest site and the lek on which breeding occurred is variable (Connelly et al. 2004 in DOI 2010). Female sage-grouse would nest wherever suitable nesting habitat exists, whether close to a lek or not. However, the BLM is not restricting the analysis of sage-grouse impacts to confined nesting ranges.
76.070	WILA	<i>Regarding sage-grouse...The DEIS should cite and evaluate recommendations set out by the State and by USFWS when considering restrictions or conditions on the ROW.</i>	The BLM would consider the Oregon State's, USFW Ecological Service's, and ODFW's recommendations for the ROW grant. Also see responses to comments 39.02, 52.01, and 155.15.
76.071	WILA	<i>ODFW has documented lek counts at the Sagehen Hill site, where sage-grouse and power development have previously come into conflict. Exhibit 14 (ODFW December 17, 2008 Letter) at 4. This clearly shows that the number of sage-grouse at the plummeted after the transmission line was constructed. This displacement from habitat is consistent with the findings in the scientific literature cited above and which ODFW cites on page 5 of its letter, and underscores that industrial wind energy development is likely to cause serious harm to sage-grouse. The agencies must disclose this finding in the DEIS supplement and evaluate its significance, given the proximity of the transmission line and generation sites to core sage-grouse habitat.</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.03 and 76.007.
76.072	WILA	<i>The DEIS fails to provide or evaluate information regarding sage-grouse population management units ("PMUs") in the vicinity of the transmission and generation project area and other PMUs in the region to identify and evaluate potential cumulative effects on these PMUs from other potential energy development and habitat loss due to impacts from domestic livestock grazing and climate change. Please provide this information in a supplemental DEIS and fully examine the status of all PMUs and populations across the region to evaluate whether further destruction of sage-grouse habitat by construction of the transmission line and generation sites on North Steens Mountain will have unacceptable impacts on sage-grouse. The DEIS does not quantify or properly evaluate the large-scale and long-term habitat losses that have occurred from fires in the region, the long-term impact of extensive new habitat loss and fragmentation, and the very long recovery times for sagebrush habitats from fires and other disturbances.</i>	Substantial additional information regarding greater sage-grouse in the area of the Project has been added to the Wildlife Section of the EIS (3.2.5.2). Also, see the response to Comment 76.065 and 76.007, regarding sagebrush habitat and wildfires and comments 39.02, 52.01, and 155.15 regarding greater sage-grouse.
76.073	WILA	<i>BLM must also evaluate the July 2009 Department of Energy report entitled "Sage-Grouse and Wind Energy: Biology, Habits and Potential Effects from Development," available at http://www.pnl.gov/main/publications/external/technical_reports/PNNL-18567.pdf, also on the CD-ROM enclosed (a hard-copy was also provided to the agencies during scoping). Extrapolating from the devastating effects of oil and gas development in Wyoming on sage-grouse there, the July 2009 DOE study concludes that "[b]oth wind farms and oil and gas fields consist of large aggregations of infrastructure and activities that share some common features, such as transmission lines and roads, and differ in others, such as wind turbines. Impacts to sage-grouse from wind energy development would likely be similar to those resulting from fossil fuel development described in Section 4." Id. at 5.1</i>	Additional information regarding effects of energy development on greater sage-grouse has been added to Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife), including information from the report referenced in the comment (Becker, et al 2009). As stated in the FEIS, greater sage-grouse avoid areas with tall structures such as wind turbines with moving blades and, although it is not well studied, could be displaced by noise, visual effects, habitat fragmentation, or other effects generated by a wind energy development (USFWS 2008, Becker et al. 2009). The reaction of greater sage-grouse to vertical structures varies by the type of structure, and could be related to spatially associated activities (general industrial development) or could be related to the presence of the vertical structures themselves (Johnson et al. 2011)... It is unclear how much displacement of greater sage-grouse would occur from the Project Area, because on-going studies have not been completed and results have not been reviewed and published that track greater sage-

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			<p>grouse movements before and after construction of wind energy projects. There has been one reported sighting of a nesting female greater sage-grouse within 492 feet (150 meters) of a wind turbine in Washington (Strickland 2010) but there have not been any other reports or studies to support this observation since then. While more studies have been completed on oil and gas development and its effects on greater sage-grouse, the overall vertical structure and vehicle traffic might differ from other types of renewable energy developments, while similarities occur due to fragmentation of native habitat by roads and infrastructure (Hagen 2011a). Greater sage-grouse would be displaced from an area beyond the turbine footprint, but for how far and during which seasons has not been adequately researched. Until empirical data are available that quantify the effects of such developments on greater sage-grouse populations, interim guidance from the ODFW is being used to quantify areas of impact of projects on greater sage-grouse (Hagen 2011b).</p>
76.074	WILA	<p><i>The DEIS includes no analysis of other areas where industrial scale energy development has had significant adverse effects on sage-grouse, such as Wyoming. See, e.g., Naugle, D. E., B. L. Walker, and K. E. Doherty, Sage-grouse population response to coal-bed natural gas development in the Powder River Basin: Interim Progress Report on Region-wide Lek-count analyses, Wildlife Biology Program, College of Forestry and Conservation. University of Montana, Missoula, MT, available at http://www.sagebrushsea.org/pdf/Naugle_et_al_Grouse_PRB_Interim_Report.pdf (on enclosed CD-ROM). BLM and USFWS should evaluate the likelihood that the effects from industrial scale wind development in a barren landscape will be equally calamitous as those from oil and gas development.</i></p>	<p>The effects of oil and gas development on greater sage-grouse were referenced in DEIS Section 3.5 (Wildlife), where appropriate. However, that study examined an area with an extremely high density of development and so, as such, does not provide an appropriate basis for estimating the potential effects of the Echanis Project. Also see the response to Comment 76.073.</p>
76.075	WILA	<p><i>The DEIS fails to provide any evidence or support for its statement that there are "conflicting results regarding the effect of wind turbines on grouse occupancy. DEIS at 3.5-25. Although the DEIS refers to "(Strickland 2010)," no such article or study or (possibly) personal anecdote appears in the "References" listed in Section 5.0. The public has no means of reviewing or commenting on what the significance of this finding is.</i></p>	<p>The Strickland reference was included in the DEIS and is as follows: Strickland, D. 2010. Renewable Northwest Project Sage-grouse White Paper. Presentation to AWEA Siting Workshop, February 18, 2010.</p> <p>Additional information about greater sage-grouse existing conditions and potential impacts was added to the FEIS, Sections 3.5.2.3 and 3.5.3 (Wildlife). This information states, "It is unclear how much displacement of greater sage-grouse would occur from the Project Area, because on-going studies have not been completed and results have not been reviewed and published that track greater sage-grouse movements before and after construction of wind energy projects. There has been one reported sighting of a nesting female greater sage-grouse within 492 feet (150 meters) of a wind turbine in Washington (Strickland 2010) but there have not been any other reports or studies to support this observation since then. While more studies have been completed on oil and gas development and its effects on greater sage-grouse, the overall vertical structure and vehicle traffic might differ from other types of renewable energy developments, while similarities occur due to fragmentation of native habitat by roads and infrastructure (Hagen 2011a). Greater sage-grouse would be displaced from an area beyond the turbine footprint, but for how far and during which seasons has not been adequately researched. Until empirical data are available that quantify the effects of such developments on greater sage-grouse populations, interim guidance from the ODFW is being used to quantify areas of impact of projects on greater sage-grouse (Hagen 2011b)."</p>

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76.076	WILA	<i>The DEIS fails to quantify or analyze in detail the potential impacts of increased predation from allowing transmission lines and tensioning towers to serve as raptor perches. Ravens and raptors will likely congregate and nest in large numbers on the line and towers, preying on sage-grouse eggs and chicks in nests near the transmission line. See Steenhof, Karen et al, Nesting by Raptors and Common Ravens on Electrical Transmission Line Towers, J. Wildl. Manage. 57(2): 271-281 (available at http://www.jstor.org/pss/3809424). Transmission lines can decrease the available habitat base and/or effectiveness of habitat (Braun et al. 2002, Lyon and Anderson 2003). Both transmission lines and fences provide perches for raptors and have been found to increase the risk of collision mortalities (Borell 1939, Aldridge 1998). The overall effect of such structures on a population is unknown; however, sage-grouse use of an area has been shown to increase with distance from power lines (Braun 1998). BLM and USFWS must quantify and describe in detail these potential increased predation effects.</i>	See the response to Comment 44.03.
76.077	WILA	<i>The DEIS completely ignores the latest scientific information on sage-grouse, released in November 2009, entitled Ecology and Conservation of Greater Sage-Grouse: A Landscape Species and Its Habitats... Both the BLM and the USFWS must evaluate the science contained in this document, as well as the conclusions of the 2010 listing decision, and explain how they apply to the sage-grouse living on Steens Mountain and Riddle Mountain that would be affected by the transmission and generation which the ROW would authorize. Based on the scientific consensus regarding the perilous state of sage-grouse, BLM and USFWS cannot authorize a transmission line that would allow development of four generation sites within core, "priority" sage grouse habitat.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03. The reference cited in the comment was utilized extensively in the FEIS. It has been updated and published as: Connelly, J. W. and, S. T. Knick (eds). 2011. Greater Sage-Grouse: ecology and conservation of a landscape species and its habitats. Studies in Avian Biology (vol. 38), University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.
76.078	WILA	<i>The DEIS needs to fully explore the magnitude and extent of impacts on sage-grouse. As a species determined to be warranted for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act, the BLM and USFWS have a duty to protect this species and its habitat. As it stands, the DEIS's analysis of the effects to sage-grouse transmission line and associated generation sites is woefully incomplete.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 44.03.
76.079	WILA	<i>The DEIS failed to adequately evaluate impacts to raptors, passerines and waterfowl, and impacts/impediments on migratory flyways. Due the magnitude of potential impacts on the avian populations, additional avian studies are needed to identify more specifically migratory flyways for seasonal migrants and resident populations that use the north-south facing escarpment of Steens Mountain to migrate through the area. Of all species in this area, the avian species have the largest range—spatially limited studies offer little assurance the impacts will be as isolated as they are described in the DEIS. The Northwest Wildlife Consulting studies are missing quantitative study of avian and bat migratory movements—much of the information and assessment of impacts is based on limited observation and conjecture, and on an unreasonably narrow point count methodology. These studies should be completed and added into a supplemental DEIS so that the public can review new information before it appears in a final EIS. The DEIS is similarly deficient in failing to provide bird data for the Refuge, which must be produced in a supplemental DEIS. DEIS at 3.5-1.</i>	As indicated in the response to Comment 156.02, additional avian surveys were completed after the release of the DEIS, and these new data have been added to the FEIS. The discussion in the Avian Use Studies produced by NWC for the Alternative B - West Route, which includes the MNWR, indicated that, "The concern of potential collisions and of electrocutions has generally been associated with larger birds, including raptors, waterfowl, game birds, and wading birds. Though the frequency with which smaller birds such as passerines either collided with or are electrocuted by transmission lines is poorly studied, it is considered to be infrequent. For this reason, efforts to improve and standardize the design and installation of transmission towers and lines have targeted larger birds such as waterfowl and raptors. If the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC 2006) standards are followed, the risk of either collision or electrocution of raptors is considered to be minimal (M. Green, USFWS, personal communication, 2010). The results of these surveys, particularly the high use of white-faced ibis at points where the proposed transmission line nears the MNWR, dictate that these best standards and practices be followed, because failure to do so would involve a high likelihood of risk to these wading birds as well as to raptors and waterfowl. If APLIC (2006) standards are followed, there might remain a relatively high risk of occasional collisions with transmission lines by white-faced ibis, because of the amount of use and the behavior of this species. At every count at which white-faced ibis was detected, those detections included flying birds, because this species moves frequently between foraging sites and between foraging and nest sites. The potential for disturbance of avian breeding attempts during construction of the proposed transmission line is believed to increase with proximity to nests. For this reason, micrositing of towers and lines should be done to maximize the distance from identified nests (of raptors) or nesting colonies (of wading birds, waterfowl, or gulls). The raptor nest survey (Gerhardt and

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			<p>Gritski 2010b) identified a number of active and inactive raptor nests within 1 mile of the proposed transmission line, and it is expected that micro-siting of towers would consider these nests. In addition, nesting areas of waterfowl, gulls, and wading birds existed in the MNWR in areas adjacent to the proposed transmission line (specifically at points near plots 7, 8, and 9 of this study). It is also expected that construction that would occur near these nesting areas or near raptor nests would be accomplished outside of the breeding season of those birds" (NWC October 11, 2009). Also, regarding the MNWR lands, such a use could only be approved if it were found to contribute to MNWR purposes or the National Wildlife Refuge System mission. Additional avian abundance data were obtained from the MNWR for 2010 and 2011. These data were included in the FEIS, Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife).</p>
76.080	WILA	<p><i>In general, the DEIS does not adequately address impacts of the transmission line and wind turbines on Golden Eagles (Aquila chrysaetos) and other raptors. Transmission lines can decrease the available habitat base and/or effectiveness of habitat (Braun et al. 2002, Lyon and Anderson 2003). Both transmission lines and fences provide perches for raptors and have been found to increase the risk of collision mortalities (Borell 1939, Aldridge 1998). The DEIS failed to fully evaluate how nesting behavior of raptors might be effected by the presence of a transmission line and what new predation dynamics the line might introduce to the area. Avian mortality through collisions with the rotor blades on wind turbines is a chief impact wind farms have on the environment. Long-term studies on the effects of industrial scale wind farms are rare and there are a number of cases in the American West of large-scale wind farms causing harm to raptor populations. The eastern edge of the Echanis site has an avian migration corridor as indicated in the Northwest Wildlife Consulting 2007 avian use survey report at page 3. More information on bird use of this corridor is needed to fully understand the potential for collision related mortality. Information is also needed about other avian migration corridors in the vicinity of the four generation sites and transmission line routes.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 46.09.</p>
76.081	WILA	<p><i>The DEIS dramatically understates the likely death of raptors and other bird species from collision with turbines. For example, the DEIS estimates annual raptor kills at the Echanis site alone at "0 to 22." DEIS at 3.5-23. This range is not meaningful to allow an analysis of the likely number of raptors killed at the four generation sites that the transmission line would facilitate. The DEIS adds a vague footnote that it does not consider studies from California because they have "inordinately high avian mortality" and are "not appropriately comparable to newer developments." DEIS at 3.2-23 n.2. However, the DEIS does not explain why they are not comparable. In many ways, particularly in the scale and number of turbines and the presence of migratory corridors, the North Steens and Riddle Mountain sites are more comparable to projects in California than to projects outside California that are not located in migration pathways or near a National Wildlife Refuge. The DEIS also estimates total bird deaths at 24 to 690 annually, another range that is so large as to be meaningless for evaluating the likely impact of the project on avian species. DEIS at 3.5-23.</i></p>	<p>DEIS Section 3.5 (Wildlife) provided an analysis of the effects of the Echanis Project on birds, and the best available method for estimating bird mortality was used. BLM acknowledges that biology in general is not deterministic, and avian mortality projections are still early in development, so the estimates have a wide range. To offset the concerns about the unknown potential mortality of birds, conditions described in the ABPP/ECP would be implemented by a TAC. The ABPP/ECP contains additional information regarding avian mortality, which has been added to Section 3.5.2.3 of the FEIS. The ABPP/ECP is still in draft form, and is being completed in coordination with the FWS, ODFW, and BLM.</p>
76.082	WILA	<p><i>The agencies must independently evaluate the statements regarding likely bird kills by the project and disclose information regarding avian deaths from wind turbines at all wind projects that have reported data, and evaluate which sites are more like, or less like, the sites on Steens Mountain. Simply dismissing contrary scientific data without analysis violates NEPA. The agencies must also obtain and disclose data and analysis of likely raptor and other bird deaths from collisions with the proposed turbines at the East Ridge, West Ridge and Riddle Mountain sites.</i></p>	<p>The DEIS drew upon the best available scientific data for reference to the proposed Echanis Project, and used those wind developments in areas most like the proposed Project Area. Post-construction mortality monitoring data would be available to the public. Evaluation of all avian studies for all potential windfarm developments is beyond the scope of this EIS. To offset the concerns about the unknown potential mortality of birds, conditions described in the ABPP/ECP would be implemented by a TAC. Specific advanced conservation practices have been developed as a part of the ABPP/ECP and are also included in Section 3.5.2.3 of the FEIS. Additional information regarding potential avian mortality from the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain wind farms has been added to Section 3.19.</p>

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76.083	WILA	<p><i>The agencies should evaluate the attached comments of Dr. Shawn Smallwood related to the Whistling Ridge Wind project in Skamania County, Washington, a 75 MW project located in the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion. Exhibit 16. As these comments demonstrate, preconstruction predictions of bird fatalities are often far lower than the actual estimated kills after a wind project begins operations. Exhibit 16 at 1–2. Dr. Smallwood extrapolated from avian kill monitoring at 23 wind sites in Oregon, California and Washington that the average annual fatalities for a project with 75 MW rated capacity would be 33 raptor fatalities, 422 total bird fatalities, and 86 bat fatalities. Exhibit 16 at 16. Again extrapolating this to the 416 MW rated capacity of the four sites associated with the proposed ROW, granting the ROW and allowing the four generation sites to come into existence would result in 183 raptor deaths per year, 2,342 total bird deaths per year, and 473 bat deaths per year. The potential for raptor, other bird, and bat deaths at the four generation sites far exceeds the estimates provided in the DEIS.</i></p> <p><i>The agency should also consider that many of the methodological deficiencies in the Whistling Ridge surveys which Dr. Smallwood describes are present in the NWC studies. Exhibit 16 at 3-9. The agencies must fully disclose the methodology used to estimate likely bird kills from the Steens Mountain and Riddle Mountain sites and explain whether it conforms to best science as described in Dr. Smallwood's comments.</i></p>	<p>The comments of Dr. Smallwood would be reviewed by the TAC, in the context of whether a different methodology should be used to determine whether avian and bat fatalities are greater than those predicted for the Echanis Project. In some cases, Dr. Smallwood's report tended to overestimate the predicted mortality that was reported for different wind farms, while other studies have underestimated the rate. Avian impacts assessment and mitigation are further discussed in the ABPP/ECP, and have been added to Section 3.5.2.3 of the EIS. See also the response to Comment 76.084.</p>
76.084	WILA	<p><i>The DEIS proposes a single mitigation measure for bird deaths: setting back turbines 500 feet from ridges, but does not quantify or explain whether this would be effective in preventing bird deaths, or how many. DEIS at 3.5-29. The other proposed "mitigation" is vague and relies on uncertain processes...</i></p>	<p>Setting turbines back from ridges is anticipated to reduce the potential for raptor collision, but no studies are available to quantify how significant that reduction might be. BLM acknowledges that biology in general is not deterministic, and avian mortality projections are still early in development, so the estimates have a wide range. To offset the concerns about the unknown potential mortality of birds, a TAC would be convened once an alternative is selected and a specific Project design is adopted. Specific mitigation plans would be developed based upon additional monitoring. The Echanis Project turbines would be located at least 500 feet from the cliff-top edge, which would reduce the potential for collisions with raptors. The effectiveness of this placement to protect birds from collisions has been supported by the USFWS in Project discussions regarding the ABPP/ECP. The Applicant is working with the USFWS to develop an Avian and Bat Protection Plan/Eagle Conservation Plan (ABPP/ECP) for the Echanis Project site (Appendix F). This plan would be used to ensure compliance with the MBTA and the BGEPA, and would be implemented under guidance from the TAC. This plan would apply to species covered under the MBTA and BGEPA. Under direction of the ABPP/ECP, together with recommendations of the TAC, the Applicant would monitor wildlife impacts through post-construction monitoring and implement additional mitigation measures if impacts exceeded threshold levels, as described in the ABPP/ECP (Appendix F).</p>
76.085	WIL	<p><i>The DEIS contains almost no information about the methodology used to obtain information about avian species near the Echanis site (and, because there is no detailed information provided for the other three sites, no methodological description is provided or any surveys from those sites, either). The DEIS states that "field investigations were conducted to survey for protected resources and their habitats beginning in 2007 and are scheduled to be completed in 2010." DEIS at 3.5-1. The DEIS lists the surveys conducted, but the only description of the methodology used is a vague reference to "implementation of an industry standard avian point count methodology." DEIS at 3.5-5. There is no description of what that methodology was, other than that it involved a "point count." The survey also is not disclosed in the DEIS itself, and therefore cannot support a reasoned decision on a ROW.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 156.02. Data collected during wildlife surveys has been added to the FEIS, as Appendix E.</p>

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76.086	WIL	<i>...BLM and USFWS therefore have an obligation to collect their own, independent data on impacts to wildlife, and particular to birds (sage-grouse, raptors and other species) which depend on Steens Mountain and Riddle Mountain for habitat. In the DEIS, it appears that the agencies rely exclusively on data collected by CEP's consultants. This violates the agencies' obligation under NEPA to independently verify and evaluate an applicant's data. Save Our Wetlands, 711 F.2d at 642.</i>	See the response to Comment 74.05.
76.087	WIL	<i>The federal agencies have failed to ensure that the data collected reflects the best available science, including proper methodological protocols. The preliminary Biological Study Reports which CEP submitted to Harney County in December 2008 suffered from serious flaws in this respect. The DEIS does not disclose survey information on the Echanis site in sufficient detail to evaluate its methodology, but the flaws in the December 2008 reports on East Ridge and West Ridge raised serious concerns about any data generated from the Echanis site as well or from the proposed transmission line. Since the biological study reports for West Ridge and East Ridge have not been disclosed in the DEIS, and therefore have not been evaluated by the agencies, it is impossible to comment on them in responding to the DEIS. We hope to be able to comment on them when they appear in the supplemental DEIS required under NEPA. However, the deficiencies in methodology in those reports are likely repeated in the similarly undisclosed (but referenced in the DEIS) biological survey of Echanis.</i>	See the additions made to FEIS Section 3.5.1 (Wildlife), and the responses to Comments 76.094, 76.100 and 76.007.
76.088	WIL	<i>CEP's biological studies did not indicate that they would be conducted using recognized methods (for example, there were no citations to methodology in the December 2008 Biological Study Reports) in such a way that it can be convincingly shown that one or more of the following are true: 1) particular species/habitat of concern are absent, 2) species/habitat which are found to be present occur in such numbers that relative to other areas are low enough to suggest that the site is not significantly important to the health of the population/habitat, 3) the habitat present serves no unique special function that would be significantly disturbed by the development (such as migratory flyways, feeding grounds, breeding grounds, etc.), or 4) species/habitat of concern which are present can be protected through potential mitigation methods (such as seasonal shutdowns, or blade feathering). BLM and USFWS must fully disclose the methodology used to collect biological information cited in the DEIS and evaluate whether or not it complies with the best science. From what is known and can be inferred about the biological studies on Echanis, the NWC surveys do not. BLM and USFWS must ensure that proper standards and methods are used to collect biological information about the baseline conditions and potential impacts of the Project. Since CEP and its consultants have not provided information that constitutes "best science," BLM and USFWS must undertake to obtain that information themselves.</i>	See the responses to Comments 74.05 and 76.094.
76.089	WIL	<i>The DEIS does not provide detailed information about 4 rodent species that are likely present in the area, 2 of which are Species of Federal Concern. There is no detail provided in the DEIS regarding the numbers of ungulates and other species present in the area of the transmission lines and four generation sites.</i>	Rodent data provided in the DEIS are adequate. Information about ungulate abundance was added to Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife) of the FEIS. This information describes that the elk populations are at management objectives for population size (400 individuals; approximately 250 within the Project Area), while mule deer are well below objectives (11,000 individuals is the management objective while current herd size is approximately 3,500 to 4,000, or 35 percent of management objective) (Klus 2010, Obradovich 2011). While pronghorn antelope and bighorn sheep objectives have not been set, populations are stable to slightly declining (Klus 2010). Wintering herds of mule deer and antelope have been observed using MNWR lands within the Project Area, with scattered individuals reported during all seasons.

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76.090	WIL	<i>BLM and USFWS must examine the Echanis site surveys, as well as any surveys disclosed in supplemental DEIS for the other generation sites, to determine whether the information presented in them is accurate. In this regard, it is shocking that there were no wildlife experts from BLM or USFWS among the "preparers" of the DEIS with respect to wildlife and avian impacts on Steens Mountain. DEIS at 4.3-9. The supplemental DEIS must include review by qualified agency staff of the NWC surveys because of the inaccuracies which appear, at least, in the survey reports which CEP presented to Harney County.</i>	See the responses to Comments 74.05 and 76.007.
76.091	WAT	<i>Considering that the sites contain riparian habitat in higher density than you would expect to find in a given area in the western U.S. (West Ridge >1.3%, and East Ridge >3% of total site area), as well as the importance of riparian areas to botanical and wildlife resources and the importance of upland condition to overall watershed health, the hydrologic impacts of the East and West Ridge sites (and the Echanis site) must be disclosed and considered in the supplemental DEIS.</i>	Section 3.19.2.4 (Cumulative Effects) of the DEIS analyzed the riparian effects caused by reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFAs) such as the East Ridge, West Ridge, and the Riddle Mountain Projects. This analysis was done for RFFAs without the Proposed Action, as well as RFFAs, including the Proposed Action and action alternatives.
76.092	WIL	<i>BLM and USFWS must independently evaluate the validity of any information which CEP or NWC provides in a supplemental DEIS. It is imperative that BLM and USFWS disclose and evaluate whether the avian surveys were designed to collect adequate data to determine if fatalities or behavioral changes will affect the local and migratory populations of these species. It is unclear, in light of limited resources and other pending priorities, why CEP proposed two avian survey methods, when one properly designed survey would enable collection of reliable data. It was unreasonable to assume that during the initial survey (800 m circular plot), one observer could accurately identify all bird species within this very large plot. Additionally, both survey methods would not adequately measure abundance or presence/absence of ground dwelling birds, including sage-grouse, quail, or chukar. The circular variable plot method (Reynolds et al. 1980)19 which CEP proposed on the East Ridge and West Ridge sites is an antiquated methodology, superseded by methods developed in the past 25 + years which enable researchers to provide more precise and credible estimates of presence/absence, density, and abundance (e.g. methods that include estimates of detection probability, including double observer methods, distance sampling—e.g. Nichols et al. 2000, Williams et al. 2001).</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.100, 156.02 and 76.007.
76.093	WIL	<i>The agencies must disclose and explain exactly what methodology was used in the surveys that form the basis of the DEIS, and explain why more accurate methods that would yield meaningful information for decision-making were not used, and why BLM and USFWS did not independently conduct surveys or independently verify the information provided by the applicant's consultant.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.100.
76.094	WILA	<i>Avian impacts analysis is inadequate and not based on the best available science. The baseline surveys were too cursory to support a scientifically credible baseline assessment. Failings include an inadequate sample and an inadequate amount of time dedicated to surveys. Avian utilization of a site can vary greatly from year to year, so the limited time span of these baseline surveys introduces large uncertainty into the resulting utilization rates. The sample sizes were grossly inadequate for what is needed for comparing bird utilization among project sites or for guiding wind turbine locations to minimize collision rates. Numerous other methodological errors in the analysis introduce additional biases that undermine the NEPA review.</i>	Although the wildlife studies were contracted by the Applicant, they were reviewed by the BLM, ODFW, and the USFWS for adequacy and scientific rigor of methods and analysis. Additional data from the agencies were relied upon to complement the results of the field studies. Additional survey data would be made available to the agencies, incorporated into the FEIS, and on-going studies would be undertaken and overseen by the TAC. A table (Table 3.5-1) has been added to the FEIS to show all wildlife surveys that were conducted. Surveys conducted after the DEIS was produced are as follows: aerial raptor nest surveys for the Alternative C - North Route (report dated August 11, 2010), avian use surveys for the Alternative B - West Route (report dated October 11, 2010) and Alternative C - North Route (report dated 10/04/2010), Special Status Wildlife surveys for the North Alternative Transmission Line (report dated August 31, 2010), special status plants for the Alternative C - North Route (report dated September 8, 2010), small plot avian Use for the Alternative B - West Route (report dated August 18, 2010), and habitat mapping for the Alternative C - North Route (report dated November 2, 2010). While additional study data would provide better variability estimates, the post-construction mortality monitoring would capture actual effects of the Project and allow the TAC to develop mitigation measures to compensate for wildlife loss, beyond the mitigation measures that are already proposed as a part of the Project.

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76.095	WIL	<i>Wildlife surveys should be conducted using current state-of-the-art field and analysis protocol. At the least, surveys must take into account survey bias including, but not limited to, searcher efficiency, carcass "life expectancy" or persistence, and scavenger removal. The entire site should be surveyed before and after construction. Both pre-development survey and post development monitoring should take into account the episodic nature of some bird migrations and nocturnal bird migrations. For example, long or inappropriately timed intervals between searches may miss a significant avian presence. The DEIS fails to account for these factors.</i>	The TAC would be convened once an alternative is selected and a specific Project design is adopted. Draft conceptual mitigation plans have been developed, are included in a new Appendix F in the FEIS, and would be finalized in coordination with the USFWS and BLM. Mitigation measures would be based upon the effects that are generally known within the industry from transmission line and wind energy development, and specific to the resources that would be affected. See also response to comment 76.094.
76.096	WIL	<i>The agencies should also disclose and evaluate whether the studies that have been conducted for avian species (including sage-grouse) conform to the methodological recommendations contained in USFWS's Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee Recommendations. For example, for sage-grouse, the Guidelines state that lek counts "in general require repeated visits to known sites and a systematic search of all suitable habitat for leks, followed by repeated visits to active leks to estimate the number of grouse using them. Guidelines at 34-35. There is no evidence in the DEIS that any such systematic studies of the leks that would be affected by the transmission and generation sites have been studied in this way. Please disclose and discuss any studies that have been conducted on those leks, on related sage-grouse habitat affected by the project, and on other avian species, and explain whether those studies conform to the USFWS Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee Recommendation. If they do not, please explain the differences and why the surveys could support a reasoned decision to approve ROWs.</i>	The guidelines mentioned by the commenter are recommendations submitted by a Federal Advisory Committee to the Secretary of the Interior during April 2010. The USFWS's website states that, "The Service is aware of industry embracing the Recommendations developed by the Wind Turbine Guidelines Advisory Committee. It is very encouraging to have industry coming to us voluntarily as they plan future wind-energy projects. We recognize that the Committee's Recommendations to the Secretary are, at this point, just recommendations. Despite the fact the Service cannot advocate for the use of the Recommendations for wind-energy development at this point in time, we recognize that the Recommendations represent a new and comprehensive effort to address the wildlife impacts of wind-energy development. It is of course expected that a wind-energy developer would want to consider using the Recommendations in its assessment of a wind project on the potential impacts to wildlife." These guidelines could be used by the TAC to design studies to be conducted for the Echanis Project and the transmission line. ODFW conducted aerial and follow-up ground searches for greater sage-grouse leks in the Steens Mountain area during April 2007. New leks were discovered during this search, but none were in the Project Area. Monitoring data on sage-grouse leks collected by ODFW and BLM was utilized in the preparation of the EIS, as well as in discussions of implementation of the sage-grouse Mitigation Framework between the Applicant, ODFW, USFWS, and BLM, which is discussed in Section 3.5.2.3. (Wildlife).
76.097	WILA	<i>New data from Raven Research completed this summer 2010 (Exhibit 17), should be used to evaluate impacts to Golden Eagles (Aquila chrysaetos) and other raptors such as the peregrine falcon (Falco peregrines). New information, such as various raptor nest sites identified throughout the summer and a peregrine falcon eyrie spotted by raptor research in April, 2010 should be included in a supplemental DEIS. With evidence that there is a peregrine falcon nest in the area close to Mann Lake, the DEIS should change the "likelihood of occurrence" at page 3.5-17.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.099. In addition, the peregrine falcon referenced in the comment was only spotted at Mann Lake during April, and not during the subsequent trip in June. It is assumed the falcon was migrating through the area in April.
76.098	WILA	<i>BLM should conduct additional surveys for peregrine falcons in and around the proposed ROWs and generation sites. To the extent surveys have been conducted, how many surveys have been conducted and when? Where has BLM looked for peregrine falcons? What are the results of those studies? How much suitable habitat for peregrine falcons would Alternative B and Alternative C, and the four associated generation sites, disturb?</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.099 and 156.02.
76.099	WILA	<i>The agencies must release a supplemental DEIS incorporating new research and differing views on potential impacts, and evaluating their significance with respect to the decisions facing the agencies. A supplemental DEIS should evaluate how the Golden Eagle and Prairie Falcon (Falco mexicanus) nest sites on and by the Stonehouse Cliffs between Mann Lake and Juniper Lake would be impacted by the nearby wind turbines. Nest sites and nest clusters are located approximately 1.5 miles or less from the Echanis site and a breeding pair of Golden Eagles was spotted 6 miles away. A supplemental DEIS should also incorporate the same researcher's observations of waterfowl by Mann Lake while doing peregrine falcon nest searches, and also disclose and evaluate the same researcher's studies and observations during 2009. The DEIS states there is no shorebird or waterfowl habitat at the Echanis site (see page 3.5-6) yet, according to the researcher many different species of shorebirds and waterfowl were identified very close to the project site.</i>	Information provided from new Applicant surveys was incorporated into the analysis of impacts to raptors in the FEIS. There were no waterfowl or shorebirds documented on the Echanis Project site in the avian studies conducted by NWC. Mann Lake, where all of the waterfowl and shore birds were documented by Raven West during the summer of 2010, is at the 4,200-foot elevation while the Echanis Project site is at about 7,400 feet. This information was incorporated into the FEIS. In preparing this EIS, the best available information and science was used to conduct the analyses. The information in the comment regarding "different species of shorebirds and waterfowl" is not peer reviewed or documented. Additionally, the Echanis Project site is on private land and actions that occur on the private land are not within the jurisdiction of the BLM. Also see response to comment 76.007.

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76.100	WILA	<i>Because little study has been done in this area besides that of CEP's contracted researchers and the BLM's contracted researcher Raven Research, more studies must be conducted under the aegis of the agencies to provide a more accurate representation of impacts. BLM and USFWS have an obligation under NEPA to verify the validity of any information provided by an applicant, including a full disclosure and review of the methodology of the studies. The following studies should be completed prior to the final EIS or any record of decision on the granted ROW, and disclosed as part of a supplemental DEIS for public review and comment:</i>	Although the wildlife studies were contracted by the Applicant's contractor, they were reviewed by the BLM, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for adequacy and scientific rigor of the methods and analysis. Additional studies were conducted since issuance of the DEIS and additional data from the agencies was relied upon to complement the results of those field studies. The additional survey data and the analyses of potential effects were added to FEIS Sections 3.5 (Wildlife) and 3.3 (Vegetation), and a new Appendix E.
76.101	WILA	<i>The following studies should be completed prior to the final EIS or any record of decision on the granted ROW, and disclosed as part of a supplemental DEIS for public review and comment: Additional avian studies at the project sites during migratory periods and nests counts south of Mann Lake</i>	See the response to Comment 156.02.
76.102	WILA	<i>The following studies should be completed prior to the final EIS or any record of decision on the granted ROW, and disclosed as part of a supplemental DEIS for public review and comment: Avian migratory study to examine flight patterns and area use.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.101 and 156.02.
76.103	WILA	<i>The DEIS fails to ensure compliance with the federal Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act ("BGEPA"), 16 USC § 668-668d, despite the presence of Golden Eagles and their habitat within and near the project site. Golden Eagles have been documented at all of the generation sites on North Steens Mountain.</i>	See the response to Comment 46.09.
76.104	WILA	<i>The DEIS evaluation of potential impacts to Golden Eagles in the cumulative effects section is inadequate. Besides not quantifying potential cumulative effects on Golden Eagles, the DEIS simply states that "[g]olden eagles have been killed at other wind developments, although the incidence of fatalities is very low." DEIS at 3.19-16. There is no evidence to support this statement. By contrast, at least two Golden Eagles have been killed in collisions with wind turbines in Oregon alone during 2010. The agencies must disclose actual data showing the number of Golden Eagles which have been killed by wind generation and transmission projects in Oregon and elsewhere in the West this year and in recent years. Again, this is an example of the cumulative effects analysis failing to quantify and detail likely impacts from cumulative and connected actions in violation of NEPA. The agencies must also conduct and include information on surveys for Golden Eagles on all four of the proposed generation sites that the ROWs would allow to access the main grid.</i>	See the response to Comment 46.09. Additional information about golden eagles has become available through the drafting of the ABPP/ECP. This information and the related impact analysis have been included in the FEIS, Section 3.5.2.3. Additionally, the cumulative effects section of the FEIS (Section 3.19.5.2) now includes additional analyses about potential golden eagle impacts.
76.105	WILA	<i>The DEIS fails to ensure compliance with the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 703-712.</i>	See the response to Comment 46.09.
76.106	WILT	<i>The DEIS does not adequately address the impacts on big game species. Please reference Exhibits 20 through 22 (maps of mule deer, elk and bighorn sheep near wind generation sites on Steens Mountain and Riddle Mountain). According to our analysis, big game habitat and range could be severely impacted based on ODFW data as all sites include big game winter range. A supplemental DEIS should re-evaluate the impacts to habitat and the possible impacts to season migration corridors for these species.</i>	Effects to big game were addressed in the Section 3.5.3 (Wildlife) of the DEIS, and additional information to support this analysis has been added to the FEIS. Please see the response to Comment 39.02
76.107	WILT	<i>...Impacts to mule deer and elk may extend beyond the temporary impacts assessed in the DEIS. There should be more study into the use of big game in the area by conducting flight surveys. By not including East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain sites in the overall analysis, the DEIS does not fully evaluate the impacts on big game of the connected actions associated with a granted ROW for the transmission line.</i>	Cumulative effects to big game, including from the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Projects, are discussed in the Cumulative Effects section (3.19.2.5). Additional text to support this analysis has been added to the FEIS.
76.108	WILT	<i>The DEIS provides no support or evidence for many of its conclusory statements about the likelihood of effects of transmission and industrial-scale generation sites on big game...</i>	See the response to Comment 39.02.

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76.109	WIL	<i>The DEIS did not adequately describe the treats to bats from transmission lines or wind turbines. Studies show that there are impacts by collision via transmission line with birds that have rapid flight characteristics similar to bats. Although there are few studies specifically targeting bats, this does not mean impacts as described in the DEIS will be unlikely.</i>	See the response to Comment 51.25. Also, it is less likely that bats would collide with a static object (e.g., house, tree, or power pole). Turbine blades, while in motion, would be more difficult for them to detect.
76.110	WIL	<i>The bat species at highest risk from wind energy development are long-distance latitudinal migrants, which may be present during the fall migration season when bat kills at wind facilities typically peak.²³ The studies done for these sites fall short and more research is needed to understand the amount of migrants going through the area around the Echanis, East Ridge, and West Ridge sites. With the increasing number of wind facilities, wind turbine heights have also increased. Recent research indicates that taller turbines pose a greater threat to bats than shorter turbines.</i>	See the responses to Comments 51.25 and, 76.049 explaining affects from the other generation sites can be found under Cumulative Effects. .
76.111	WIL	<i>Stipulations for operation of the turbines need to take into account the latest science on how bats are being killed, and adjust operations accordingly. Turbines may need to be shutdown during times of the year and on nights when conditions are most conducive to bat mortality. Stipulations of this nature can be a condition of the ROW and the DEIS should evaluate certain conditions in the Final EIS or a DEIS supplement.</i>	See the response to Comment 51.25.
76.112	WIL	<i>It would be desirable for a permitting agency to set a limit on bat deaths, and require swift adaptive actions, including shutdown of the facility— temporary or permanent—if fatality thresholds are exceeded. Similar provisions should be included for other wildlife species. Seasonal shut down of wind turbines, particularly during the late summer/fall migratory period, is currently being examined as one way of reducing bat mortalities at other locations.²⁶ Obviously, while these techniques may enable a wind facility to operate with minimal threat to bats throughout the rest of the year, wind developers will be concerned about the economic impact of temporary shutdown, and may resist this strategy to reduce bat deaths. However, evaluation of these mitigation techniques, after adequate information has been obtained regarding bats at these sites and site-specific impacts, should be Undertake an as part of the Final EIS.</i>	See the response to Comment 51.25. Additionally, please note that requiring mitigation for bats is outside of BLM's permitting authority.
76.113	WIL	<i>The DEIS also fails to evaluate adequately effects on other mammals, including pygmy rabbits...Although the DEIS notes that pygmy rabbits have been documented in the vicinity of where the project would be constructed, and have a "moderate" chance of occurring where they would be affected negatively by this project, the DEIS provides no evidence supporting its claim that the loss of pygmy rabbit habitat would be "very small." DEIS at 3.5-51. The DEIS does not evaluate the likelihood that additional raptor access to dozens of miles of perches will seriously impact pygmy rabbits. Nor does the DEIS include surveys, instead, it indicated that surveys will be constructed after a ROW is granted but before construction. The survey for pygmy rabbits needs to occur before a ROW is granted.</i>	Effects from the proposed Project on pygmy rabbits were analyzed based upon habitat surveys, historical records, and discussions with ODFW and BLM staff to determine the likelihood of pygmy rabbit presence, as well as potential effects during construction and operation. Predator perch deterrents would be used to minimize impacts to pygmy rabbits.
76.114	WIL	<i>The DEIS does not supply sufficient information about the population status and locations of Columbia spotted frogs (<i>Rana luteiventris</i>), especially in relation to Alternative B, which crosses the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. However, this information is essential because "[s]potted frogs were present at Mud Creek during 1996 and 1997. This site should be recognized as important frog habitat, as it is one of the 3 sites on the refuge which supports <i>R. luteiventris</i>. Other known sites are located at Mud Creek Pond and Page Springs." William H. Cater, "Spotted Frog Survey at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge 1997, Exhibit 25 at 2. Several frogs were found at several locations on and near the Refuge in 1998. <i>Id.</i> at 5. Several of these locations appear to be in the vicinity of the route alternatives proposed under Alternative B.</i>	The potential effects from construction and operation of the proposed Project would not change Columbia spotted frog habitat. Known Columbia spotted frog locations are not within the proposed Project Area; they are at least 11 miles to the south of Alternative B (including the Alternative B route options).

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76.115	WIL	<i>The DEIS is disingenuous in stating that Columbia spotted frogs were “not documented in surveys,” DEIS at 3.5-19, because it appears that no surveys of the Refuge were conducted, and evidence clearly exists of the likely presence of the frogs on the Refuge. How close is Mud Creek to the ROW proposed in Alternative B? How close is Mud Creek Pond to the ROW proposed in Alternative B? How close is Page Springs to the ROW proposed in Alternative B? When was the last study conducted to locate spotted frogs in or near either of the ROWs proposed in Alternative B and Alternative C? What is the current population of spotted frogs in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge? Is there suitable habitat elsewhere along either of the ROWs proposed in Alternative B or Alternative C? Is there suitable habitat elsewhere on the four generation sites for spotted frogs?</i>	See the response to Comment 76.114.
76.116	WIL	<i>In addition to providing more complete information about Columbia spotted frogs and producing the avian surveys of the Refuge in a supplemental DEIS, please also produce more detailed maps showing the route variations in Alternative B near the Refuge to assist the public in understanding the differences in the various alternatives. The scale of most of the maps of that area makes it difficult to distinguish the proposed route variations.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.114.
76.117	MIT	<i>The DEIS discussion of mitigation measures throughout the DEIS is inadequate. The DEIS does not comply with the basic requirement under NEPA that include supporting analytical data that explains how mitigation might actually prevent harmful effects. Rather, it simply lists possible mitigation measures, but provides no details or analysis of how, or whether, the measures would actually mitigate the likely adverse impacts described. Part of this stems from the failures documented above to disclose accurate, quantified and detailed information about likely impacts. But mostly this is a failure to make the analytical connection required under NEPA.</i>	Appendix A identifies over 200 specific Project Design Features (PDFs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) that would be stipulated in the ROW grant(s) for the transmission line on federal lands to avoid, minimize, reduce, and compensate for potential impacts to the environment. In addition, over 100 specific Project Design Features (PDFs) and Best Management Practices (BMPs) are identified that would or could be implemented as part of the Echanis Project. Effects from these PDFs and BMPs were incorporated in the analysis of potential impacts. As a result of public comments, several potential mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce impacts to Visual Resources, Recreation, Wilderness, WSAs, WSRs, and LWCs. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have authority to implement mitigation measures on private lands. Additional mitigation measures have been added to the FEIS, including mitigations for golden eagle, avian, bat, and sage-grouse impacts, which can be found in Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife).
76.118	WIL	<i>For example, the discussion of mitigation in the section on wildlife describes a future “Habitat Mitigation Plan.” DEIS at 3.5-29. This “Plan” does not describe what mechanisms would be used or what the practical consequences would be for preventing or minimizing damage to habitat. There is no explanation how or whether this “Plan” to be developed at some future point actually would be effective in mitigating adverse environmental effects. Similarly, the “Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Plan” is void of any detail, explanation or analysis of how it will prevent or mitigate damage to wildlife. The entire suite of mitigation described at 3.5- 29 and 3.5-30 requires additional description and scientific citation and justification. Any “Habitat Mitigation Plan” must be fully outlined with dates, actions, and rationale that can justify the actions. There should be a full description of where off-site mitigation will occur and a full description of on-site mitigation measures that will be adopted for all sites and infrastructure falling within the scope of the Greater Echanis Project</i>	See the response to Comment 52.01. After discussions with the USFWS and BLM, the Applicant is no longer producing a stand-alone Wildlife Monitoring and Mitigation Plan, as was described in the DEIS. The information that would have been included in that plan is now a part of the Habitat Mitigation Plan.
76.119	VEG	<i>Similar deficiencies in descriptions of mitigation occur in the sections involving vegetations (e.g. DEIS at 3.3-27, referencing best management practices (“BMPs” and project design features (“PDFs”) but not explaining how they would mitigate the negative effects to vegetation and spread of noxious and invasive weeds), None of the mitigation measures described in the DEIS involve a “hard look” that includes analysis of their likely effectiveness, but rather are impermissible listings and perfunctory descriptions of possible mitigation measures</i>	See the responses to Comments 51.21 and 52.01. Section 3.3.3.5 (Vegetation) of the DEIS discusses the potential residual effects that would likely occur after additional mitigation measures were implemented.

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76.120	NOI	<i>Similar deficiencies in descriptions of mitigation occur in the sections involving noise (e.g. DEIS at 3.17-14 to -15, citing both a need for mitigation in Lower Stonehouse WSA and ambient noise level exceedances in High Steens WSA, but then stating that “[n]o additional mitigation, beyond the PDFs and BMPs listed in Appendix A, is proposed to address the noise and visual changes that could affect the wilderness values of solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation in the Lower Stonehouse WSA and High Steens WSA” without explaining how these will mitigate the noise impacts to wilderness values); None of the mitigation measures described in the DEIS involve a “hard look” that includes analysis of their likely effectiveness, but rather are impermissible listings and perfunctory descriptions of possible mitigation measures.</i>	As a result of public comments, several potential mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce impacts to Visual Resources, Recreation, Wilderness, WSAs, WSRs, and LWCs. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have authority to implement mitigation measures on private lands. Additional text was added to the FEIS to better explain how PDFs and BMPs would be used to minimize effects to Wilderness Areas, WSAs, and WSRs. Additional text has been added to the FEIS to clarify this analysis. It should also be noted that noise impact analysis has been revised. Please see FEIS Sections 3.13 and 3.17.
76.121	VIS	<i>Similar deficiencies in descriptions of mitigation occur in the sections involving visual impacts (e.g. DEIS at 3.9-15, no mitigation besides BMPs and PDFs without explanation of how those would mitigate impacts). None of the mitigation measures described in the DEIS involve a “hard look” that includes analysis of their likely effectiveness, but rather are impermissible listings and perfunctory descriptions of possible mitigation measures.</i>	Because the construction and operation of the Echanis Project site is not a BLM action, the BLM does not need to consider alternatives to the Echanis site (BLM H-1790-1, 2008, page 46). The development of the Echanis Project site involves, however, a Federal action (the application for a ROW for the transmission line); therefore, the EIS must analyze the indirect environmental effects of the Echanis Project site as a connected action (DEIS page 2.1-1) (See Section 3 for the effects analysis by resource). In response to public comments, additional mitigation measures that address impacts to visual resources, wilderness, and recreation have been proposed. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have the authority to implement the measures on private lands.
76.122	REC	<i>Similar deficiencies in descriptions of mitigation occur in the sections involving recreation (e.g. DEIS at 3.7-17, “[n]o mitigation is proposed for recreation resources”).</i>	Opportunities for and access to all types of recreation would remain unchanged by the Project as visitors to the Steens area would be able to experience all recreational activities that are currently extant. The DEIS does not state that there would be a “replacement” form of recreation prompted by the Echanis Project turbines but only that “some visitors would find the wind turbines interesting and would come to view the development.” The DEIS also does not identify these visitors as a potential offset. Instead, Section 3.7 (Recreation) conveys that experiences for some visitors would be degraded as a result of the Echanis Project turbines. In response to public comments, additional mitigation measures that address impacts to visual resources, wilderness, and recreation have been proposed. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have the authority to implement the measures on private lands.
76.123	WSA	<i>Similar deficiencies in descriptions of mitigation occur in the sections involving wilderness values (e.g. DEIS at 3.13-15, no mitigation besides BMPs and PDFs without explanation of how those would mitigate impacts). None of the mitigation measures described in the DEIS involve a “hard look” that includes analysis of their likely effectiveness, but rather are impermissible listings and perfunctory descriptions of possible mitigation measures. None of the mitigation measures described in the DEIS involve a “hard look” that includes analysis of their likely effectiveness, but rather are impermissible listings and perfunctory descriptions of possible mitigation measures.</i>	See the response to Comment 62.03 regarding wilderness and WSA buffers. Also please refer to Project Design Features (PDF) and Best Management Practices (BMP), Appendix A-11, under Aesthetic Resources for the ROW, and Appendix A-28 regarding minimizing effects during construction and operations set forth in Exhibit B to the Harney County Conditional Use Permit. Section 3.13 (Wilderness) of the DEIS addressed the temporary and permanent effects after incorporating PDFs and BMPs. In response to public comments, additional mitigation measures that address impacts to visual resources, wilderness, and recreation have been proposed. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have the authority to implement the measures on private lands.
76.124	WAT	<i>Similar deficiencies in descriptions of mitigation occur in the sections involving water and wetlands (e.g. DEIS at 3.2-3, 3.2-6, 3.2-7, 3.2-20, 3.4-3 to 3.4-5, 3.4-18, citing BMPs and PDFs but not explaining how they would actually mitigate the likely damage to water and wetlands resources, and not explaining how the created wetland compares to the destroyed wetland in terms of biological composition and ecological function). None of the mitigation measures described in the DEIS involve a “hard look” that includes analysis of their likely effectiveness, but rather are impermissible listings and perfunctory descriptions of possible mitigation measures.</i>	Project design features and best management practices (BMPs) were described in Section 2 (Project Description) and Appendix A of the DEIS. Additional mitigation measures also were provided in each technical section of the DEIS, as required under NEPA and the BLM NEPA Handbook. In addition, other mitigation measures could be included in the Section 404 and 401 permits issued for the Project.

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76.125	VIS	<i>The agencies in the DEIS have provided no independent input regarding the affected visual resources, relying instead on a study funded entirely by the developer. The agencies must collect and evaluate their own visual impacts analysis, rather than one prepared by the developer's consultant, and disclose it to the public for review. This is particularly true because of serious deficiencies in the visual impacts analysis presented in the DEIS. The DEIS does not adequately describe the impacts to visual and aesthetic resources from the Greater Echanis Project (Echanis, East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain sites and the necessary transmission line). The analysis, although lengthy, is both incomplete and flawed. The DEIS needs to include a viewshed analysis like the one represented in the section 3.13 (see figures 3.13-1, 2, 3, 4, 5) related to impacts on Wilderness areas, Wilderness Study Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers. The DEIS also contains no evaluation of whether the visual impacts of the Project are compatible with the purposes of the Steens Act, FLPMA, and the Malheur NWR</i>	The DEIS is a BLM document. ENTRIX served as the third-party consultant to the BLM to independently evaluate research prepared by the Applicant and to provide independent analyses, as directed by BLM. All sections of the DEIS were either drafted by or reviewed by the BLM and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), including the visual resources analysis that is contained in Section 3.9 (Aesthetics and Visual) and Appendix D (Visual Resources). Also see the responses to Comments 76.140 and 143.09.
76.126	WSA/VIS	<i>The DEIS does not fully evaluate the magnitude of impacts that a transmission line and the Greater Echanis Project would have on the Steens Mountain area including nearby wilderness areas, recreation sites and scenic lookouts, as well as impacting the general character and aesthetic value of Steens Mountain and the surrounding area.</i>	The BLM analyzed the magnitude of impacts of the transmission line on visual resources in Section 3.9 (Aesthetics and Visual); on wilderness areas, WSAs, LWCs, and WSRs with scenic values in Section 3.13 (Wilderness); and the cumulative visual effects of RFFA projects on Visual Resources, WSAs, LWCs, WSRs, and Wilderness areas in Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects). All of these sections also contain information about visual effects upon areas not managed by the BLM.
76.127	LND	<i>The analysis failed to discuss "connected actions" between the transmission right-of-way (ROW) approval and the consequent construction of giant wind turbines that the lines would connect to.</i>	Because development of the Echanis Project is dependent upon Federal approval of the ROW grant for the transmission line, the Echanis Project qualifies as a "connected non-Federal action" under 40 CFR 1508.7 and 40 CFR 1508.25(a). Therefore, the DEIS included analysis of the potential environmental effects associated with development and operation of the Echanis Project as "indirect effects" associated with the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line Project. While this environmental review requires disclosure of potential effects upon private lands, as a connected action, BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) only have the authority to approve, modify, or deny ROW grants for those actions occurring on public lands. Three other wind energy projects similar in size and scale to the Echanis Project (i.e., West Ridge, East Ridge, and Riddle Mountain) were included as reasonably foreseeable future actions in the Cumulative Effects analysis in the DEIS (see Section 3.19, Cumulative Effects).
76.128	VIS	<i>(2) The analysis did not adequately explain the differences in visual impacts with the various visual stimuli involved (i.e. immobile vs. mobile objects and constant vs. blinking lights).</i>	As noted in BLM Manual 8431, when determining the degree of contrast, factors that are considered include "motion," which may draw attention to the Project. Moving parts of wind turbines were taken into account in analyzing the contrast of the Echanis Project against the backdrop of a stationary landscape (see DEIS page 3.9-10 and Appendix D-11). Project effects were analyzed, which included the use of safety strobes and intermittent lighting on wind turbines (see DEIS page 3.9-15 and Appendix D-18). For additional discussion about the use of strobes and their impacts on the night sky, see the response to Comment 76.139.
76.129	VIS	<i>(3) Additionally, the viewshed analysis in section 3.13 which describes impacts to Steens Mountain Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers, should be included in the visual resource section. Notwithstanding the absence of this analysis or a similar analysis in the 3.9 Visual Resource section, the viewshed analysis failed to show the viewshed affected collectively of the entire project area that makes up the Greater Echanis Project. By limiting the analysis to each project individually, it misrepresents the magnitude of visual impacts.</i>	The Steens Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), and Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs) were considered in the visual analysis in DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources) when determining the sensitivity level of public users in a particular area. One of the factors considered when assigning a sensitivity level was "special areas" that include Wilderness Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs), WSAs, and WSRs. Key Observation Points (KOPs) were chosen to ensure that a project contrast rating in these special areas could be adequately analyzed. This approach is consistent with BLM Manual 8431. Additional text was added to Sections 3.9 and 3.13 so that the sections are appropriately cross referenced. Cumulative visual effects for the Project and the RFFAs are analyzed in Section 3.19.2.9. Cumulative effects to Wilderness, WSAs, and WSRs are discussed in 3.19.2.13. Figures 3.19-11 through 3.19-13 clearly show the visible extent of the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Echanis Wind Energy Projects. When the maps are compared areas of overlap can be determined thus conveying the intensity of cumulative effects. For additional discussion about the use of

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			strobes and their impacts on the night sky, see the response to Comment 76.139.
76.130	VIS	<i>Simulated photos of turbine impacts are misleading because the pictures have a low resolution and are "pixilated."</i>	See the response to Comment 76.142.
76.131	VIS	<i>(2) The visual impact from Mann Lake is grossly understated.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.148.
76.132	VIS	<i>(3) The DEIS should include a more comprehensive viewshed analysis. The viewshed analysis (in the wilderness section) only included a 5-mile perimeter ("foreground middle ground") around the turbines, but neglected to show the effect in the "background" range. This is important for Wilderness and other lands with wilderness character.</i>	Page 3.13-2 of the DEIS (Wilderness) described the rationale for choosing the 5-mile radius as "it consists of an area subject to foreground to middleground views of the Project as defined in the BLMs Visual Resource Management (VRM) methodology and is the zone where changes are more noticeable and more likely to trigger public concern (BLM Manual 8410)."
76.133	VIS	<i>Although the DEIS makes an implied connection between the transmission ROW and the proposed wind projects, it fails to make an explicit connection related to visual impacts. One stark example is the discussion of permanent effects of the Echanis Wind Energy project (DEIS 3.9-10, 11). BLM finds that the project would not meet Visual Resource Management Objectives but then disingenuously states that the project is "located on private lands not subject to BLM's visual resource management objectives." In this way, BLM completely divorces its transmission ROW from the visual effects of the Echanis project. The fact is, however, that the project is dependent on the ROW, i.e. if the ROW is denied the wind generation sites cannot and will not proceed. If, as the DEIS admits, the visual impacts would be unacceptable, BLM must deny the ROW based on its statutory obligations under FLPMA and the Steens Act. As shown on ONDA's viewshed analysis (Exhibit 8), the turbines would be visible from about 439,361 acres within the CMPA boundaries and from about 31,541 acres of the Wilderness Area. Particularly at night, with blinking red lights atop the turbines, they would destroy the current nonindustrialized landscape of Steens Mountain and eviscerate the purpose behind the congressional designation of the CMPA in the Steens Act.</i>	The DEIS disclosed the visual impacts from the Echanis Project on pages 3.9-10 to 3.9-15 (Visual Resources). For an illustration of anticipated night time impacts from strobes, Figure 3.9-8 was created and added into the FEIS. It is unclear what methodology the commenter use to arrive at the "439,361 acres within the CMPA boundaries and from about 31,541 acres of the Wilderness Area" estimate for Project visibility so this information could not be verified. Section 3.13 (Wilderness) of the DEIS clearly disclosed the extent (in acres) of the CMPA and the Steens Wilderness Area within a 5-mile radius of the Project, as well as the RFFAs that would have views of the Project and the RFFAs. A 5-mile radius impact area was chosen because it would consist of an area subject to foreground to middleground views of the Project, as defined by the BLMs VRM methodology, and would be the zone where changes would more noticeable and more likely to trigger public concern (see also DEIS Section 3.13.1). In response to this and other public comments, additional text and a new figure were added to the FEIS to illustrate the greatest extent of visual effects from the Project in combination with the RFFAs in Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects). The amount of land within the Steens Mountain Wilderness and the CMPA that would have views of the Project and RFFAs would be notably less than what is indicated by the commenter.
76.134	VIS	<i>The DEIS does not make a clear distinction between the various types of visual stimuli and how each category will affect the environment...</i>	See the response to Comment 76.128.
76.135	VIS	<i>Video simulations are necessary to disclose accurately the flicker from 200-ft. diameter blades on up to 207 turbines on North Steens Mountain. Because the blades rotate, sometimes at high speeds, their flicker will be more eye-catching and disruptive to the visual character of the Mountain than stationary objects. Without simulations that disclose the movement of the turbines, the DEIS is deficient and violates NEPA.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.128. Blade movement is discussed as an effect in Section 3.9.3.2. Preparation of video simulations would not appreciably contribute to the analysis of visual effects as blade movement is already discussed in Section 3.9.3.2.

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76.136	VIS	<i>The DEIS failed to evaluate adequately the impacts the turbines will have at night. DEIS at 3.9-2. The DEIS acknowledges that “[s]imulations of blinking lights on wind turbines, wind turbine movement, and nighttime views were not prepared.” Id. The lack of such concrete visual information in the DEIS thwarts the ability of the public and the decisionmakers to evaluate the true impacts of the project on the unspoiled views of Steens Mountain and on the scenic values which BLM must protect within the CMPA...A proper disclosure of visual impacts requires a realistic, moving-picture representation of the nighttime views of the proposed development, so that the public may have a better understanding of the aesthetic tradeoffs that come with it.</i>	Preparation of a movie simulation of the strobes would be beyond the scope of this EIS. See the response to Comment 76.139. A generic simulation of night time lighting from a wind energy project was prepared for the Nine Canyon Wind Project and is indicative of night time impacts when all lights are simultaneously illuminated. See http://www.efsec.wa.gov/wildhorse/deis/figures/40 Fig 3.10-9 and 10.pdf.
76.137	VIS	<i>...BLM also fails to point out that a group of flashing lights on a dark night will be noticeable from a much longer distance than the turbines during the daytime. The distance zones (described as 3-5 mile foreground-middle ground and 5-15 mile background) is a more reasonable distance for daytime than it is for nighttime. However, these distances are greatly underestimated in the DEIS.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.139 for a discussion about the impacts caused by obstruction lighting.
76.138	VIS	<i>BLM has failed to evaluate the amount of light from FAA-required and discretionary lighting that will be present on the transmission line, tensioning towers, and associated generation sites at night. One of the most important scenic resources of the North Steens area is the nighttime darkness. The DEIS inappropriately dismisses this concern by stating that there are no management objectives for light pollution and glare. DEIS at 3.9-15. Yet such information would be easy to obtain: already in Oregon there are areas where there are large arrays of wind turbines whose FAA-required lighting blink 15 or 20 times per minute. A simple video of these locations would afford the public (and agency decisionmakers) the opportunity to evaluate whether these effects are unreasonable and therefore whether the ROWs should be denied.</i>	No lights would be placed on transmission towers because they would be below the 200-foot threshold stipulated by the FAA. See the response to comment 76.139 for additional discussion about impacts caused by obstruction lighting. A simulation of night time lighting from a wind energy project was prepared for the Nine Canyon Wind Project and is indicative of night time impacts when all lights are simultaneously illuminated. See http://www.efsec.wa.gov/wildhorse/deis/figures/40 Fig 3.10-9 and 10.pdf.
76.139	VIS	<i>...flashing lights will be seen over more than 439,000 acres of the CMPA. This is far beyond a “minimal visibility outside of the immediate Project Area.” As a result, the statement that there would be “minimal effect” on nighttime light pollution has no support in the DEIS. BLM and USFWS must independently confirm this false statement by visiting the areas of the Columbia Plateau and Columbia River Gorge where arrays of dozens or hundreds of turbines are operating. The agencies must obtain nighttime photographs and video of turbine arrays and extrapolate those to the 207 that may occupy North Steens Mountain. The agencies also have an obligation to present truthful evidence about what it means for the strobes to be “intermittent”: in the other areas of Oregon mentioned, they flash every three or four seconds. Hundreds of turbines hundreds of feet tall with red or white strobes flashing certainly do “contribute to light pollution.” The DEIS is simply wrong in making this statement.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.128. The following text was added to Section 3.9.3.2 (Aesthetics and Visual) of the FEIS: “To meet FAA requirements, wind turbine installations utilize red obstruction lights on the nacelle of each wind turbine at the end of a string of turbines and on turbines within strings on a spacing not to exceed 0.5 mile. Light pollution would be minimized through the use of synchronization, which flashes all obstruction lights within the Project simultaneously. The utilization of obstruction lights with a narrow vertical beam spread, typically 3 degrees, further reduces the visible range of the obstruction lights. The typical visibility range of such obstruction lights under ideal conditions is less than 25 miles (Patterson 2005). To better understand the effects of night sky illumination, Harney County supplied the BLM with a viewshed map (Figure 3.9-8) that illustrates the geographic areas where obstruction strobes would be visible under the most ideal atmospheric conditions and assuming a lack of vegetation. This analysis indicates that the strobes would be visible from a limited amount of land within a 20-mile radius of the Project due to the narrow vertical beam spread. A photo simulation prepared for the Nine Canyon Wind Project in Washington State approximates the night time views of the Project (see http://www.efsec.wa.gov/wildhorse/deis , figures/40 Fig 3.10-9 and 10.pdf).”
76.140	VIS	<i>The viewshed analysis provided by BLM is deficient in several ways. It is not referenced at all in the DEIS visual analysis section, although it is integral to the public’s understanding of the visual impacts. Visual impacts will occur in numerous areas that are not protected as Wilderness or WSAs. The viewshed analyses are an important aid to understanding where to potential impacts will be on the landscape. The analysis also fails to show the entirety of impacts associated with all four generation sites in CEP’s Greater Echanis Project. By only showing impacts from each individual generation site, and not all sites together, the DEIS does not provide the public an accurate characterization of impacts. The DEIS also omits the transmission line along with all the proposed wind generation sites, which results in a failure to provide a complete representation of visual impacts.</i>	The viewshed analysis contained in DEIS Section 3.13 (Wilderness) was to principally show how the visual effects from the proposed Project would affect the wilderness values and visual and scenic values present in various “special areas” situated near the Project. These same special areas were taken into consideration in DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources) when determining the “Level of Sensitivity,” as required by BLM Manual H-8410-1. Additional text has been added to make this connection more explicit. Also see the response to Comment 143.09. Additional cross references have been included within Sections 3.9 and 3.13 of the FEIS to link those analyses.

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76.141	VIS	<i>The viewshed analyses only evaluate land within 5 miles of the turbine sites although BLM admits that unacceptable levels of visual contrast from the Echanis turbines will occur as far as 8 miles away (DEIS 3.9-11 KOP 61).</i>	Section 3.13.1 indicated that a 5-mile radius around Project facilities was established to take into account the potential for possible Project effects to visual resources. Five miles was chosen as the analysis area for this section because it would consist of an area subject to foreground and middleground views of the Project, as defined by the BLM's VRM methodology, and would be the zone in which changes would be more noticeable and more likely to trigger public concern. Table 3.9-2 (page 3.9-11), which refers to KOP 61 (East Rim Overlook), does not convey whether the level of visual contrast is "unacceptable" or not, only that the Project's ultimate effect from this KOP would be "moderate".
76.142	VIS	<i>The photo simulations of turbine impacts illustrated in the DEIS are highly misleading. There are several reasons for this. First, the photo angles are wide, causing objects in the distance to appear smaller than they would to the naked eye. Secondly, the photos were taken when the atmosphere was hazy. It is during the crystal-clear days that the views are most dramatic and would therefore be the most affected by the presence of turbines. The analysis should take into account those days when the visual impacts will be most severe; the photos appear to be trying to downplay the impacts. Finally, the photo's resolution is so coarse that the towers and blades are pixilated beyond recognition making them almost invisible</i>	The simulations presented in the DEIS were prepared to best approximate, if not overstated, the proposed Project's appearance. The simulations prepared in the analysis were consistent with the BLM's Visual Simulation Techniques, contained in BLM Manual 8431, and convey the contrast of the proposed Project against the existing landscape. The simulations were prepared with commonly used computer software (MS Photoshop) at resolutions ideally suited for computer downloads and accessibility. The simulations for this project were prepared with a level of sophistication that is commensurate with the quality of the visual resources and the severity of the anticipated impact.
76.143	VIS	<i>The agencies must produce a set of photographs for public review that accurately illustrate the impacts to the scenic quality of Steens Mountain, reflecting conditions on clear days, with sharp resolution and angle of view that more accurately approximates normal human vision.</i>	The simulations presented in the DEIS were prepared to best approximate, if not overstated, the proposed Project's appearance.
76.144	VIS	<i>The DEIS's failures to adequately evaluate visual impacts are similar to those in a recent draft environmental impact statement prepared for the Whistling Ridge wind project in Washington. Please review the enclosed comments submitted by landscape architect Dean Apostol regarding the visual and aesthetic impacts from that proposed project. Exhibit 28. Please explain why the key factors listed on page 2 and the recommendations on pages 10 and 11 should not apply equally to a visual effects analysis of the impacts to Steens Mountain. Please also explain why it appears that the draft environmental impact statement for the Whistling Ridge project contained significantly more information and evaluation of visual impacts than the DEIS for this project. This DEIS fails to consider the factors which Exhibit 28 describes as essential for a proper visual analysis.</i>	This comment suggests using a third-party comment on the Whistling Ridge Energy Project (DOE/EIS 0419) as a potentially useful means for comparing the respective approaches to analyzing visual resource impacts used for both projects and for ascribing potential mitigation. The Whistling Ridge Project, however, is not regulated by the BLM and the approaches used for that project are not necessarily consistent with BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) guidance. The Whistling Ridge Project utilized a hybrid methodology based upon Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) guidance to analyze impacts to visual resources. Additionally, the Whistling Ridge Project would be situated in a different geographic region that would exhibit different landscape components than those present for the proposed Project. It also would be located in different federal, state, and local political jurisdictions that apply different standards of analysis to visual resources affected by wind energy projects; comparing a critical assessment of another project as well as the third-party's findings and recommendations that are ascribed to that project's analysis of impacts to visual resources (particularly when that analysis does not utilize BLM's VRM system).
76.145	VIS	<i>The DEIS discussion of mitigation is wholly inadequate. Rather than include discussion of mitigation for visual impacts, the DEIS references back to project design and management practices in Section 2.0. DEIS at 3.9-9 ("These measures are not repeated in the mitigation sections below, but are described in Chapter 2 and are listed in Appendix A."). The DEIS frankly states for all of the action alternatives that "[n]o mitigation for affects [sic] to visual resources would be implemented" for any of the alternatives. DEIS at 3.9-20, -22, -24, -30. As a result, the DEIS contains no description of mitigation and no actual analysis of how, or whether, the proposed design and management practices could be effective to mitigation the dramatic visual and aesthetic degradation of Steens Mountain's unique viewsheds.</i>	Additional text was added to the FEIS to better explain how specific BMPs and PDFs would be used to minimize effects to visual resources. The BLM, however, cannot apply visual resource management objectives to private lands. Furthermore, pursuant to BLM policy, the mitigation of effects from projects that occur outside of designated wilderness areas must not be so restrictive so as to preclude, or seriously impede, such activities (such as the proposed Project).
76.146	REC	<i>The DEIS' analysis of potential impacts to recreational resources is wholly inadequate. Although Section 3.7 appears to provide adequate baseline data, its analysis of potential environmental impact is highly flawed and ignores the national significance of scenic vistas afforded at Key Observation Points and recreational destinations throughout the Steen Mountain CMPA. Essentially, the DEIS sweeps potentially significant adverse effects under the rug by providing only the most cursory discussion of potential impacts to scenic resources and</i>	The choice of Key Observation Points (KOPs) in areas of human congregation was based upon BLM VRM guidance. Consistent with BLM Manual 8431 "Visual Contrast Rating" and as discussed in DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources) and Appendix D (Visual Resources), the KOPs were identified based upon areas of high visual sensitivity, angle of observation, number of viewers, public access, length of time the Project is in view, relative project size, season of use, and light conditions. DEIS Section 3.13 (Wilderness) did consider noise and visual

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		<i>the unique recreational experience afforded on public lands at Steens Mountain.</i>	impacts to primitive campsites that were within 5 miles of the proposed transmission line and the Echanis, West Ridge, East Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Project turbines. Additional cross references between Sections 3.13 and 3.17 (Noise) have been added to the FEIS.
76.147	REC	<i>The DEIS acknowledges that the Steens CMPA is "a popular recreational destination for runners, hikers, hunters, horseback riders, and outdoor enthusiasts" DEIS at 3.7-2. it also cites that recreational visitation more than doubled during the period 2004 to 2009 (Id.). Yet by not recognizing the national significance and current relatively pristine appearance of the Steens Mountain viewshed, the DEIS applies a threshold for adverse impact that is unlikely to be exceeded even were the proposed action to include industrialization of the landscape at a scale far in excess of the current proposal. Thus, the threshold for visual impact is not in keeping with the Steens' status as a "a popular destination for outdoor recreation in the region" (Id.)...Steens Mountain is a national scenic icon and the DEIS demonstrates bias in ignoring this important fact.</i>	DEIS Section 3.7 (Recreation) acknowledged that the visual quality of some visitor trips would decline, resulting from additional wind turbines and transmission lines being present. Visual impacts were discussed extensively in DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources), and impacts to opportunities for solitude as well as primitive and unconfined recreation were discussed in DEIS Section 3.13 (Wilderness). In response to public comments, additional mitigation measures that address impacts to visual resources, wilderness, and recreation have been proposed. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have the authority to implement the measures on private lands.
76.148	VIS	<i>As a result of the severe shortcomings in the DEIS' methodology of qualifying the potential significance of impacts to visual and recreational resources, the DEIS text readily glosses over the direct and potentially significant impacts to recreation, hiking and the recreational experience resulting from the Proposed Action and action alternatives. It downplays the impact of the proposed transmission lines and Echanis facilities in views from Key Observation Points as described in the DEIS. Moreover, Table 3.7-2 contains some glaring inconsistencies.</i>	Interpretation and conclusions on the degree of visual impact are highly subjective and dependent upon the viewer. The BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) methodology, as used in DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources), provided a more systematic and objective approach to quantitatively and qualitatively analyze impacts to visual resources. Impacts to recreational resources are extensively discussed in DEIS Section 3.7. Primitive and unconfined recreation is also discussed in the Wilderness section of the DEIS (Section 3.13).
76.149	REC	<i>For example, Table 3.7-2 states that "Echanis wind turbines would be hard to distinguish from (the Kiger Gorge) overlook" at a distance of 5.3 miles (DEIS at 3.7-13). Yet for the East Rim Overlook, noted in Table 3.7-2 as being 7.8 miles distant, the DEIS states that "Echanis wind turbines would be visible from this overlook" (Ibid). Absent is text that explains this apparent inconsistency, with the implication only that from this point of reference the wind turbines would not intrude into the horizon (DEIS at 3.7-15). Irrespective of viewing angle, there is a strong indication that views from Kiger Gorge Lookout would be significantly and adversely affected, with the proposed facilities located within an otherwise relatively pristine landscape fully within the field of view.</i>	DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources) confirmed that from Key Observation Point (KOP) 58, it would be difficult to visually discern the Echanis Project turbines while KOP 61 would have views of the Project. The geologic features, varying horizon lines, and differences in topographic variety all account for the differences in views. While KOP 58 is closer to the Echanis Project turbines, the high walls of the Kiger Gorge would largely preclude views of the Echanis Project turbines from the overlook. The views from KOP 61 are not as inhibited by topographic screening and, thus, would have views of the Echanis Project turbines, but the views would be from a greater distance and would rise above the turbines.
76.150	REC	<i>The Proposed Action and alternatives would represent significant adverse impacts to the otherwise natural setting and, therefore, to the hiking experience at the Steens on this and other trails particularly along north-facing slopes. As illustrated in ONDA's Viewshed Analysis map, turbines would be visible from over 31,000 acres of the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area and from over 439,000 acres within the CMPA boundaries. Exhibit 8. The DEIS must evaluate what hiking areas and camping areas this would affect. In particular, BLM must evaluate how people camping both at developed and dispersed campsites would be affected by the flashing red lights on the turbines flashing every 15 seconds throughout the night. This development would forever change, for the worse, the character of the recreation experience on hundreds of acres of land on Steens Mountain.</i>	A more specific description of Echanis Project night-time lighting and its associated impacts has been added to the FEIS in Section 3.9 (Visual Resources). Also see the response to Comment 76.128. Impacts to opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation as well as solitude within Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Study Areas, Lands With Wilderness Characteristics, and Wilderness were identified in DEIS Section 3.13 (Wilderness). Several of the maps contained in Section 3.13 pinpoint primitive campsites and illustrate whether they would have views of the Project and/or the reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFAs). It is unclear what methodology the commenter used to arrive at the "439,361 acres within the CMPA boundaries and from about 31,541 acres of the Wilderness Area" estimate for Project visibility, so this information could not be verified. Section 3.13 of the DEIS clearly disclosed the extent (in acres) of the CMPA and the Steens Wilderness Area within a 5-mile radius of the Project, as well as the RFFAs that would have views of the Project and the RFFAs. A 5-mile radius impact area was chosen because it consisted of an area subject to foreground to middleground views of the Project, as defined by the BLMs VRM methodology and is the zone where changes are more noticeable and are more likely to trigger public concern (see also DEIS Section 3.13.1). As a result of this and other public comments, additional analysis was undertaken to analyze the cumulative visual effects of the Project and RFFAs to the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area and the CMPA. Additional text and a new figure were added to Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects) of the FEIS that illustrate the greatest extent of visual effects within these two land designations (see Figure 3.19-22). This analysis illustrates less visual effects than those estimated by public comments. An additional map has been added to

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			convey the extent that the safety strobes would be visible (see Figure 3.19-17). As noted in Section 3.7 (Recreation), the experiences for some visitors, such as visitors to primitive campsites near the Project, would be degraded as a result of having views of the Echanis Project turbines. Additional text has also been added to Section 3.7 to clarify that no hiking trails within a 5-mile radius would have views of the Project.
76.151	REC	<i>The DEIS analysis is further insufficient because it appears its author(s) did not conduct adequate site reconnaissance at important recreation destinations and Key Observation Points. For example, the DEIS states more than once that hikers in Big Indian and Little Blitzen gorges might have views of the proposed facilities (DEIS at 3.7-15). Yet hikers following established trails into these gorges are not afforded long-distance views to the north. Once entered, long distance views beyond the gorges steep walls are not available throughout their approximately 9- mile length. Only if hikers were to climb to the rim of the gorges or the spur trail that leaves Little Blitzen Gorge would they be able to see beyond its topographic confines. Even then, views toward the proposed facilities would be blocked by vegetation and intervening topography. Consequently, statements to the contrary within the DEIS raise the question whether its author(s) conducted a thorough site analysis, or whether they visited Big Indian and Little Blitzen gorges at all.</i>	As noted in the Section 3.7 (Recreation) of the DEIS, the South Steens Campground is 13.4 miles from the proposed Echanis Project turbines. The DEIS stated that because various trails extend to the north and east of the campground, there is a potential for views of turbines as hikers travel the trails that extend from that campground. Additional viewshed analysis conducted for the FEIS, indicates that none of these trails would have views of the Project. The text of the FEIS has been updated.
76.152	VIS	<i>The DEIS also avoids any discussion of noise and visual effects on dispersed campsites, omitting any noise receptors or visual analysis points of view outside of developed campgrounds or areas of human congregation, and failing to include analysis for any of the turbine sites except for Echanis. DEIS Section 3.17; DEIS Section 3.9. Nor does the DEIS describe any potential conditions the agencies might place on the ROWs to ensure protection of recreational resources.</i>	The choice of Key Observation Points (KOPs) in areas of human congregation is based upon BLM VRM guidance. Consistent with BLM Manual 8431 "Visual Contrast Rating" and as discussed in DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources), Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects) and Appendix D (Visual Resources), the Key Observation Points (KOPs) were identified based upon areas of high visual sensitivity, angle of observation, number of viewers, public access, length of time the Project is in view, relative project size, season of use, and light conditions. The DEIS did consider noise and visual impacts to primitive campsites in Section 3.13 (Wilderness) that are within 5 miles of the proposed transmission line, Echanis, West Ridge, East Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Project turbines. Additional cross references between DEIS Sections 3.13 and 3.17 (Noise) have been added to the FEIS.
76.153	REC	<i>To imply that it (turbines) could become a recreational destination for persons seeking to view an industrial-scale wind farm is ludicrous. And to imply also that doing so would somehow offset the adverse impacts that can reasonably be anticipated to current recreational use is wholly unsupported. As a result of these severe shortcomings, the DEIS fails to adequately describe, and propose mitigation for, what invariably would be a significant and irreversible impact to the outstanding and nationally-significant scenic and recreational resources of the Steens Mountain CMPA.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.122.
76.154	VEG	<i>The DEIS includes only the most general description of the tremendous problem of invasive weeds on Steens Mountain...but there is no detail provided about what weeds or to what extent the project will be a cause of exacerbating the problem of weeds on Steens Mountain.</i>	A detailed analysis of historical or current noxious weed problems on Steens Mountain is beyond the scope of this EIS. The RMP EIS analyzed the broader context concerning weeds in the CMPA. The present EIS tiers to the RMP EIS. See Section 3.3 (Vegetation). For a more detailed discussion about BLMs management of noxious weeds see the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area RMP, pages RMP-31 through RMP-33. See the responses to Comments 51.21 and 76.156 for measures that would be taken to minimize the spread of noxious weeds by the proposed Project.
76.155	VEG	<i>Please evaluate the Declaration of ecologist Dr. Jonathan Gelbard, on the enclosed CD-ROM (including attachments),²⁷ who describes that the spread of weeds is "recognized, virtually by scientific consensus, as one of the greatest threats to desert ecosystems of the Intermountain West, including southeastern Oregon."</i>	The BLM feels that the issue of noxious weeds is very important for this and any activities that occur on BLM and adjacent lands. BLM feels that the concern is reflected in the PDEs, BMPs, mitigation measures, and Weed Management and Control Plan, which would effectively reduce the potential threat from noxious weeds. Evaluation and discussion of the spread of noxious weeds on desert ecosystems across the Intermountain West is beyond the scope of this EIS.

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76.156	VEG	<i>The DEIS does not evaluate the extent to which the roads created for construction and later maintenance of the project will lead to invasion of weeds into currently weed-free or low-weed areas. The agencies must explain what the baseline conditions for weeds are in the area where the transmission line and generation sites will be located. Without the baseline information about existing weed conditions, the agencies cannot make a non-arbitrary decision about the effects of weeds from the project's construction and operation. The DEIS's discussion of mitigation, indicating there will be a weed control plan in place, is inadequate because it does not analyze whether or not that plan will actually be effective in controlling weeds.</i>	Additional text was added to Section 3.3.3.2 (Vegetation) of the FEIS to describe potential impacts, avoidance, and mitigation for noxious weeds. The Applicant is working with Harney County and BLM to develop a Noxious Weed Management and Revegetation Plan. The Noxious Weed Management Plan includes measures to prevent and control the spread of noxious weeds during and subsequent to maintenance and construction activities associated with the Echanis Project site, transmission line, associated facilities, and any other disturbances connected with the Project into the future. Before construction, problem areas would be identified, and workers would be trained about noxious weed identification and the prevention of spread into uninfested areas. During construction, areas of concern would be flagged by Echanis Project staff or the project biologist to alert construction workers that weeds are present. Additional noxious weed control measures are also listed in the FEIS (Section 3.3.3.2).
76.157	WSA	<i>The DEIS inadequately describes effects of the proposed transmission line and four associated generation sites that make up CEP's Greater Echanis Project (Echanis, East Ridge, West Ridge, Riddle Mountain) on wilderness values. Four figures (Figures 3.13-1, 2, 3, and 4) appear in this section which show maps of the four generation sites. As noted previously, CEP is forthright that all four sites will be developed over the next three years and the DEIS acknowledges that the ROW proposed to be granted will accommodate energy production from all four sites. DEIS at 3.19-2, 3. However, the maps provide insufficient information about the visual and noise impacts to wilderness areas to afford the BLM and the public a basis for evaluating the extent of the impacts or whether the impacts to wilderness are unacceptable. The DEIS also recognizes that several Wilderness Study Areas ("WSAs") will be visually affected by the transmission line and generation sites. See, e.g., DEIS at 3.13-13. Many additional areas of citizen-proposed WSAs would also be affected. The turbines from the three North Steens sites will be visible from over 30,000 acres of designated Wilderness. Exhibit 8.</i>	As a result of public comments, several potential mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce impacts to Visual Resources, Recreation, Wilderness, WSAs, WSRs, and LWCs. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have authority to implement mitigation measures on private lands. Effects will also be reduced through the implementation of PDFs and BMPs. Additional information pertaining to noise generated by wind turbines was obtained from CEP and reviewed by the BLM. Through the use of the anticipated wind turbine model, noise effects would be less than what was anticipated in the DEIS. PDFs and BMPs, are proposed. For a discussion about ONDAs recommended WSAs, see the response to Comment 76.159. An analysis was added to the FEIS about the effects to one parcel (Lower Stonehouse parcel) that BLM determined to possess wilderness characteristics in the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area RMP (see FEIS Section 3.13.2.3). Impacts from RFFAs when combined with or without the Project to the Lower Stonehouse parcel as well as the High Steens and Bridge Creek parcels with wilderness characteristics were analyzed in Section 3.19.2.13 (Cumulative Effects). For a discussion about the citizen-proposed WSAs, see the response to Comment 76.159.
76.158	WSA	<i>The DEIS does not discuss whether these visual impacts (and noise impacts for the turbines closest to the Wilderness and WSA borders) violate BLM's non-impairment mandates under the Wilderness Act and FLPMA. There is no support provided for the statements regarding the noise effects of turbines in WSAs and Wilderness. Wind turbines would be located in some cases "within a few hundred meters" of WSAs. See, e.g., DEIS at 3.13-13. The DEIS recognizes that this "will exceed ambient levels" as well as state noise standards. However, the DEIS does not evaluate anywhere how much noise the turbines would cause in WSAs and the Wilderness Area (and other areas with wilderness character).</i>	See the response to Comment 62.03 regarding wilderness and WSA buffers. However, see Section 3.13.3.2 (Wilderness) of the DEIS regarding effects to WSAs, WSRs, LWCs, and the Steens Mountain Wilderness. An analysis was added to the FEIS about the effects to one parcel (Lower Stonehouse parcel) that BLM determined possessed wilderness characteristics in the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area RMP (FEIS Section 3.13.2.3). Impacts from RFFAs when combined with or without the Project to the Lower Stonehouse parcel as well as the High Steens and Bridge Creek parcels with wilderness characteristics were analyzed in Section 3.19.2.13 (Cumulative). As a result of public comments, several potential mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce impacts to Visual Resources, Recreation, Wilderness, WSAs, WSRs, and LWCs. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have authority to implement mitigation measures on private lands. Also, additional information pertaining to noise generated by wind turbines was obtained from CEP and reviewed by the BLM. Through the use of the anticipated wind turbine model, noise effects would be less than what was anticipated in the DEIS. See sections 3.7, 3.13, and 3.17 for discussions of this updated information.
76.159	WSA	<i>In addition, the DEIS does not disclose any effects from the project on citizen-proposed wilderness. The DEIS must present and analyze the effects of the proposed action on the wilderness resource everywhere that it is affected by visual impacts and noise from the three generation sites on North Steens Mountain. This discussion should include effects on the proposed WSA additions recommended in ONDA's September and November 2002 wilderness inventory reports and recommendations to the BLM (BLM has copies of these reports and has produced them as parts of administrative records in several lawsuits). It appears that the project would have visual impacts on several ONDA-proposed WSAs on North Steens</i>	An intensive inventory evaluating the presence of wilderness characteristics on the BLM-administered lands in the Project Area that fall outside of WSAs and Steens Mountain Wilderness was documented in November 1980. The final intensive inventory decision (Wilderness Inventory - Oregon and Washington, Final Intensive Inventory Decisions, November 1980) found that wilderness characteristics were not present on these lands. In 2003-2010, an inventory maintenance was completed by an IDT who reviewed current conditions and citizen information submitted for the area. Changes that had occurred since the original inventory were evaluated against the wilderness criteria and documented. No changes

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		<i>Mountain. (Of course, ONDA's wilderness inventory information is not aimed solely at securing WSA status for these lands, but also at securing some nominal increase of on-the-ground conservation of, and management for, the wilderness values and characteristics present in these areas.). The EIS should present and discuss the significant wilderness values documented in detail in ONDA's wilderness inventory reports and consider whether any aspect of the proposed action would impact wilderness values or these areas' ability to be designated as wilderness in the future. ONDA raised this issue during the public scoping period, but the BLM has not even mentioned it in the DEIS. The EIS also should include detailed maps showing the locations of the ONDA inventoried areas, as compared to the project proposal areas, current WSAs and wilderness areas and other similarly important information.</i>	to conditions were identified that would modify the findings of the 1980 inventory for lands within the Project Area; except the BLM identified in the Steens RMP the Lower Stonehouse parcel as possessing wilderness characteristics within the Project Area (see Section 3.13.2.3). Impacts from RFFAs both with and without the Project to the Lower Stonehouse parcel and two other parcels (the High Steens LWC and Bridge Creek LWC) are discussed in the Cumulative Effects section of the FEIS (see Section 3.19.2.13).
76.160	ECO	<i>The socioeconomic impacts of transmission for potential renewable energy development go far beyond the value of the electricity produced by such projects or the construction, operation and maintenance jobs which may be created... The public lands that may be impacted by this proposed transmission project are important and valuable to all Americans. Development of these lands for energy transmission should be considered carefully and should account for all their potential values – both market and nonmarket.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.165.
76.161	ECO	<i>The DEIS has failed to address the specific requests made in the scoping comments. Notably, the DEIS does not account for the costs associated with the project (including reduced or degraded recreation visitation and effects on property values from loss of open space), nor does the DEIS address the economic benefits associated with undeveloped public lands, does not assess an alternative which avoids undeveloped public lands in favor of private lands, does not explore the benefits of siting this project on previously developed, contaminated or degraded lands (brownfields), the DEIS fails to consider the non-market values affected by the project. The DEIS examines only potential jobs and income using IMPLAN and does not assess the impacts of the proposed project on other sectors of the economy. All of these analyses were requested by Oregon Natural Deserts Association (ONDA) and other organizations in scoping comments submitted on August 29, 2009.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.165.
76.162	ECO	<i>Net economic benefits must, by definition, include the costs associated with any activity. Nor are they comprised solely of income and employment. It is absolutely impossible to estimate the net benefits of a project without including all costs, and to make such an assertion calls into question the credibility of the entire economic analysis. To address this error, BLM must reevaluate the proposed alternatives using transparent methodology which includes all the costs associated with the development. Any negative impact will inflict costs on at least some stakeholders, and many of these impacts were pointed out to BLM in the scoping comments provided by ONDA.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.165.
76.163	ECO	<i>As noted by ONDA, "The scope of the DEIS must include both the transmission line and the three wind energy generation sites on North Steens Mountain." (ONDA scoping comments p. 7). The lack of analysis on costs is compounded by the fact that the BLM has not analyzed the complete project and all the attendant cumulative impacts.</i>	DEIS Section 3.19.3.11 (Cumulative Effects on Social and Economic Values from Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions, including the Proposed Action and Action Alternatives) estimated the potential effects of the three wind projects with the proposed Project and the action alternatives.
76.164	ECO	<i>These costs (undeveloped public lands) should be included in Final EIS's assessment for the North Steens Transmission project in order to do a complete analysis of net public benefits.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.165.
76.165	ECO	<i>The Final EIS must make a quantitative assessment of all the costs associated with the proposed North Steens Transmission Project and the associated generation projects. Because the agencies must circulate a supplemental DEIS to address other deficiencies in the DEIS, this assessment should be included in the supplemental DEIS. These costs include: 1) Costs associated with impacts to wildlife, including greater sage-grouse, raptors and other resident and migratory birds, bats, mammals (including pronghorn, elk, deer, bighorn sheep, pika and Preble's shrew); 2) Costs associated with scenic and visual impacts; 3) Costs associated with noise impacts; 4) Costs associated with impacts to water; 5) Costs associated with impacts to</i>	Both market and non-market values can be associated with the quality and quantity of cultural and natural resources, including soil, water resources, vegetation, wetlands and riparian, fish and wildlife, land use, visual, recreation, cultural, air quality, and noise resources. In the Project Area, market values are primarily associated with recreation visitation and expenditures related to recreation resources, while non-market values could be associated with all resources. Subsections in 3.19.2 of the DEIS (Cumulative Effects) analyzed the effects of the Project on the quality and quantity of each resource. Because those sections did not predict significant, unmitigated changes in those resources, no significant changes in the associated

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		<p>recreation, including the costs associated with potential damage from enhanced ORV access and the damage such access may cause to non-motorized recreation; 6) Costs associated with invasive weeds and other impacts to vegetation, including the negative impacts of herbicide use; 7) Costs associated with damage to microbiotic soil crusts and 8) Costs associated with impacts to cultural resources.</p> <p>Finally these costs should be assessed in a cumulative fashion, as they are often interrelated. The scoping comments submitted on August 29, 2009 by the Oregon Natural Deserts Association and other organizations provides detail on these impacts. The FEIS must assess the economic costs associated with these impacts and include the costs in a true analysis of net economic benefits.</p>	<p>market and non-market values are expected. However, to the extent that the quality or quantities of those resources do change, the market and non-market values associated with these resources may also change.</p>
76.166	ECO	<p>The mere presence of undeveloped public lands and the natural and recreational amenities that they provide produce measurable economic benefits for local communities. Development of the North Steens Transmission and associated generation projects will have impacts on these benefits which should be assessed in the Final EIS and any supplemental DEIS. The impacts on undeveloped lands represent a significant class of costs that must be addressed.</p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.165.</p>
76.167	ECO	<p>The socioeconomic analysis in the Final EIS must also adequately address the potential impacts on the quality of life for residents of communities that will be impacted by the transmission development. The quality of life in many communities with abundant protected public lands is often tied inextricably with those lands. Any negative impacts on these lands from transmission development may deteriorate aspects of the western quality of life. As discussed above, such a decline will create more than simply emotional or psychological impacts. Areas with high quality of life are better able to attract the entrepreneurs, skilled and creative workers, retirees and others who are important economic drivers of many western communities.</p>	<p>DEIS Section 3.11.2.1 (Social and Economic Values, Lifestyle and Social Values) discussed quality of rural life and cultural values in Harney County. Quality of life indicators, such as employment and lifestyle values were discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.2. Potential impacts to these indicators from the Project were discussed in Section 3.11.3. The Project is not expected to create any substantially negative affects to these indicators, indicating that the quality of life for the rural population would remain intact.</p> <p>Regions with protected natural landscapes can experience increased population growth (Sonoran Institute 2004; Phillips 2000; etc), which leads to increased economic growth (Lewis and Plantinga 2000; Lorah 2000). Economic growth can be fueled by increased tourism, or by population growth fueled by workers or retirees attracted by local amenities and scenery. The magnitude of the effect of preserved natural areas to serve as an engine of economic growth depends largely upon the proximity to metropolitan areas and the associated services and transportation infrastructure. The largest urban area in the vicinity of the Project Area is Bend, and it has a population under 80,000 and is over 125 miles away. The lack of a proximate urban center might limit the potential of the undeveloped public lands to serve as an economic growth engine for the local community, and the relatively small change to public lands from the Project are expected to produce no measurable effect on the ability of public lands in the area to encourage population growth and resulting economic growth.</p>
76.168	ECO	<p>The Final EIS must include a thorough examination of the full socioeconomic impacts likely to occur if the proposed energy transmission project impacts undeveloped lands. Suggested analyses and sources of data can be found in "Socio-Economic Framework for Public Land Management Planning: Indicators for the West's Economy" (on enclosed CD-ROM in lieu of Exhibit 30).</p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.165.</p>
76.169	ECO	<p>The Final EIS must also include an assessment of impacts on the local quality of life that are may result from the development of energy transmission on surrounding public lands. The potential resulting economic impacts of any decline in quality of life must also be assessed in order to fully evaluate the proposed development.</p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.167.</p>
76.170	ECO	<p>The Final EIS should include a quantitative analysis of the impacts on residential property values due to the loss of open space and undeveloped public lands from the development of the proposed energy transmission and associated generation.</p>	<p>The potential property value effects of the proposed Project were discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.3 (Social and Economic Values).</p>

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76.171	ALT	<p><i>The Final EIS should include an analysis of the relative benefits of siting the proposed energy transmission (and the concurrent energy generation) on brownfields and other degraded lands, both public and private. The analysis should examine the net public benefits of siting on these lands relative to siting on undeveloped lands, especially undeveloped public lands which may be more important for the climate change mitigation properties, the provision of recreation opportunities, their role in local economies and their provision of passive use and other non-market values.</i></p>	<p>Because the construction and operation of the Echanis Project site is not a BLM action, the BLM does not need to consider alternatives to the Echanis site (BLM H-1790-1, 2008, page 46). The development of the Echanis Project site involves, however, a Federal action (the application for a ROW for the transmission line). Therefore, the EIS must analyze the indirect environmental effects of the Echanis Project site as a connected action (DEIS page 2.1-1)(see Section 3 for the effects analyses by resource). The Purpose and Need descriptions in the DEIS, Section 1.3, were prepared in accordance with the guidelines in Section 6.2 of the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790-1. The BLM handbook (page 35) explicitly states, "The purpose and need statement for an externally generated action must describe the BLM purpose and need, not the applicant's or external proponent's purpose and need (40 CFR 1502.13)." The Purpose for BLM's action is to grant, grant with conditions, or deny the Echanis application for use of public land managed by the BLM Burns District Office to construct, operate, and maintain a new 230-kV transmission line. The need for the BLM action, to respond to the utility ROW application, arises from the FLPMA of 1976 which establishes a multiple use mandate for management of Federal lands, including energy generation and transmission facilities as outlined in 43 USC 1761(a) and 43 CFR 2800 in addition to the Energy Policy Act of 2005. Because the Purpose and need is to respond to a request for a transmission line within the Steens area, other potential alternative sites for generating wind energy is outside the BLM's Purpose and Need (see DEIS Sections 1.3.1 and 1.3.2). The Applicant's purpose and need is explained in the DEIS Section 1.1 (Background). In addition, the route selection process was based on property ownership, land use compatibility, topography, environment constraints, construction and operation costs, electrical loss due to long transmission distances and location and capacity of existing energy infrastructure (DEIS Section 2.4.1, Project Description). In addition, there are no known public or private brownfields or degraded lands that would provide a more advantageous location for either the proposed wind energy project or the proposed alternative transmission line routes.</p> <p>Much of the alternative transmission line routes were sited in crested wheat grass seedlings, along highway corridors or near developed land to minimize impacts associated with the Project.</p>
76.172	ECO	<p><i>The Final EIS must measure and account for changes in non-market values associated with the proposed energy transmission development. To do otherwise omits a very important socioeconomic impact that would directly result from this development. The analysis must assess the non-market economic impacts to all Americans, including the passive use values of undeveloped public lands.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.165.</p>
76.173	ECO	<p><i>The analysis performed for the Final EIS must not rely solely on IMPLAN or on other models derived from economic base theory to predict the economic impacts of energy transmission development. When such analysis is used, the impacts on other economic sectors (recreation and tourism especially) must also be analyzed, and these changes should be presented to show net gains/losses due to the proposed development. As we have discussed above, the relationship between public land management and local and regional economic prosperity and growth is far more complex than these models assume, and given the potentially significant impacts on many of the region's public lands, use of such models in the DEIS has resulted in an incomplete and inadequate analysis of the socioeconomic impacts. Furthermore, where IMPLAN is used to project income and employment effects all multipliers and all assumptions used to derive them must be provided for review.</i></p>	<p>See the responses to Comments 76.165 and 76.167.</p>

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76.174	WAT	<i>The project site is in a very dry area of Oregon. The general lack of water resources make those aquatic resources present all the more important as habitat, and render deleterious impacts to those resources all the more severe. The DEIS gives only cursory treatment to the anticipated impacts to waterbodies, riparian areas and wetlands associated with the proposed project, and fails to provide more than the vaguest of mitigation plans. This cursory treatment violates both the letter and intent of NEPA by failing to provide both the public and the action agencies with information adequate to make informed decisions. Additionally, the insufficient analysis fails to comply with the requirements of FLPMA, the Clean Water Act, and Oregon state law.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.124.
76.175	WAT	<i>43 U.S.C. § 1765. The DEIS, however, fails to include such terms and conditions to adequately protect the waterbodies, wetlands and riparian areas affected by the project, or evaluate any alternatives that consider potential conditions. The DEIS contains none of the mandatory terms and conditions to carry out the purposes of FLPMA and "minimize damage to scenic and esthetic values and fish and wildlife habitat and otherwise protect the environment." Id. § 1765(a). Nor has the DEIS demonstrated that any ROW would "prevent unnecessary or undue degradation" of the lands BLM manages on and near Steens Mountain, including the rare and essential aquatic resources there. Id. § 1732(b).</i>	See the response to Comment 76.124.
76.176	WAT	<i>In addition to failure to comply with FLPMA, the DEIS does not provide adequate information or analysis to demonstrate compliance with the Clean Water Act. The purpose of the Clean Water Act ("CWA"), 33 U.S.C. §1251 et seq., is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of waters of the United States.</i>	The Project would obtain and comply with conditions set forth in all permits required under Section 404 and Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA). DEIS Section 3.2.3 (Water Resources) included an effects analysis by alternative. In addition, Appendix A included BMPs and PDFs to mitigate for potential effects.
76.177	WAT	<i>The proposed action would cause unacceptable adverse impacts both individually and in combination with known and/or probable impacts of other activities affecting the ecosystems of concern. The DEIS lacks essential information for the agencies to determine whether the proposed action would comply with the 404(b)(1) guidelines.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.176.
76.178	WAT	<i>In numerous essential aspects, sufficient information does not exist in the DEIS to make a reasonable judgment as to whether the proposed wetland fill activities will comply with these Guidelines. It is the burden of the applicant, not the federal and state agencies, to produce such information. Here, the applicant has failed to provide the requisite information. For example, the locations of the transmission line poles have yet to be determined. DEIS at 3.4-23. The DEIS only contains vague statements that poles will be placed in wetlands. See e.g. id.: 3.4-19; 3.4-21 ("so three poles would be placed in wetlands at that crossing").</i>	See the response to Comment 76.176.
76.179	SOI	<i>The required Erosion and Sediment Control Plan has yet to be drafted, let alone set out for agency and public review.</i>	A Draft Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) has been developed for the proposed Project, as required by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) National Pollutant Discharge and Elimination System Stormwater Discharge Permit (ODEQ 2005) and pursuant to Oregon Revised Statutes 468B.050 and Section 402 of the Federal Clean Water Act. The ESCP is included in Appendix F of the FEIS.
76.180	WAT	<i>Conducting the wetland delineation field visits during the dry summer months likely led to an improperly low count of wetland areas. Delineation field visits should have occurred during the wet season in this dry area of the state. Moreover, the ordinary high water mark of streams was determined through direct observation. Id. This observation similarly should have occurred during the wet months when stream flow is at its peak.</i>	The ordinary high water mark (OHWM) determination is done using physical characteristics of vegetation, soil, and geomorphology specific to the region. The Oregon DSL reports that, "The ordinary high water mark has been defined in federal law as the line that the water impresses on the soil by covering it for a sufficient period of time to deprive it of vegetation. In Oregon, the line of ordinary high water has also been defined by statute (ORS 274.005). Summarized in general terms, these definitions say that the ordinary high water mark is a line on the bank or shore to which the high water ordinarily rises each year and is the waterward limit of upland vegetation and soil. This line is not established based on the level to which the water rises during major floods. It is generally recognizable by a visible change in the soil and vegetation. In a 1912 Oregon Supreme Court case (Sun Dial ranch vs. May Land Company) involving the Columbia and Sandy Rivers, the court said "...high water mark' is the point below which the presence and action of the water are so common and usual and so long continued in all

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			<p>ordinary years as to mark upon the soil a character distinct from that of the banks with respect to vegetation as well as with respect to the soil itself." Others define the ordinary 'high water mark' as a "water mark" defining the waterward limit of the submerged and submersible land "...which the water occupies sufficiently long and continuously to wrest it from vegetation and destroy its value for agricultural purposes." http://www.oregon.gov/DSL/NAV/whoownssthewaterways.shtml). Also see response to comment 63.09.</p>
76.181	WET	<p><i>Also problematic is the complete lack of analysis on wetlands where the project proponents claim "there would be no direct effect from construction of new access roads." Indirect effects of this construction on adjacent wetlands are entirely possible and should have been analyzed. All wetlands in the project area should have been analyzed. Small adjustments in the proposed route could affect these wetlands, yet they are entirely ignored by the DEIS. Likewise, the DEIS ignores wetlands that would "be completely spanned by the transmission line." DEIS at 3.4-2. Again, both potential direct and indirect effects to these wetlands are part of any complete environmental analysis of the project.</i></p>	<p>Wetlands that are spanned by the transmission lines are shown in Figure 3.4-1 (shown in red and noted in the Figure as "T-Wetland type-Wetland number"). The discussion about the permanent effects of Alternative B discussed the details of spanning 1.16 miles of wetlands, including five wetland crossings and 10 riparian areas; discussions of other alternatives include similar analyses (see Sections 3.4.3.3, 3.4.3.4, and 3.4.3.5).</p> <p>Indirect effects of the Project, including road building, were discussed in DEIS Section 3.4 (Wetlands) as well as Section 2 (Project Description). For example, Section 3.4 stated "Roads would not be paved with impervious surfaces, but would be cleared and graded. Permanent effects would include reduced interception and infiltration of precipitation. In addition, the grading of roads and construction of the bridge has the potential to increase erosion near and in stream channels. These potential effects would be minimized by the design practices described in DEIS Section 2." Additionally, temporary indirect effects to wetlands from construction would be minimized by the use of BMPs, as discussed in Section 3.4, Section 2, as well as the Project's Conditional Use Permit application, erosion and sediment control plans, stormwater pollution prevention plans, and any other necessary permits.</p>
76.182	WAT	<p><i>The DEIS refers to directional drilling as a proposed technique for stream crossings, yet has no discussion of the potential impacts of this activity. Horizontal directional drilling ("HDD") crossings, when successful, have impacts in areas adjacent to rivers where staging and construction areas occur. HDDs also require the disposal of materials extracted from the drill hole. Without knowing the length and width of the proposed HDDs, it is impossible for the public to meaningfully comment on the impact of the HDD and the disposal of spoils. Worse yet, HDD attempts frequently fail, causing drastic impacts to water quality and fish habitat.</i></p>	<p>Directional drilling would be considered only, and if, it is decided to place the existing Harney Electric Cooperative (HEC) distribution lines underground in the area adjacent Diamond Lane east of Highway 205 in conjunction with the selection of the Alternative B - West Route. This option was proposed as a means of reducing avian mortality caused by the existing HEC distribution lines in that area. The potential direction drilling would occur at two, or possibly three, locations at watercourses on that route. Each directional bore would be less than 300 feet in length. Equipment performing the boring operations would be located on county road right-of-way. Material removed from the bore would be suitably contained and disposed of at a suitable location.</p>
76.183	WET	<p><i>The DEIS does not describe the mitigation proposed for the loss of wetlands due to the proposed project. The DEIS says only that these specific mitigation measures "will be described in the Compensatory Wetland Mitigation (CWM) Plan" in a revised application to the Corps and Oregon Department of State Lands. DEIS at 3.4-18 (emphasis added). The utter lack of this information in the DEIS deprives the public of an opportunity to comment on the proposed mitigation plans. The general description of mitigation measures is incredibly vague and generalized. See e.g., id. ("mitigation would consist of wetland creation and riparian enhancement planting.") The DEIS simply does not contain enough information on the impacts to wetlands for the agencies to make informed decisions.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 63.15.</p>

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76.184	WET	<i>The DEIS fails to follow the legal requirements, skipping the avoidance and minimization steps, and then fails entirely to set out any detail on the proposed mitigation. The DEIS lacks information on the proposed location of mitigation, timing, and any detail beyond the proposed 1:1.5 mitigation ratio. The filling of the wetlands and their resulting destruction will be certain, permanent, and imminent. In contrast, the measures to be implemented in the as yet undrafted CWM Plan, and the effectiveness of such measures are highly uncertain. Furthermore, even if the measures of a future CWM Plan are successfully implemented, the benefits from the measures may accrue slowly while the sensitive, endangered and threatened species are put in further jeopardy by a lack of essential habitat.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.15.
76.185	WAT	<i>Because the DEIS lacks any detailed discussion of proposed mitigation, it is impossible for the public or the agencies to evaluate whether all appropriate and practical steps will be taken to minimize impacts and mitigate for those that can not be eliminated. The DEIS fails to disclose specific information for adequate evaluation of the mitigation designs and procedures to be used mitigating these environmental impacts. The agencies and the public can not possibly evaluate the effectiveness of any mitigation plans proposed by the applicant without the specifics of the plans. Simply stating that Best Management Practices ("BMPs") will be used is insufficient for evaluation of mitigation measures specific to this site.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.124.
76.186	WAT	<i>The proposed project would violate Oregon's water quality standard for temperature by removing riparian vegetation that shades streams, causing stream heating along a wide construction easement. The proposed project would also violate Oregon's water quality standard for turbidity by causing an increase in turbidity levels in stream segments impacted by the installations. The DEIS states only that 20% of the 516 streams mapped in the watershed are listed as having Total Maximum Daily Loads ("TMDLs"). DEIS at 3.2-5. Most of these are for excess temperature. Others are impaired by turbidity or dissolved oxygen levels. The DEIS, however, fails entirely to analyze specific impacts to these impaired streams or to explain how the applicant will or can comply with Oregon's water quality standards.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26. Section 3.2.2.4 (Water) and Table 3.2-1 of the DEIS provided a discussion and listing of impaired streams and water quality issues in the Project Area.
76.187	WAT	<i>...the Applicant has failed entirely to demonstrate that these beneficial uses will be protected and that the waters will not be further degraded by the project. The applicant has failed to prove the necessity of this project, and therefore the state will not be able to determine that the benefits of the diminished water quality outweigh the environmental costs of the reduced water quality.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26.
76.188	WAT	<i>The proposed action would violate Oregon's water quality standard for turbidity.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26.
76.189	WAT	<i>The proposed action would violate the state of Oregon's antidegradation policy for already impaired waterbodies.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26. Section 3.2.2.4 (Water) and Table 3.2-1 of the DEIS provided a discussion and listing of impaired streams and water quality issues in the Project Area.
76.190	WAT	<i>The DEIS fails entirely to demonstrate that the project will comply with FLPMA, the CWA, or Oregon state law. The failure to analyze the impacts to wetlands, riparian areas and streams in any detail, the total lack of a mitigation plan and erosion and sediment control plan, and the heavy reliance on general and unspecific BMPs is entirely inadequate under NEPA.</i>	See the response to Comment 63.26.
76.191	NOI	<i>DEIS section 3.17 covering noise is inadequate because it does not study noise effects from all four generation sites and does not consider any recreational locations (such as dispersed campsites shown in various DEIS maps) to be receptors. This improperly limits the scope of the analysis.</i>	The East Ridge, West Ridge, and the Riddle Mountain Wind Farm Projects were included in the analysis of cumulative effects (DEIS Section 3.19) as "reasonably foreseeable future actions." The potential combined noise effects from these projects was acknowledged in Section 3.19.2.17 of the DEIS. Noise effects from the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Projects would be similar to the Proposed Action. Each of these Projects, if developed, would be subject to the 10 dBA increase threshold for wind energy facilities pursuant to OAR 340-035-0035.

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76.192	NOI	<i>The DEIS must evaluate noise from turbines on West Ridge, East Ridge and Riddle Mountain that may be closer to areas where people congregate, and also study area where the public regularly accesses (such as dispersed campsites and hiking trails) which would be closer to the locations where turbines are projected on those sites.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.191.
76.193	CME	<i>The consideration of cumulative effects in the DEIS is inadequate.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.009.
76.194	WIL	<i>agencies have not undertaken any meaningful analysis of the cumulative effects to sage-grouse populations, other avian species, other wildlife, scenic resources and other resources in conjunction with existing, pending, or planned projects and actions that also may impact these resources—for example, other energy projects currently under development or planned in sage-grouse habitat, or the continuing effects of wildlife grazing.</i>	Additional cumulative effects analysis regarding greater sage-grouse, general wildlife, and other avian species has been added to the FEIS in Section 3.19.2.5. Additional information about the cumulative effects on scenic resources has been added to the FEIS in Section 3.19.2.9 and 3.19.2.13.
76.195	CME	<i>The DEIS's discussion of cumulative effects is inadequate in a variety of ways. The DEIS fails to evaluate adequately the cumulative effects of the transmission line and the four associated generation projects on the ecological integrity of Steens Mountain by omitting detailed analysis of the effects of the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain sites – despite the fact that, ironically, for at least two of these sites, more information has been made available to the public (albeit through a county permitting process, and not in this DEIS) about potential impacts than for the Echanis site which is analyzed in the DEIS. See, e.g., Exhibit 2.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.009.
76.196	WIL	<i>The DEIS also does not adequately evaluate the cumulative impacts of the four generation sites on several important resources. The DEIS fails to provide any concrete analysis of cumulative impacts, instead providing largely generic descriptions devoid of any cumulative impact analysis specific to the proposed transmission line and associated generation. For example, the DEIS fails, for example, to study cumulative impacts to wilderness values and sage-grouse populations and sagebrush habitat with respect to invasive species, habitat fragmentation, irretrievable loss of finite wilderness characteristics, and so forth, on a landscape level. As described above, the DEIS includes no adequate discussion about direct and indirect impacts to sage-grouse and its habitat—let alone an analysis of cumulative impact. Thus, there is no discussion of the direct impacts of the project on sage-grouse and nor of how sage-grouse populations are doing in the immediate surrounding areas. There is no discussion of how nearby agency actions such as grazing authorizations, rangeland projects, vegetative treatments and other wilderness inventory determinations, cumulatively impact the resources affected by this transmission and generation project. The DEIS similarly does not adequately evaluate the cumulative effects of the four generation sites on noise (that would result from the turbines on the four sites), water and wetlands (from construction and road building effects on the four sites), or any other resources.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.009 and 76.194.
76.197	CME	<i>The cumulative impacts regulation unambiguously provides that the agency must consider all "other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions," including actions that are "individually minor." 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7. In many instances, particularly with respect to sage-grouse and other avian species, the DEIS states that information simply is not available. See, e.g., DEIS at 3.5-1 (avian data not available); 3.5-4 (data on noise impacts to species is not available); 3.5-13 ("No studies have been conducted to date regarding whether the grouse population is at or near carrying capacity, so it is unclear whether the loss of available habitat from development of the proposed Project would have an effect on grouse abundance"); 3.19-15 (sage-grouse habitat information not available). The courts clearly have required that an agency provide a justification in its environmental analysis for why more definitive information cannot be provided. See <i>Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain</i>, 137 F.3d at 1379-80. It is the agencies' obligation to collect this information, evaluate it, and present it for public review and comment.</i>	See the response to Comment 74.03.

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76.198	WILA	<i>In the cumulative effects analysis, the DEIS does not acknowledge the vast amount of science and current studies which are being conducted regarding sage-grouse, particularly in the wake of the "warranted but precluded" listing by USFWS in March 2010, nor the effect of the proposed action's likely elimination of over at least 65 square miles of core sage-grouse habitat when combined with past, present, and future impacts on the birds. See Exhibits 6, 7 (maps showing proximity of transmission and turbine sites to sage-grouse leks and sage-grouse core habitat). There is no quantification of how many sage-grouse are likely to be affected, or how that total compares to the local population on Steens and Riddle Mountains, or on the population of sage-grouse in Oregon and elsewhere through their remaining range. There is no explanation of how the amount of adversely-affected core habitat compares to the sage-grouse's remaining core habitat</i>	Current science and studies were utilized in completion of the EIS, including the Sage Grouse Strategy (Hagen 2011a), the USFWS 12-Month Finding (USFWS 2010), and the <i>Greater Sage-Grouse: Ecology and Conservation of a Landscape Species and its Habitats, Studies in Avian Biology</i> (Connelly et al 2011), as well as other scientific papers and data. Existing information does not support the statement that greater sage-grouse would be eliminated from the "65 square miles," as cited in the comment. It is likely that they would use this area less, and possible that they would not use it at all. The greater sage-grouse population numbers for this area of the Steens Mountains are estimates from ODFW lek data, and ODFW did not provide any population estimates. Routes that the birds use to travel to and from the breeding sites are unknown. The quantification of effects requested in this comment cannot be calculated from the existing data. However, additional information about greater sage-grouse was added to the FEIS, Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife). Also see response to comment 52.01 regarding a Habitat Mitigation Plan.
76.199	WILA	<i>"[t]he effect of the three additional wind developments would need to be carefully analyzed to determine the extent of displacement [of sage-grouse] that would occur, and whether grouse leks were near areas proposed for development." DEIS at 3.19-20. The agencies do have to conduct this analysis, and they must do it in a supplemental DEIS. The DEIS offers no justification of why this information cannot be provided in this environmental analysis. See <i>Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain</i>, 137 F.3d at 1379-80.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.200.
76.200	WILA	<i>Nowhere in the DEIS is there any information quantifying the impacts of other current and proposed energy development projects on sage-grouse. DEIS at 3.19-13 to 3.19-21. The DEIS improperly limits even the narrative, qualitative discussion it provides to a few actions taking place in the immediate vicinity of Steens Mountain. This is an improperly narrow definition of the cumulative effects analysis necessary to satisfy NEPA. What are the cumulative effects of habitat loss for sage-grouse from energy projects and other disruptions to and fragmentations of its habitat? How many sage-grouse are being displaced in Oregon and other states by other energy projects? How have new oil and gas development authorizations in Wyoming affected sage-grouse? How would reasonably foreseeable developments of wind energy on public lands within sage-grouse habitat affect the regional and local populations? If other past, present and future actions are already having an unacceptable impact on sage-grouse, what is the incremental effect that displacing the populations near a dozen leks will have on the potential of sage-grouse to avoid extinction—and listing on the Endangered Species List? BLM must answer all of these questions in a supplemental DEIS because they should have been answered in this DEIS.</i>	Information regarding leks near the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Projects was added to Section 3.19.2.5 (Cumulative Effects) of the FEIS. Also, a description of all leks in the vicinity of all reasonably foreseeable future actions, and potential impacts to sagebrush habitat, in the context of Burns District BLM greater sage-grouse populations and habitat, has been added to the discussion. Also see response to comment 76.007 regarding supplementation.
76.201	WILA	<i>The DEIS also includes the admission that "[t]he seasonal habitats (wintering, brood rearing, late summer) of sage-grouse in the areas of the proposed wind energy project have not been mapped, so estimates for acres of these habitats are not available." DEIS at 3.19-15. However, the DEIS posits that there will be displacement of sage-grouse from their summer and winter habitats. Id.. This is an example of a recurring deficiency in the DEIS: generic statements about possible effects, of unknown extent, followed by a statement that information is not available. Nowhere in the cumulative effects section does the DEIS explain why more definitive information cannot be provided.</i>	Conceptual habitat mitigation plans for sagebrush habitat have been developed and are included in Appendix F of the FEIS. Text was added to Sections 3.5.2.3 and 3.5.3 (Wildlife) of the FEIS to describe greater sage-grouse habitat use and impacts in greater detail. Seasonal habitats (e.g., wintering, brood rearing, and late summer) have not been mapped because of their variability, so specific estimates for acres of these habitats surrounding the Project are not available. Additionally, movement patterns of greater sage-grouse are not well documented, and birds have been known to be migratory or resident depending upon the habitat and landforms (Beck 1975, Wallestad 1975, Berry and Eng 1985, Connelly et al. 1988, Wakkinen 1990, Fischer 1994 in Hagen 2010, Monograph#5). Radio-telemetric studies of greater sage-grouse movements in the area have demonstrated that grouse populations occupy very large areas (generally more than 100,000 acres; Freese et al. 2009). Throughout a given year, greater sage-grouse may stay confined to an area of 100 km ² , or may exceed 1,500 km ² . Likewise, breeding, brood rearing, and winter range for any given population can overlap entirely, partially, or not at all (Hagen 2010). According to ODFW (2010), greater sage-grouse have been known to travel up to nearly 10 km between ranges in the Burns BLM District. GIS data with greater sage-grouse lek locations was analyzed for lek distance from the proposed

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			Project. Seventeen leks occur within 10 km of Alternatives B and C, including two lek complexes (number in parenthesis is number of leks), Ham Brown Lake (3) and Jack Mountain/Jack Mountain Lake (4). Other leks occurring outside of lek complexes are Dollar Lake, Irish Lake, and Little Kiger. Five of these leks also occur within 10 km of the Echanis Project site, including Ham Brown (3), Dollar Lake, and Little Kiger. Although these leks are within the distance range of possible movement to the Project Area, there is no evidence supporting whether these birds utilize sagebrush habitat in the Project Area. Sagebrush habitat within the Project Area is provided in Table 3.5-12. See the response to 76.069 for additional information regarding sage-grouse movement.
76.202	WILA	<i>The DEIS makes no quantitative estimate of the likely adverse impacts to sage-grouse and other avian species from the construction of the transmission line and four generation sites, when combined with all past, present and reasonably foreseeable future projects affecting sage-grouse and avian species which use North Steens Mountain. DEIS at 3.19- 16. Without a quantitative estimate of likely impacts, the cumulative effects analysis violates NEPA.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.200.
76.203	WILA	<i>The DEIS also omits any analysis of cumulative effects analysis to sage-grouse on Steens Mountain from recent road construction on South Steens which may expand human access to lek sites and nesting areas and lead to sage-grouse avoidance of previously inhabited habitat in those areas. The DEIS similarly fails to quantify or provide any detail regarding the cumulative effect of past, present and future livestock grazing on sage-grouse.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.13 and 76.200.
76.204	WILA	<i>The DEIS's cumulative impacts analysis of other avian species is similarly deficient. A total of over 60 species of other birds were recorded on the East Ridge and West Ridge generation sites in 2008. Several other bird species are documented as likely present on the sites, including vulnerable species such as sandhill cranes and critical sensitive species such as Lewis's woodpecker. BLM and USFWS should obtain any data from CEP and ODFW regarding the baseline populations of birds present or migrating through the generation sites, potential transmission line locations, and through the Malheur NWR, and disclose this information in a supplement to the DEIS along with information about the impacts of various alternatives on these other bird species. Even if only a few ferruginous hawks or sage-grouse are killed or displaced it is significant from a conservation perspective. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act does not allow for incidental take, and any bird kill by wind turbines is a violation of the Act. As windpower projects expand, it is reasonable to expect that the overall number of mortalities will increase significantly—especially if the expansion is done in a manner that fails to consider impacts to wildlife.</i>	See the responses to Comments 46.09 MBTA) and 156.02 (bird surveys).
76.205	WIL	<i>Nowhere in the DEIS is there data quantifying the likely cumulative effect of past, present and future actions involving transmission lines on wildlife. It is well known that energy transmission lines kill birds.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.194.
76.206	WILA	<i>To adequately evaluate cumulative effects from power lines, the agencies must disclose in the DEIS: what species of birds have been affected by other power lines in the vicinity of the Refuge and Steens Mountain? How many other birds from the same species are killed annually by power lines? How many birds have been killed by the power lines on and near the Refuge since 1999? Have there been any subsequent studies, and, if not, why not? Have there been mitigation efforts to reduce power line fatalities? If so, have they proven effective? What is the plan if mitigation efforts are not effective?</i>	Prior to 1999, the MNWR has had limited data about bird mortality and existing distribution lines. Since 1999, mortality data have not been collected. Bird deflectors have been placed on existing distribution lines in strategic locations, in accordance with USFWS guidelines. Site-specific effectiveness of these deflectors has not been evaluated. Also, see the response to Comment 44.02.

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76.207	WILA	<i>Another summary produced by the Refuge showed two fatalities of sandhill cranes because of collisions with power lines between 1986 and 1988. Exhibit 32 (Listing of fates of 14 sandhill cranes found dead on Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, Oregon and vicinity 1986-88). Were these deaths caused by the same power lines as the others? Has USFWS obtained more recent data on sandhill crane collisions with power lines? If so, where are the data?</i>	Prior to 1999, the MNWR has had limited data regarding bird mortality and existing distribution lines. Since 1999, mortality data have not been collected. Bird deflectors have been placed on existing distribution lines in strategic locations, in accordance with USFWS guidelines. Site-specific effectiveness of these deflectors has not been evaluated. Also, see the response to Comment 44.02.
76.208	WILA	<i>The DEIS does not evaluate the specific impacts from transmission lines on birds. It appears that transmission lines can have significant and negative impacts to birds, especially in locations where the power lines are built over water and waterfowl concentration areas...The DEIS does not adequately address impacts to sandhill cranes, mainly by arguing that the information is not yet available. This information must be published in a supplemental DEIS to allow adequate public comment.</i>	See the response to Comment 156.02.
76.209	WILA	<i>Similarly, barbed wire can have negative impacts to wildlife, and the barbed wire associated with livestock grazing on Steens Mountain, Riddle Mountain, and nearby public and private lands can have a devastating impact to species, particularly sage-grouse which fly near the ground. For example, between 1996 and 1999, 12 birds died because of barbed wire on the Malheur Refuge. Exhibit 33. (Data showing barbed-wire fence line fatalities for birds on the Refuge). Where is the barbed wire located that caused these deaths? Is the barbed wire still in place? Has additional barbed wire subsequently been installed in the ROW or the Echanis site? Does the project include installation of any barbed wire? If so, where? What alternatives exist to using barbed wire that are less dangerous to wildlife? How many miles of barbed wire fence exist within the area affected by the proposed transmission line and associated generation sites? How many birds are expected to be killed by these barbed wire fences? BLM and USFWS must provide this information to quantify the cumulative effects on birds and wildlife from barbed wire fences in and surrounding the transmission and generation project.</i>	Barbed wire would not be a component of the proposed Echanis Project.
76.210	WIL	<i>Another cumulative effect on avian species that the DEIS does not discuss is precipitation trends and overall weather patterns due to anthropogenic climate change. When the Malheur-Harney Lakes Basin experienced wet years in the 1980s, "most colonial nesting species" generally benefited. See Gary L. Ivery, Carroll D. Littlefield, and David G. Paullin, Colonial Waterbirds Response to High Water Levels in the Malheur-Harney Lakes Basin, in Southeast Oregon (undated, prepared by Malheur National Wildlife Refuge) at 12 (on enclosed CD-ROM). Has there been more or less annual precipitation since 1986 in this area? Have there been any periods of drought in the ROW or adjacent areas? If so, how has this impacted wildlife? Relatedly, BLM has not adequately addressed impacts to wildlife from "human-driven competition for water," a known aggravating factor in shorebird conservation. Lewis W. Oring and Larry Neel, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan: Intermountain West Regional Report, 2010 at 3 (on enclosed CD-ROM). How has competition for freshwater from humans affected specific species of shorebirds in the past 10 years? How will the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Echanis wind facility and related transmission lines add to the strain on water resources?</i>	See the response to Comment 75.03. The potential effect of Echanis Project development on water resources is minimal, because transmission lines and wind turbines require minimal water withdrawals for construction or operation. These water withdrawals would not compete with animals. The overall effects of climate change, precipitation trends, and the effects of weather patterns on wildlife in southeastern Oregon is outside of the scope of this EIS, but would not be exacerbated by the Echanis Project.
76.211	WILA	<i>The DEIS also does not mention deaths due to botulism or gapeworm, despite the fact that both diseases have been a source of avian fatalities in the past...As described above, powerlines are major factor in increasing incidence of botulism in waterfowl. Will construction of the transmission lines increase the risk of a botulism or gapeworm outbreak in or around the ROW? What precautions will be taken to reduce the likelihood of spreading disease to wildlife during construction and maintenance of the power lines? What is the plan if they are not effective? Is an additional construction of power transmission lines that could even slightly increase the risk of botulism among the birds that depend on the Refuge "compatible" with the purposes for which the Refuge was established?</i>	Increases in bird disease in or near the Malheur Refuge would not occur because of the distance of the proposed transmission line from waterfowl and shore/wading bird feeding areas.

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76.212	VEG	<i>The DEIS provides no information or evidence to explain how the proposed restoration projects in the vicinity of the transmission line and generation sites would "minimize the potential for the spread of noxious weeds," either on Steens Mountain generally or on the sites affected by the transmission and generation proposals. DEIS at 3.19-11. In fact, the disturbance of hundreds of acres on the four generation sites, construction of roads and turbine pads for up to 276 turbines, construction of dozens of transmission towers and associated infrastructure, will combine with the expansion of the managed route system under the Steens Travel Management Plan to exacerbate the spread of noxious weeds.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.156.
76.213	VEG	<i>The DEIS's evaluation of the cumulative effects of the project on noxious weeds largely ignores and fails to quantify the cumulative effects that new ground disturbing activity create in exacerbating existing weed problems from the number one land use impacting BLM's ability to recover these lands permanently—livestock grazing. See, e.g., Belsky & Gelbard (2000) (and citations therein); Parker et al. (2006). Domestic livestock grazing on public lands spreads weeds and promotes ideal sites for weed establishment and spread through disturbance of microbiotic crusts and native plant communities, and by altering all aspects of composition function and structure of arid western lands. See Mack and Thompson (1982), Fleischner (1994), Belsky and Gelbard (2000), USDI BLM Technical Bulletin on microbiotic crusts. (2001). Restoration (i.e. a post-construction weed mitigation strategy) without prevention is a flawed strategy: if management after restoration is not altered, the original problems will return. The DEIS fails to discuss any ways of mitigating weed impacts from the project by altering the patterns of livestock grazing on affected public lands. How do the agencies plan to eliminate or restrict livestock grazing so that livestock do not become vectors for dispersing weeds in the new roads and areas opened by the project's construction?</i>	The DEIS's evaluation of the cumulative effects of the Project included livestock grazing, along with all the other potential vectors dispersing weeds in the new roads and areas opened up by the Project's construction. Mitigation measures that would help to reduce the potential for weed introduction and spread include washing of equipment during the construction phase, rehabilitation of disturbed areas utilizing weed-free seed following the construction phase, annual monitoring for weeds in the Project Area, and treatment of any weeds that occur within the Project Area. Weed management activities on surrounding BLM lands occur on an annual basis. These activities, coupled with allotment management plans that encourage and promote healthy, weed-resistant, plant communities, would minimize weed populations in areas surrounding the proposed Project Area, thus minimizing the potential for new weed introductions into the Project Area by livestock or any other potential vectors. Also, see the response to Comment 76.156.
76.214	VEG	<i>Likewise the DEIS fails to describe in detail and analyze the past, present, proposed and foreseeable future effects of livestock grazing on Steens Mountain and in the surrounding area, especially as it relates to the degradation of habitat for sage-grouse</i>	See the response to Comment 76.215
76.215	WILA	<i>Despite all of these recognized effects from grazing on sage-grouse habitat, and the acknowledged presence of past, present and reasonably foreseeable grazing, the DEIS does not quantify and evaluate in detail how building a new transmission line and four associated turbine sites will cumulatively impact sage-grouse or synergistically combine with grazing to more widely distribute invasive weeds and otherwise detrimentally affect sage-grouse.</i>	Grazing has not been demonstrated to negatively affect greater sage-grouse habitat, when properly managed (Greater Sage-Grouse Strategy, Hagen 2011)
76.216	WILA	<i>The DEIS also fails to consider the cumulative effects of other energy projects currently being developed in sage-grouse habitat and which would affect other resources, such as Golden Eagles, impacted by the generation sites on Steens Mountain and Riddle Mountain and the associated transmission line.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.194.

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76.217	CME	<p><i>The DEIS discusses the need for the project to interconnect to the BPA transmission system, DEIS at 2.2-9 to 2.2-11, but fails to analyze the indirect and cumulative effects of new wind energy development on the grid and the need for new transmission facilities. The discussion of the interconnection of even the initial circuit is flawed because it references yet another study that is not yet complete but only speculatively discussed in the DEIS, namely the BPA Facility Study report. DEIS at 2.2-9. The agencies must disclose this study and whether or not the information discussed in the DEIS is, in fact, supported by factual evidence. More significantly, the cumulative impacts section of the DEIS makes no mention of the grid or how the project would affect demand for new transmission facilities.</i></p>	<p>DEIS Sections 2.2.1.3 (Project Description), 3.18.3.2 (Energy), and 3.19.2.18 (Cumulative Effects) described the various system upgrades that would be made to the HEC, BPA, and Idaho Power Company electrical systems if electrical power generated by the Echanis Project and other potential sources were to be interconnected to the regional grid. However, the effects of upgrading the system are somewhat speculative and dependent upon the alternative selected. If these upgrades were to occur, they would involve installing new electrical equipment and new communication equipment on all three systems, upgrading a 20- to 35-mile segment of the existing HEC transmission line with new higher rated conductors, and re-sagging/re-tensioning a 20-mile segment of an existing BPA transmission line. Some of these upgrades would require short-term activity within the scope of an existing ROW or would occur on private land where no Federal action might be necessary. New lines or major upgrades on public land would require a new decision and be subject to NEPA. Please see Section 3.19 for a discussion about cumulative effects of upgrades to the HEC system.</p> <p>Effects upon the regional grid, not described in this EIS, is beyond the scope of this EIS and is or would be addressed in other applicable BPA documents and other environmental reviews.</p>
76.218	ENR	<p><i>To respond to the increased demand for interconnections to the grid, the BPA conducts annual Network Open Seasons where prospective energy producers can submit Transmission Service Requests ("TSRs") to BPA. From these requests the BPA offers eligible producers Preferred Transmission Service Agreements ("PTSAs"). Based on these agreements the BPA calculates the demand for transmission services and the need for any new transmission facilities. As shown in the attached exhibits, in response to the 2008 Network Open Season, the BPA signed PTSAs securing 6,410 MW of transmission capacity. And in response to the 2009 Network Open Season the BPA signed PTSAs securing 1,553 MW of transmission capacity. In 2010 alone the BPA received TSRs for 4,456 MW of wind energy development that would be eligible to sign PTSAs. If all eligible PTSA are signed and completed, the total new services provided by BPA will total over 12,000 MW, generate the need for hundreds of miles of new transmission lines, and the expenditure of millions of dollars in public funds. The 416 MW peak power projected to be generated at the Echanis, West Ridge, East Ridge, and Riddle Mountain sites would directly contribute to these impacts. The DEIS must acknowledge and evaluate these impacts and the further impacts that flow from them.</i></p>	<p>The requested evaluation is beyond the purpose and need and scope of this EIS. This EIS is being conducted to decide whether to allow the Applicant to have access across federally-managed lands. If the federal agencies involved in this process decide to allow the Applicant access across their managed lands, then BPA would conduct their own environmental review at the appropriate time to make a decision regarding this interconnection request.</p>
76.219	ENR	<p><i>The DEIS fails to include actual data on the grid's capacity to accommodate new sources of intermittent wind energy. As stated above, the BPA has previously expressed concern about how it will reliably integrate over 6,000 MW of wind energy by 2013. Northwest Power and Conservation Council, Sixth Power Plan, at 12-11. The DEIS must include some analysis of how much wind energy the grid can accommodate over the long-term and whether wind integration capacity will limit the amount of wind energy development that can occur in the region. If integration capacity will limit generation potential, then the DEIS must address why the generation sites proposed by Columbia Energy Partners should take priority over potential development in other locations that would have reduced environmental impacts.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.218.</p>

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76.220	ENR	<i>The DEIS includes no comprehensive review of the impacts of the BPA transmission system. The BPA's last comprehensive review of the transmission system was in 1995. BPA Business Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0183) (hereinafter "BPA BP EIS"). That review noted that wind energy could cause adverse impacts to wildlife and scenic resources, but did not undertake any detailed review of how providing access to the transmission system would lead to impacts from the explosion of wind energy development throughout the region. BPA BP EIS at 4-42, Section 4.3.1. The BPA BP EIS also does not address how much wind energy can be integrated into the grid. In 2007, the BPA undertook a supplemental analysis of the Business Plan EIS, but declined to undertake further environmental review. Supplemental Analysis of the Business Plan EIS (DOE/EIS-0183) (April 6, 2007). The supplement stated that "continued consideration of a comprehensive policy for BPA's transmission business is not in the best interests of the agency at this time." The supplemental analysis was based on four wind projects totaling 750 MW of wind energy that had been connected to the BPA grid at that time. Id. at 42. The analysis did not discuss impacts to wildlife from this development. Id. at 46. The analysis did not include a section on scenic impacts, much less how wind energy development enabled by the BPA has transformed scenic landscapes. The supplemental review also failed to acknowledge the ongoing impacts to cultural resources from the development that has been enabled by BPA transmission project. Id. at 48—49.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.218.
76.221	ENR	<i>Although the DEIS contains a detailed discussion of the interconnection of the initial 115-kV circuit associated with the Echanis site, DEIS at 2.2-10, the cumulative effects analysis does not include any discussion of how the identified difficulties with the interconnection of even the initial line would be overcome during the "upgrade." See, e.g., DEIS at 3.19-57 (discussing need for upgrade without explaining how the interconnection of the 230-kV line would occur.</i>	As described in DEIS Sections 2.2.1.3 (Project Description) and 3.18.3.2 (Energy), the various system upgrades would have to be made to the HEC, BPA, and Idaho Power Company electrical systems if the full 104 MW of electrical power generated by the Echanis Project were to be interconnected to the regional grid. These upgrades would involve installing new electrical equipment and new communication equipment, upgrading 20 to 35 miles of the existing HEC transmission line with new higher rated conductors, and re-sagging/re-tensioning a 20-mile segment of an existing BPA transmission line. These upgrades would require short-term activity within the existing ROW and would be unlikely to have adverse environmental effects.
76.222	ENR	<i>The DEIS provides no data or other quantitative support for the statement that reduction of power at the four generation sites during the winter months "would be beneficial to the integrated transmission and power system." DEIS at 3.19-56. Nor is there evidence or data supporting the subsequent statement that "the energy variability would occur at times that would compliment [sic] the Columbia Gorge projects, potentially benefitting the balancing required by BPA." Id. Where is the data or report from the BPA that support this?</i>	See Figure 3.18-3 and associated text in Section 3.18 (Energy) for a comparison of the Echanis Project and Columbia River Gorge Projects estimated typically monthly energy generation.
76.223	EIS	<i>The DEIS barely scratches the surface of the analysis which the agencies are legally obligated to perform under NEPA, and provides no information whatsoever about options the agencies are considering for complying with their substantive obligations under FLPMA, the Steens Act, the Refuge Administration Act, the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and other statutory, regulatory and policy obligations. As a result, the DEIS has failed to take a "hard look" at the issue before the agencies, and cannot support any decisions by the agencies other than to adopt the "no action" alternative and deny the ROWs requested across public lands administered by the BLM and USFWS.</i>	Section 1.7 (Introduction) of the DEIS described the relationship of the Proposed Action and alternatives to relevant BLM, USFWS, and Harney County land use plans, laws, regulations, and policies.
76.224	EIS	<i>The inadequacy of the DEIS, at a minimum, requires the preparation and issuance for public review of a supplemental DEIS addressing the deficiencies in the current document. However, the unacceptable impacts of the transmission line and the four associated generation sites on public lands within the Steens CMPA, on sage-grouse, on Golden Eagles and other raptors, and on the long-term ecological integrity of Steens Mountain are evident even from the limited information currently available. As a result, we urge the agencies to adopt the "no action" alternative (Alternative A) and deny ROWs for any configuration of transmission line that would result in the construction of industrial wind energy generation sites on Steens Mountain.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.007 and 76.223.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
77.01	GEN2	<i>The proposed benefits from wind farms on Steens Mtn are not great enough to warrant the damage that will occur with respect to wildlife and unique scenic values.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
78.01	GEN2	<i>I am for the Transmission Line Route because it will help the economy and create "green" jobs. Please keep the weeds out and keep the line as short as possible and away from roads.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
79.01	GEN2	<i>Keep all alternative Energy power lines, wind turbines, and related disturbances OFF OF ALL PUBLIC LANDS!!!! You destroy wildlife, habitat, and all of the good things that are supposed to be protected by you as guardians of our public lands, all in the name of "alternative power" development! To do that is defeating the entire purpose of our efforts to replace fossil fuels. Pay private landowners to allow such activities. And pay a fair price too.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
79.02	WILA	<i>• The proposed transmission route crosses the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, a refuge dedicated over 100 years ago to native and migrating bird populations. The presence of 70-120 ft poles with tiered power lines poses flight hazards to large birds, such as pelicans, sandhill cranes, white-faced ibis, snow geese, Ross' geese and Golden eagles, through strikes against the new infrastructure.</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02 and 158.05.
79.03	WIL	<i>The transmission line, turbines, associated roads and substations will fragment sage grouse, elk, and mule deer habitat. Disturbance to sagebrush habitat in this area will greatly impact sage grouse populations associated with four known sage grouse leks in the area. Sage grouse numbers are decreasing and the federal government recently announced the listing the sage grouse on the endangered species list warranted, though it is not officially listed yet. There is also the potential for increased predation on sage grouse as the transmission towers and lines provide perches and nesting sites for raptors.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 44.03.
79.04	WIL	<i>• Part of the transmission line and most of the turbines lie within areas that the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife has deemed off-limits to any industrial development because of sage grouse populations.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
79.05	WIL	<i>• The draft EIS has not adequately analyzed impacts to sage grouse, Golden eagles, and other birds and wildlife from three of the four generating sites that are planned to connect to the new line. The current draft EIS only analyzes the impacts of one turbine site, while the developer, Columbia Energy Partners, has made it clear that it intends to develop four wind energy generation sites on or near Steens, all of which will use the proposed transmission line. This represents over 100 turbines within five miles of sage grouse leks, the minimum distance prescribed by U.S. Fish & Wildlife and the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. The BLM must prepare a supplemental draft EIS to adequately analyze the impacts from all four proposed wind energy generation sites.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.194 and 76.007 (regarding supplementation).
79.06	VIS	<i>425-foot tall turbines associated with this project would be visible along the Steens Loop Road at Fishlake Campground, Whorehouse Meadows, the Kiger Gorge overlook, and along the ridgeline above Mann Lake and the Alvord Desert.</i>	The proposed Project would not be visible from Fish Lake Campground, Whorehouse Meadows, or the Kiger Gorge overlook. The Project would be visible from Mann Lake and the Alvord Desert. While visible from the Alvord Desert, the visual effect of the wind turbines from the Echanis Project would be weak because of the distance from the Project. Some reasonably foreseeable future actions, most notably the East Ridge and West Ridge Projects, would be visible from Whorehouse Meadows or the Kiger Gorge overlook (see Sections 3.13-7 and 3.13-8, Wilderness, and Appendix D).
79.07	LND	<i>The BLM must not issue a Right of Way for the proposed transmission line based on the unacceptable impacts to federally-protected lands in the Steens Cooperative Management and Protection Area, other federal lands, and the wildlife that live there.</i>	As described in DEIS Section 1.4.1 (Introduction), the BLM would decide whether or not to grant the ROW request from the Applicant and, if so, under what terms and conditions. In making the decision whether to grant, grant in part, or deny the ROW application submitted by the Applicant, the BLM would consider decision factors provided by law including, but not limit to, those outlined in 43 CFR 2804.26.

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79.08	EIS	<i>The draft EIS was prepared by a third party consultant with little apparent input from the land management agencies. Call on BLM and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to conduct their own, independent studies of the dangers to sage grouse, Golden eagles, waterfowl, and other wildlife from this ill-conceived industrial development on Steens Mountain.</i>	See the response to Comment 13.07.
82.01	GEN2	<i>The beauty, tranquility and suitability for native fauna and flora of Steens Mountain should not be sacrificed for power generation and transmission. The Bureau of Land Management should choose the No Action Alternative in the EIS for this project.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
83.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens Transmission Line, either Alternative B or Alternative C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on green jobs. This process has been thorough and transparent. There is no reason for the BLM not to authorize this project, and I hope you will do so.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
84.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
85.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
85.02	ENR	<i>The wind projects proposed by Columbia Energy Partners will produce more than half of their output in the winter months when the region needs 'green power' the most. There are few projects with the potential to provide significant renewable power in those periods, which is vitally important to shutting down the coal-fired power plants that are the single largest source of pollution in the region.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
85.03	LND	<i>The wind projects being proposed will be built on private property. No turbines, no transmission lines and no project structures will be located in the wilderness or other protected areas. The US Bureau of Land Management has a directive to support development of renewable energy, from Secretary Salazar and President Obama. The BLM should approve the transmission line so these projects can move forward.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
85.04	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative: 1. The private landowners who own the project sites will eventually be forced to break up their ranches , selling off parcels to meet operating expenses. The wind projects will keep these large ranches intact for several more generations – that should be a priority concern among thoughtful conservationists and the BLM:...</i>	The effects of the No Action Alternative were discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.3.1 (Social and Economic Values). The current state of the affected environment is discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.2. Under the No Action Alternative, the Echanis Project would not be constructed so social or economic changes attributable to the Project would not be realized.
85.05	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative: ... 2. Harney County has suffered many years of unemployment rates around 20%. These projects are vitally important for revitalizing the local economy in terms of jobs, tax benefits and economic diversification; ...</i>	See the response to Comment 85.04.
85.06	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative: ... 3. Oregon has above-average unemployment and faces a \$3billion budget gap in the next legislative session; ...</i>	See the response to Comment 85.04.
85.07	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative: ... 4. Oregon has set a policy of building a "green economy" – these projects are essential to continuing that forward momentum.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.04.
85.08	VIS	<i>The EIS studied the visual impacts from all of CEP's planned projects and found that even when all projects are built, the impact to views from the Steens Wilderness would be minimal. In fact, the Echanis project would be visible for just 0.4% of the Steens Wilderness. If we are serious about slowing global climate change, if we are serious about rebuilding on economy on 'green jobs,' if we are serious about creating more wilderness, we cannot have the boundaries of any wilderness be the wilderness itself and everything that can be seen from there. After all, the boundaries of most Oregon wildernesses (which are located in forests) are ... clear cuts!</i>	Comment acknowledged.

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85.09	GEN1	<i>CEP has conducted three years of bird, bat, plant and animal and cultural surveys on this project. The EIS considers all of that in its analysis of the projects. With more than 1,000 pages of information, data and visual simulations, this EIS is exhaustive in its review and points conclusively towards approving the transmission line in either of the two main routes proposed.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
86.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens Transmission Line -- either Alternative B or Alternative C. I believe those alternatives are sensitive to the environment in the area, while providing our nation with much-needed clean energy. I sincerely hope the BLM and the federal government moves forward to approve the line, because I believe clean energy projects like this are essential to the economic and environmental well being of the United States.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
88.01	GEN1	<i>I am in favor the North Steens Transmission Line project moving forward - what ever alternative the BLM deems appropriate. How long will the environmental groups hold "green projects and jobs" hostage from a community that wants and needs the project, power and jobs. The issues and concerns of the environmental groups have raised, in my opinion have been studied and documented and found to be non-factors. Please rule in favor of the North Steens Transmission Line project so it can move forward.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
89.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
90.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
91.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
92.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
92.02	ENR	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.02.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.02.
93.01	GEN1	<i>We 100% support the North Steens Transmission Line Project routing alternatives B or C.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
93.02	ALT	<i>Of the two alternatives carefully studied for the DEIS we believe Routing Alternative C (the North Route) does however provide better flexibility for private land route placement opportunity as well as improved collector line access in support of future wind turbine site developments proximate to the eastern Riddle Mountain and State Land areas.</i>	Your support of the Alternative C - North Route is acknowledged.
93.03	ECO	<i>Renewable energy project development harnessing the natural wind resources uniquely available within Harney County is clearly important to the economic diversity and future viability of Harney County and its people. This development will help keep our largest ranchland areas in tact from land parcel subdivision benefitting our rangelands, wildlife habitat, viewscapes, and the traditional lifestyles of our next generation.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
94.01	ECO	<i>As a lifelong resident of Harney County, I have seen the very best and the very worst of times in our great County. Harney County and it's residents have been devastated by one economical disaster after another. We have an opportunity to re-invent ourselves with the introduction of "Wind Energy".</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
94.02	LND	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.03.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.03.
95.01	ECO	<i>However, as this is private land, it is highly likely that any adverse impacts from wind development will pale in comparison to possible subdivision and development of the private land in the area if the local ranching families are unable to generate sustainable income from wind royalties.</i>	Comment acknowledged.

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95.02	P&N	<i>I believe it is very important to expedite new transmission lines, and note that it is a high priority with President Obama and others in the Administration too. We are falling behind much of the rest of the world in generating clean, renewable energy, and we need to accelerate our efforts to wean ourselves off dependence on foreign oil, and to minimize the burning of coal, which simply is not a clean fuel.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
95.03	VIS	<i>I have seen the area from both the air and the ground, and believe the visual intrusion will be minimal.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.148.
95.04	LND	<i>I am writing in support of the North Steens Transmission line that would enable wind power generated on private land (Hoyt Wilson and other properties) to reach the market in the most efficient manner. I have toured the area in question, and note that it crosses only very small tracts of BLM land, with everything else being located on either private or State land. Also, as the entire Echanis wind project is located exclusively on private land, the Federal lands protected by the 2000 Steens Act will have no physical surface disturbance, and only minor visual impacts.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
95.05	P&N	<i>Moreover, the power that will be generated by the Echanis project will be winter peaking power, unlike much of the summer capacity which exists further north in the Columbia River Gorge. Winter capacity is important to help reduce reliance on coal fired plants.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
96.01	ECO	<i>Perhaps the major point I would like to make is that in my lifetime (I am 61 years old.) I have not seen an industrial burst that has helped rural America. This is an industry located in rural America. This is an opportunity to revitalize rural communities and their tax bases....Ranchers are still running their cattle and managing their land around these wind farms. I had one rancher in Eastern Oregon tell me it saved them from selling some of their land, due to commodity prices.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
97.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
98.01	GEN1	<i>I am writing in support of Wind Energy and the North Steens Transmission Line, either Alternative A or Alternative B.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
98.02	ENR	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.02.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.02.
98.03	LND	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.03.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.03.
98.04	VIS	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.08.</i>	See the response to Comment 62.03.
98.05	WIL	<i>due to the below listed reasons we would be foolish to do anything else but move forward with the North Steens Wind Projects and Transmission Line:...4. CEP has conducted three years of bird, bat, plant and animal and cultural surveys on this project. The EIS considers all of that in its analysis of the projects. With more than 1,000 pages of information, data and visual simulations, this EIS is exhaustive in its review and points conclusively towards approving the transmission line in either of the two main routes proposed....</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
98.06	ECO	<i>due to the below listed reasons we would be foolish to do anything else but move forward with the North Steens Wind Projects and Transmission Line:...5. Economically the private Landowners who own the project sites will eventually be forced to break up their ranches , selling off parcels to meet operating expenses. The wind projects will keep these large ranches intact for several more generations – that should be a priority concern among thoughtful conservationists and the BLM; Harney County has suffered many years of unemployment rates around 20%. These projects are vitally important for revitalizing the local economy in terms of jobs, tax benefits and economic diversification; Oregon has above-average unemployment and faces a \$3 billion budget gap in the next legislative session; Oregon has set a policy of building a “green economy” – these projects are essential to continuing that forward momentum....</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.

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98.07	ENR	<i>due to the below listed reasons we would be foolish to do anything else but move forward with the North Steens Wind Projects and Transmission Line...6. Lastly and most importantly we must move forward with the continuing initiative to transform from the archaic fuel sources of the present to the environmentally friendly sources of the future. With continued progress and evolution we can ensure our children, grandchildren and future generations of a healthy, clean and environmentally friendly habitat for everyone to enjoy.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
99.01	ECO	<i>These projects are vitally important for revitalizing the local economy in terms of jobs, tax benefits and economic diversification.</i>	The potential positive effects of the proposed Project were discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.3 (Social and Economic Values).
99.02	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
99.03	ENR	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.02.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.02.
99.04	LND	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.03.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.03.
100.01	LND	<i>The BLM in part is supposed to protect our public lands and adjacent lands. The BLM would be negligent in their duties if the proposed ROW is approved.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
100.02	SOIL	<i>In this arid climate the land does not repair or recover from damages easily or quickly. Disturbances on the soil in the "Laydown" areas may take hundreds of years to recover. Other areas where graders, bulldozers & other heavy equipment is used may never recover. It is ironic that the BLM would consider allowing this fragile area to be scarred yet ask me to Leave No Trace when camping & to keep my horses away from fragile areas. The whole Steens Mountain fault block is fragile.</i>	See the response to Comment 53.02.
101.01	GEN1	<i>I support the building of this important infrastructure addition. Please direct approve the applicant's moving forward with either Alternative B or C.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
102.01	ALT	<i>This EIS needs to be approved as quickly as possible for a number of reasons. 1. The west route out to the existing line is the shortest and has the least impact on the environment....</i>	Your support for the Alternative B - West Route is acknowledged.
102.02	ALT	<i>This EIS needs to be approved as quickly as possible for a number of reasons.... 2. The west routes joins with an existing transmission line rather than requiring the construction of a line that duplicates that existing one....</i>	Your support for the Alternative B - West Route is acknowledged.
102.03	ALT	<i>This EIS needs to be approved as quickly as possible for a number of reasons.... 3. The north route is a bad choice due to 30+ miles of new line....</i>	Your support for the Alternative B - West Route is acknowledged.
102.04	LND	<i>This EIS needs to be approved as quickly as possible for a number of reasons.... 4. The crossing of the refuge is a simple choice with no poles on the ground within the refuge....</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
102.05	ALT	<i>This EIS needs to be approved as quickly as possible for a number of reasons.... 5. The developer should be requested to bury the lines on Diamond lane as a mitigation effort....</i>	An alternative was developed in the DEIS Section 2.5.2 (Alternatives Considered but Rejected) that incorporated this mitigation measure as part of its design, but the potential costs and cultural impacts prohibited evaluating this alternative in detail in the remainder of the EIS.
102.06	ENR	<i>This EIS needs to be approved as quickly as possible for a number of reasons.... 6. The potential to reduce the nations need for coal, gas and oil are environmental benefits which far outweigh the small impact on the ground in this county....</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
102.07	ALT	<i>This EIS needs to be approved as quickly as possible for a number of reasons.... 7. If this EIS is not quickly approved the developer may be forced into going entirely on private ground or county road right of ways which may not be as good a choice as the West route....</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
102.08	ECO	<i>This EIS needs to be approved as quickly as possible for a number of reasons... 8. The fragile nature of the local economy is very much dependant upon this opportunity and the survival of a rural community should be equally important to environmental concerns. In this case the two are so tied together that preventing this project will result in harm to both.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
103.01	GEN1	<i>I am very much in favor of an electrical transmission line at any location to serve the Echanis, West Ridge, East Ridge and Riddle Mountain wind farms. We need the jobs and taxes these projects will provide in Harney County. The nation needs the 'green' energy. It's a win-win deal, so let's get on with it.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
104.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
105.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens Transmission Line, It will bring family income to the community.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
106.01	GEN2	<i>I do not support any of the current options for establishment of wind turbine power structures in the Steen Mountain area. Ecological impact would be too great and impossible to prevent or rectify with any current plan. I do not support this action.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
107.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
107.02	ECO	<i>An expansion project like this would do a lot of good things for Harney County as it would drastically increase the demand and need, not only for employees to operate the new project, but also construction workers on site for a few years. In these harsh economic times, a project like this should be a "must have" for communities like that of Harney County.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged. The potential positive employment effects of the Project were discussed in DEIS Sections 3.11.3.2, 3.11.3.3, and 3.11.3.4 (Social and Economic Values).
108.01	ECO	<i>I would like to let you know that I am vary supportive of the North Steens Transmission Line either one of the alternatives A or B. I have lived in this community almost all my life and have seen the economy devastated by the loss of the ability to use our own natural resources such as the Lumber industry and now cattle grazing on the public lands. With our unemployment of around 20% and the vary probable loss of the local prison our community need some hope of potential jobs and increase of tax base to help us survive. This transmission line will create green jobs for our community.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
109.01	WIL	<i>It is my understanding that the developer Columbia Energy Partners ("CEP") has conducted three years of bird, bat, plant, animal and cultural surveys in support of this project and that such analysis points conclusively towards approving the transmission line in either of the two main routes proposed.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged. Please note, however that there are not three continuous years of survey data evaluating the same territory for each Project, and there was only one year of surveys completed for the Echanis Project.
109.02	VIS	<i>Furthermore, the company has studied the visual impacts from all of CEP's planned projects and found that even when all projects are built, the impact to views from the Steens Wilderness would be minimal.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
109.03	ENR	<i>The US Bureau of Land Management has a directive to support development of renewable energy, from Secretary Salazar and President Obama and the BLM should approve the transmission line so that these projects may move forward. It is my hope that the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on green jobs.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
110.01	GEN1	<i>I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on 'green jobs.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
110.02	ENR	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.02.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.02.
110.03	LND	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.03.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.03.

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111.01	GEN1	<i>I have known Columbia Energy for two years and would love the opportunity to finance their projects. I support the North Steens Transmission Line, either Alternatives B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward expeditiously.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
112.01	ECO	<i>As one of the "economically depressed causalities" I would like to express my support for anything that we can bring to our community an infusion of jobs, green economy and any economic stimulation that will help set our community on the road to forward momentum.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
112.02	WSA	<i>I feel that the Columbia Partners have thoroughly investigated the impact to the wilderness area and as I understand it the impact would be minimal.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
112.03	ECO	<i>I feel that the wind projects would help ensure that the large landowners in our county can remain intact and prolong the need to sell of parcels to meet operating expenses. I would think that this would be a priority to conservationists and The BLM.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
113.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
113.02	LND	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.03.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.03.
113.03	ECO	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.04.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.04.
114.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
116.01	GEN1	<i>From the sounds of it, Harney County is in dire straights, and we need to create jobs to get these people back on their feet. And I cannot think of a better way to create jobs then with green energy. The WHOLE country needs to support green energy more, not just Oregon State. So, I want you to know that I fully support the North Steens Transmission Line, either Alternative A or Alternative B. I hope that you will approve the project, so that the applicant can move forward in a prudent and environmentally sensitive way.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
117.01	GEN1	<i>I am in complete favor of the transmission line being put in Harney County.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
118.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
118.02	ENR	<i>There are many positive outcomes from the wind projects proposed by Columbia Energy Partners: - more than half of the energy produced will occur during the winter months when the region needs 'green power' the most...</i>	Comment acknowledged.
118.03	LND	<i>There are many positive outcomes from the wind projects proposed by Columbia Energy Partners:... - the proposed wind projects will be built on private property - no turbines, transmission lines, or structures will be located in the wilderness or other protected sensitive areas...</i>	Comment acknowledged.
118.04	ENR	<i>There are many positive outcomes from the wind projects proposed by Columbia Energy Partners:... - approval of the transmission line will meet Secretary Salazar and President Obama's directive of supporting development of renewable energy...</i>	Comment acknowledged.
118.05	ECO	<i>There are many positive outcomes from the wind projects proposed by Columbia Energy Partners:... - large ranches can remain intact for several more generations since revenue from the lease agreements will help meet operating expenses...</i>	Comment acknowledged.
118.06	ECO	<i>There are many positive outcomes from the wind projects proposed by Columbia Energy Partners:... - Harney County's local economy will be revitalized with increases in jobs, tax benefits, and economic diversification...</i>	See the response to Comment 107.02.

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118.07	ECO	<i>There are many positive outcomes from the wind projects proposed by Columbia Energy Partners:...- these wind projects help meet Oregon's policy of building a "green economy"</i>	The potential positive effects of the proposed Project were described in DEIS Section 3.11.3 (Social and Economic Values).
119.01	ECO	<i>While I know the economic advantages have been rehearsed many times, the particular needs of Harney County should add even more impetus to giving this project the green light. For the Green Economy to grow and thrive in Oregon and the NW, projects like these need to be given a thoughtful review, and then every possible benefit of government support.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
119.02	ENR	<i>As someone who has been working to get more renewables into the source mix in the NW – I hope that your review will come down on the side of approving the plan, particularly since it provides a source in winter months when NW consumers have their heat and lights on the most.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
120.01	GEN1	<i>Subject: Support for the North Steens Transmission Line. [No letter body.]</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
121.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
122.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
123.01	GEN1	<i>I would like to voice my support for the North Steens Transmission Line, Alternative B or C. It is my hope that the BLM will direct the applicant To proceed with the most environmentally sensitive route.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
123.02	ENR	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.02.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.02.
123.03	ECO	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.05.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.04.
123.04	LND	<i>These projects will be built entirely on private property; not a single turbine, transmission line or structure will be located in wilderness or other protected areas. Land owners will benefit from guaranteed lease revenue, stabilizing large, family ranches.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
124.01	GEN1	<i>I write in strong support of your approving either Alternative B or C in the proposal from Columbia Energy Partners to generate and transmit wind power in Oregon. As an avid supporter of wind and other alternative energy sources, I am delighted with this wind project and it's role in reducing our dependence on non-renewable energy.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
124.02	ECO	<i>Additionally, the area in Oregon where these projects are being proposed have long suffered high unemployment and the residents are anxious to see new jobs bring new life to their economy. Especially since it will be a new, "green" economy.</i>	See the response to Comment 107.02.
125.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
126.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
127.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
128.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
129.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
130.01	GEN1	<i>Every resident of SE Oregon is an environmentalist in one way or another and the BLM can rest assured that if you allow us to do so we will continue to be good stewards of the environment. I urge you to direct the applicant to proceed with the project. It is time that human beings are given some protection from extinction.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
131.01	GEN2	<i>Alternative A, the "No Action" alternative, is the only responsible course of action presented here.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
131.02	REG	<i>Columbia Energy Partners ... have gamed the system by bringing in their projects just under important regulatory limits.</i>	Comment acknowledged.

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131.03	WIL	<i>they pose grave threats to wildlife populations that have not evolved in their presence. Natural selection does not work overnight. In time, the birds and animals will "learn" to avoid the turbines. However, in the decades or even centuries before they do, the losses will be great.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
131.04	TRA	<i>Meanwhile, service roads will tear through the countryside and the turbines blight the skyline.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
131.05	LND	<i>the American people have repeatedly voted in huge majorities to protect their public lands. I see none of those surveys or opinion polls cited in the EIS. Harney County is not the American people, nor do the public lands belong to any local entity. Congress settled that issue in 1936 by closing the "public domain" to occupancy, sale, and settlement. What remained was called the "public lands," to be leased but never sold. In fact and in law, what happens on Steens Mountain is indeed the public's business. Harney County gets just a say. Here again, the Draft EIS does nothing to reaffirm who the real "owners" are. Under References, I see not a single citation to the standard histories of Constitutional or public land law. [see letter]</i>	Comment acknowledged.
131.06	EIS	<i>Even BLM's mailing list (4.2.3.1) makes no mention of the National Park Service, which has had an interest in Steens Mountain for years.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
131.07	LND	<i>We know what the people in Harney County think. They are scared to death that without these wind farms their economy will disappear. We sympathize. Nevertheless, this decision belongs to the country....Our public lands were established to serve us forever, in good times and in bad. Just because the current times are bad is no excuse for making poor public policy. This is a terrible plan for Steens Mountain and immediately should be shelved.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
132.01	GEN1	<i>Lets put our county back to work, use the land that we live in and create some jobs, bring in some families and help the economy here, we know we won't get much help from the other side of the mountains. I am all in favor of building the transmission lines and using our wonderful natural resources!</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
133.01	GEN1	<i>We support the North Steens Transmission Line, either of the Alternatives (A or B). We hope the BLM will do whatever it takes to move the applicant forward on an environmentally sensitive path. We feel it's REALLY IMPORTANT that we slow down global warming and dependence on oil while at the same time creating more green jobs. This is a GOOD PROJECT that will accomplish those goals.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
134.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
134.02	ENR	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.02.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.02.
134.03	ECO	<i>The BLM should approve the transmission line so these projects can move forward. The impact they will have on preserving the large ranches is important to the conservation of the region, as well as the immediate impact the projects will have on revitalizing the depressed economy. Harney County has suffered for many years from high unemployment rates and it's anticipated the State of Oregon is facing a looming budget shortfall of more than \$3 billion to face this next legislative session.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
135.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
135.02	LND	<i>It is important to preserve as much as possible of our native landscapes. But, the desire to preserve should be balanced with the need to develop. I believe the Steens are big enough to accommodate both.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
135.03	LND	<i>The wind projects being proposed will be built on private property. No turbines, no transmission lines and no project structures will be located in wilderness or other protected areas.</i>	Comment acknowledged.

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135.04	VIS	<i>The Environmental Impact Statement studied the visual impacts from all of the planned projects and found that even when all projects are built, the impact to views from the Steens Wilderness area would be minimal.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
137.01	LND	<i>The route will have minimum impact on public land.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
137.02	VIS	<i>The view shed will be minimally impacted.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
137.03	WIL	<i>I believe the impact on wildlife and migratory birds will also be minimal.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
137.04	ECO	<i>The economic impact on the county and the environmentally friendly generation of power meets at least two federal and state goals of providing more jobs for people in economically depressed areas and increasing the tax base of the county for county services and the production of "green" power to replace dependence on fossil fuels.</i>	The potential positive effects of the proposed Project were described in DEIS Section 3.11.3 (Social and Economic Values).
137.05	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
138.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
138.02	ENR	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 85.02.</i>	See the response to Comment 85.02.
139.01	WILA	<i>It appears to me that another power line of a different height to the existing one across the Blitzen Valley may be very hazardous to birds.</i>	See the response to comment 156.02.
140.01	GEN1	<i>Replicated comment, see Comment 83.01.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
141.01	WIL	<i>The proposed transmission lines cut through a portion of Steens Mountain much protected by Congress. The building of these lines, roads, turbines will disturb all manner of elk, deer and sage grouse habitat. My understanding is that part of the transmission line and turbines lie within areas that the Oregon Dept. of Fish & Wildlife has declared off limits to industrial development of any kind, due to sage grouse habitats. There must be a better place to locate wind turbines. This is a bad deal all around for wildlife in this area. I propose "ALTERNATE A"- No Action</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 155.15.
142.01	WIL	<i>I am opposed the construction of transmission lines near Steens Mountain. The proposed project will detract from one of the most unique high desert areas within Oregon. Specifically, the transmission lines will further divide the range lands near Steens Mountain thereby harming wildlife. Additionally the required road construction will further scar the fragile desert environment. Transmission towers require maintenance. The roads used for that purpose will become a permanent feature upon the range land. In closing, there are other areas that are more suitable for wind generation and don't have the high potential to destroy the unique and forever valuable Steens Mountain high desert.</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 44.02.
143.01	CME	<i>Both the Proposed Action and Alternative for the North Steens Transmission Line would result in dramatic, cumulative degradation of one of North America's most spectacular and unique geologic landscapes. This line enables development of the Echanis, West Ridge and East Ridge windfarms. Nothing proposed in the DEIS can mitigate the permanent damages to recreation, scenic and visual resources which would result from this combined project.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
143.02	LND	<i>The Proposed Action or Alternative would permanently alter the remarkable visual quality and wilderness character (Current wilderness and WSAs) of the Steens Mt. An industrial landscape would sprawl across the geologic wonder of the wild North Steens ridges and gorges, making a mockery of the purposes of the Cooperative Management and Protection Area. [also discusses inconsistency with purpose of Steens Act]</i>	See the response to Comment 76.035.

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143.03	EIS	<i>I urge the BLM to take charge of this developer-driven DEIS process and provide an unbiased accounting of the impacts of this proposal in a Supplemental DEIS.</i>	See the response to Comment 13.07.
143.04	LND	<i>Section 113 of the [Steens] Act requires a (f) PROHIBITION ON CONSTRUCTION OF FACILITIES on federal lands, unless they...[see letter] • Where is the DEIS finding that the Transmission Line and attendant wind farms meet the tests in Section 113 that their impacts on federal lands are: Minimal in nature, consistent with the purposes of the Act, and necessary for the purposes stated in Section 113</i>	See the response to Comment 76.029.
143.05	LND	<i>Section 122 of the Act calls for: COOPERATIVE EFFORTS TO CONTRODEVELOPMENT AND ENCOURAGE CONSERVATION. (a) POLICY. [see letter] • How does the DEIS find that the Proposed Action or Alternative are consistent with the current character and uses of the public and private lands in the CMPA?</i>	See the response to Comment 76.029.
143.06	LND	<i>Sections 2,114: The Act provides a remedy for land use conflicts in Section 114 Land Acquisition or Section 2 Definitions in a Conservation or Non-Development Easement which may "ii) protect open space or viewshed" • Mitigation of this proposed energy development by land acquisition or easement should be evaluated in the DEIS.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.029.
143.07	CME	<i>Comments on Cumulative Effects DEIS Section 3.19 The DEIS analysis on Cumulative Effects (Recreation, Visual Resources, Wilderness) misses the mark about the some of the Steens area's most important values. The DEIS should fully assess the impacts of the Proposed Action or Alternative on special recreation, visual and wilderness values of the Steens ridges and gorges and the area's relative uniqueness among of landscapes in North America. The area's high recreation, visual and wilderness values result from its nationally recognized scenic and geologic landscape qualities, which includes: 1. One of North America's longest, steepest, and most dramatic mountain escarpments 2. The Steens gorges are one of the Great Basin's best records of the last ice age and some of North America's most striking glacial landscapes, comparable to Glacier National Park but in a high desert setting. 3. The Steens ridges and gorges are one of Oregon's most significant iconic landscapes, along with Mt Hood, Crater Lake, and Painted Hills. 4. The Steens area has been designated by Congress for its unique character and national value in BLM's new National Landscape Conservation System.</i>	The visual effects of the proposed Project and action alternatives were evaluated using the BLM Visual Resources Management (VRM) methodology, which is the standard tool used by the BLM to assess potential effects on scenic resources under its jurisdiction (see DEIS Section 3.9, Aesthetics and Visual). A second method was used to evaluate the potential effects upon the intrinsic wilderness and/or outstanding resource values of the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area, designated Wilderness Study Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers in or near the analysis area (see DEIS Section 3.13). This method involved using a GIS-based viewshed analysis to assess the potential for visual effects from various Project features, including turbine towers and transmission line poles, upon scenic values in particular. Because of the proximity of the project to the Steens Mountain Wilderness Area, Wild and Scenic Rivers, as well as Wilderness Study Areas, a 5-mile radius around Project facilities was established to take into account the potential for possible Project effects such as noise and visual.
143.08	REC	<i>Section 3.19.2.7 Recreation • The DEIS needs to assess the current recreation types and quality of visitor experience on Steens Mt., along with current user preferences for unobstructed views, wilderness recreation, scenic driving, remote camping, hiking, hunting and fishing, and exploring unusual high desert landscapes. The DEIS needs to assess the impacts on current Steens users and the changes in the quality of their experience. It is specious to conclude (p 19-25) that the proposed wind farms have limited effect on recreation quality, simply because some future users might tolerate windfarms and others find them objectionable. That could be an excuse to place windfarms on Mt. St Helens or on the rims of Crater Lake or the Grand Canyon.</i>	The following text was added to the beginning of Section 3.7 (Recreation): "An ECNorthwest study completed in August, 2009 found scenic visitation to the Malheur Wildlife Refuge has increased by 17 percent over the 1996 to 2006 period. However, it also found that over this same timeframe that hunting and fishing visitation to the Refuge had declined by 60 and 74 percent, respectively. Furthermore, the study found that ODOT daily traffic counts in the vicinity of the Steens Mountain have decreased after peaking in 2001. The study concludes that there is no evidence to suggest that scenic tourism has grown considerably in the area over the past decade."

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143.09	VIS	<i>Section 3.19.2.9 Aesthetics/Visual Resources</i> <i>The proposed Transmission Line connects a series of 7 to 9 mile wind tower corridors on adjacent Steens ridgelines. This sprawling industrial facility would alter dramatically the current character of Steens Mt., from natural wonder to industrial corridor. This part of the DEIS should assess the value of the Visual Resources on two scales. The Visual Resource and viewsheds analysis in the DEIS works for localized view impacts, but does not measure landscape scale effects. • The DEIS should also assess the Steen's overall landscape value (scenic and geologic) compared to similar iconic Western landscapes in the National Landscape Conservation System and in National Parks, and the likely cumulative effects of the transmission/windfarms project on the value of Steens landscapes. This assessment can use scenic and geologic values of Steens ridges and gorges, as found in BLM management plans and other standard federal landscape classifications. The information in the DEIS from the Visual Resource Management assessment can then be weighed against a national scale of landscape value to determine the relative effects on this iconic landscape.</i>	The DEIS addressed the proposed Project's impacts using the BLM's VRM system for identifying visual resources and for analyzing the level of contrast a project will have with the existing landscape. As discussed in the DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources) and Appendix D (Visual Resources), the BLM took into account the Steens area's scenic qualities and its significance as it applied its sensitivity level analysis. Sensitivity levels are a measure of public concern for scenic quality. Public lands are assigned high, medium, or low sensitivity levels by analyzing the various indicators of public concern. Several of the factors that go into the sensitivity level analysis include "Special Areas" such as Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness Study Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), etc. The analysis also took into account the level of public interest expressed by local, state, and/or national groups. Additional analysis that involves ranking the Steens Wilderness within the larger context of the National Landscape Conservation System (NLCS) and the National Parks is beyond the scope of this EIS. The cumulative visual effects from the proposed Project are discussed in DEIS Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects).
143.10	WSA	<i>3.19.2.13 Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers The Viewshed Analysis, maps, and summary (Table 3-19-5) in this section are very useful to understand the full impacts of the windfarms on Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. The maps and Table show that over 10,000 acres of Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers around the Kiger, Blitzen and Mc Coy gorges will now have close up views of at least one of the three adjacent windfarms, with some wind towers right on wilderness boundaries. The DEIS does not report a combined total of all Wilderness or Study Area acreage which will have views of one or more windfarms. No mitigation is proposed in the DEIS. The DEIS analysis only included Observation Points on roadways in this area. • To fully understand the Proposed Action's trade off of unique wilderness areas for energy development, the DEIS needs to also include a number of Key Observation Points within each Wilderness and Wilderness Study Area and along adjacent Wild and Scenic Rivers. DEIS conclusions about impacts on each area should be based on views from within these areas, not just roadway viewpoints....</i>	For a discussion about the selection of the KOPs and consideration of "Special Areas" such as the WSAs, Wilderness, LWCs, and WSRs, see the responses to Comments 143.09 and 76.152. Additional data and figures have been developed to analyze the overall visual impacts from the Project upon the CMPA and Steens Mountain Wilderness (see Section 3.19.2.13 and Figure 3.19-22 in the Cumulative Effects section). It should also be noted that the figures identify the WSAs, WSRs, LWCs, and Steens Mountain Wilderness and convey where these lands would have views of the Project and the RFFAs. Tables were also prepared to illustrate the number of acres within these designations that would have views of the RFFAs.
143.11	WSA	<i>3.19.2.13 Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas and Wild and Scenic Rivers The Viewshed Analysis, maps, and summary (Table 3-19-5) in this section are very useful to understand the full impacts of the windfarms on Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas. The maps and Table show that over 10,000 acres of Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, and Wild and Scenic Rivers around the Kiger, Blitzen and Mc Coy gorges will now have close up views of at least one of the three adjacent windfarms, with some wind towers right on wilderness boundaries. The DEIS does not report a combined total of all Wilderness or Study Area acreage which will have views of one or more windfarms. No mitigation is proposed in the DEIS. The DEIS analysis only included Observation Points on roadways in this area.... • The DEIS should also assess the effects of potential future losses of these areas to the national Wilderness System, through diminished wilderness character and adjacent industrial encroachment.</i>	Cumulative visual effects for the Project and the RFFAs were analyzed in DEIS Section 3.19.2.9. Cumulative effects to Wilderness, WSAs, LWCs, and WSRs were discussed in 3.19.2.13. Figures 3.19-11 through 3.19-13 clearly show the visible extent of the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Echanis Wind Energy Projects. When the maps are compared, areas of overlap can be determined, thus conveying the intensity of cumulative effects. See the response to Comment 76.123 regarding minimizing potential affects. See the response to Comment 76.129 regarding the KOPs.
143.12	WSA	<i>The DEIS analysis concludes (p 19-47) correctly that the project would "permanently diminish" the wilderness values of these areas. That may be an understatement. This DEIS finding alone is reason to support the No Action Alternative.</i>	See the response to Comment 143.11. There would be no losses to the national wilderness system (or NLCS) (see the responses to Comments 143.09 and 62.03). The cumulative effects Section 3.19.2.13 addresses the reasonably foreseeable future actions on wilderness, WSAs, LWCs, and WSRs. The BLM is unaware of any additional adjacent industrial encroachments.
144.01	WIL	<i>While I have concerns related to protecting the environment on and near the route of the proposed line—specifically, sage grouse, wild horses, other migratory fowl, and visual landscape—I do support approval of the Transmission line. This will provide a reduction in carbon-based electrical generation and provide much-needed permanent jobs to our County.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
145.01	CME	<i>The DEIS does not evaluate as connected actions all four of the proposed wind projects that would make use of the North Steens transmission line.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.009.

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145.02	CME	<i>There is a lack of a detailed and thorough examination of those connected actions within the cumulative effects chapter.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.009.
145.03	LND	<i>The DEIS evaluation of all four wind projects should examine whether the proposed actions fall within the management objectives and rules of federal and state land management plans to allow for comprehensive evaluation by the public or the agencies involved. This includes alignment with Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's newly updated Sage-grouse Assessment.</i>	Section 3.19.2.6 (Cumulative Effects) in the DEIS described the cumulative effects of all four wind projects as they relate to Land Use, Grazing and Realty, including BLM land management plans. Page 3.19-22 of the DEIS pointed out that, "While the West Ridge and East Ridge projects are both located on private land, the entire West Ridge site, and the northern half of the East Ridge site, would be located within the boundaries of the Steens Mountain CMPA. Any facilities related to these projects on public land within the CMPA would be prohibited." The effects on greater sage-grouse were described in Section 3.19.2.5, along with information about greater sage-grouse habitat available for the West Ridge, East Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Project sites Please see response to comment 155.15 regarding ODFW's data and Section 1.7 of the FEIS regarding conformance to land use plans, laws, regulations and policies.
147.01	WILA	<i>I have been going to Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and surrounding areas in Harney County for the last 35 years. During that time I have not seen a greater threat to the wildlife of the region than the proposed North Steens 230 kV Transmission Line project. If approved the transmission lines would go right through the middle of significant wildlife habitat negatively impacting many species of birds.</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02 and 51.04.
147.02	WILA	<i>The area proposed for crossing by Alternative B has valuable habitat used by tens of thousands of migratory and resident waterfowl, wading birds, and shorebirds. Thousands of White-faced Ibises are known to nest in the area of the Alternative B crossing, and the MNWR has important nesting habitat for Sandhill Cranes and Tundra and Trumpeter Swans. Putting the transmission lines in this area would have a devastating impact on nesting White-faced Ibises and many species of waterfowl. There is no reason to place such a destructive project in the middle of valuable nesting habitat. It additionally could have a significant impact on nesting Sage Grouse, a species that is endangered, though not yet added to the Endangered Species List</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02, 155.15, and 158.05.
148.01	GEN1	<i>I support the Steens transmission line. I don't see how we can do anything else. The recovery of our climate is the most important thing right now I don't understand why anything should stand in its way. Support our planet.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
150.01	VIS	<i>Steens Mountains ...landscape is one of it's strongest features. I would not like to see the proposed development occur for many reasons and urge you to reconsider the plan to install the transmission line through the Steens Mountains area and the nearby Wildlife Refuge.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
151.01	WILT	<i>First, the statement is made in the EIS that loss of bighorn sheep habitat would be "less than one percent" within its "game management" unit. Since bighorn sheep habitat use is rather specialized and restricted to lands of the type affected by this wind power project, and there is a restricted amount of this habitat type. If the Steens Wildlife Management Unit, the adverse effects on carrying capacity reductions could be more disproportionate for this species than the Draft EIS suggest</i>	See the responses to Comments 39.02 and 158.07. The effects to big horn sheep were specifically addressed in DEIS Section 3.5.3 (Wildlife).
151.02	WILT	<i>Second, the Draft EIS does not appear to evaluate the effects of road traffic on the use of adjacent habitats by deer, elk, bighorn sheep and some other wildlife species. Studies have shown that the adverse effect of roads open to traffic extends several hundred feet from the roadway itself, so each acre of roadway would really result in multiple acres of degraded habitat use.</i>	Studies have shown that it is not just the presence of a road or that the road is open, but the amount of use that occurs on that road, that is the determining factor for the effectiveness of the habitat around the road (Perry and Overly 1977, Wisdom et al. 2005a, 2005b). When road use increases on access roads, then wildlife, mainly elk, would avoid these areas. If road use decreased, elk would use the area again. Mule deer are less affected and can grow accustomed to disturbance (Yarmoloy et al. 1988). Additional data regarding big game and road avoidance was added to the FEIS, Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife).

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151.03	GEN2	<i>But for me, these effects on wildlife are emblematic of my own perception of how development would degrade this enthralling landscape. It would no longer be special, it would be less enthralling, it would become more ordinary and even unfriendly.[two quotations in letter] Based on the unique and precious value of these undeveloped landscapes and habitats, and the development's adverse effects on both wildlife and human values, I urge the adoption of the No Action Alternative.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
152.01	LOC	<i>I think this project would be great for the County except for the location. The Steens and surrounding area is unique and no other place like it in the world. Wind towers and transmission lines just don't fit there. Anyone's gut should tell them that without much thought. But everyone who lives or spends much time in Harney County knows the wind is always going to blow. I am sure there are a lot of other good sites in the county that would not be as intrusive to areas and places we should preserve. Places more off the main stream of tourism that would not affect the beauty and of the Steens and surrounding area. Also where there is not such a diversity of wildlife. I think it would be a better choice for the people of the County and Country.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
153.01	REG	<i>At the time [Steens Act] law was created and enacted, two extractive concerns were addressed. Section 104 withdrew mineral and geothermal leasing from the area, the boundaries for this exclusion go far beyond the CMPA. The intent is clearly to protect the Mountain and the surrounding region from energy development. Wind and solar had not yet been seen as active energy options in the region. Based on the exclusion of geothermal leasing in the area, it would be very fair to expect that the exclusion would likely have included wind and solar, at least where they conflict with the intention to protect and improve the Mountain as iterated in Section 111. But the Act anticipated the unknown types of development threats to the Mountain. These were planned for in the authorization of \$25,000,000 for land acquisitions, nondevelopment, and conservation easements. The draft EIS proposes alternatives. Although Congress would have to fund the appropriation and negotiation among affected parties would need to be initiated, the purchase of rights and easements could be an important alternative to consider in the EIS. [see letter]</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.171 and 76.051, regarding BLM's Purpose and Need and the range of alternatives. Relative to the \$25,000,000 authorized by the Steens Act for land acquisition, no money to date has been appropriated by Congress. Although the Steens Act authorizes land acquisition, non-development and conservation easements, the Act also provides that such arrangements be made with willing landowners. As you note, negotiations would have to occur with willing landowners, appropriations would have to be guaranteed and a number of other details ironed out before any analysis could be made on land acquisition. At this point such analysis would be far too speculative to be meaningful and as indicated above would not meet the purpose and need of this EIS.
153.02	REG	<i>While the [Steens] Act does point out the rights of land owners on the Mountain, the rights intended for protection were to retain the current character of grazing and land use at the time of the ACT. While I clearly understand that the transmission line and the Echanis Project are outside the CMPA, it is important to note that BLM documents ask that the connecting landscapes not be ignored.</i>	Impacts to private and public lands were considered in the DEIS. Also see the response to Comment 76.051.
153.03	REG	<i>Section 122(a) Policy "Development on public and private lands within the boundaries of the Cooperative Management and Protection Area which is different from the current character and uses of the lands is inconsistent with the purposes of this Act." The question that must be answered is, what alternative in the DEIS serves the intent of the law in protecting the mountain from ecological degradation, preserves the nature of the mountain as it has been historically, and is consistent with the purposes of the Act? Only alternative A - No Action - provides the protections stated in the public law. Alternatives B and C fail to protect and enhance the ecological integrity of the mountain that was central to the creation of the Act. Options B and C fail to protect the character and uses of the land the special status species enumerated in the DEIS the visual and scenic resources of the Mountain</i>	The portions of the alternative transmission line routes that pass through the CMPA would be located on privately-owned land not subject to the regulatory provisions in the Steens Act. The BLM has no management authority regarding does not regulate the siting of transmission lines or wind energy developments on private property located within the boundaries of the CMPA (see 16 U.S.C. § 460nn-42 "[n]othing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law.").

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153.04	WILA	<i>The DEIS fails to address the serious concerns two other agencies will have with alternatives B and C. The FWS is required under the BGEPA to protect eagles. The Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is under strict guidelines as to what development can occur in these protected lands for purely economic interests. The fragmentation of the land caused by the transmission line towers and the service roads to them is clearly detrimental to many of the special status species in the region. The DEIS tried to make light of the significant changes these towers will have on the land. The report claims that the negative impacts of the towers will be partly mitigated, but in many instances the BLM simply lacks any real data on impacts to the environment. In addition to the lack of data and analysis from MNWR and other agencies, some information has been deliberately withheld.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.063, regarding information that was withheld. See the response to Comment 44.02 regarding Malheur Refuge compatibility, and the response to Comment 46.09 regarding BGEPA compliance.
153.05	WILA	<i>Figure 3.5-3 states: "This figure for special status animals contains confidential information not available for the public review." I am unclear why data important to the public review of the DEIS is withheld and request it be included in the final EIS.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.063.
153.06	REG	<i>[see letter] landscapes in the NLCS, a new pattern is defined: "With these designations a pattern has emerged: the protection of special areas where conservation and restoration of the landscape and its biological or cultural resources is the overriding objective, rather than the extraction of commodity resources." It would be an unfortunate change from the intention of the Act to see the management of a crown jewel of Oregon move in a direction explicitly contrary to the very intentions of BLM's National Landscape Conservation System.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
153.07	ECO	<i>The Act does ask BLM to consider the economics of the region, but not in isolation from the ecological and social interests. The granting of the proposed right of way fails to balance the other interests and disregards the intents and purposes of the Act.</i>	The potential social and economic effects of the proposed Project were described in DEIS Section 3.11.3. The effects to other resources were discussed in other sections of the DEIS. Please also see response to comment 76.017.
153.08	GEN2	<i>Therefore, once the EIS is in its final form and the public process is complete, I respectfully urge BLM to adopt Alternative A - No Action.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
154.01	INFO	<i>Could you get me copies of the following documents: - The Biological Opinion by the USFWS...</i>	Because there are no threatened or endangered species within the project area, the USFWS did not prepare a Biological Opinion.
154.02	INFO	<i>Could you get me copies of the following documents:... - The two studies referenced page 3.7-12 of the EIS. On that page the EIS states that two studies have been conducted on the impact of wind towers on recreation. However, the results of those studies are not included in the EIS. Neither are they cited with enough specificity that someone might be able to find them in a library.</i>	References were added to that paragraph in the text in the FEIS to show that the information was obtained from: (1) Scottish Renewables Forum & the British Wind Energy Association. 2002. Tourist Attitudes Towards Wind Farms. Summary Report. September. (2) Horizon Wind Energy. 2007. Kittitas Valley Wind Power Project, Washington, Tourism and Benefits to the Local Economy. Available at: www.horizonwind.com , accessed September 18.
154.03	LND	<i>The Echanis Wind Project and the associated transmission lines have the capacity to substantially alter the character of Steens Mountain. When I joined the Steens Mountain Advisory Council I learned, and agreed with one of the few things that everyone on the Council could agree on: that we wanted the mountain to remain the same. That was what I wanted then, and what I still want now. Windmills and transmission lines will bring an industrial character to the mountain that will degrade the experience of wild, natural world that makes this place so special.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.035.
154.04	REG	<i>[regarding CMPA designation] I firmly believe, based on many conversations with many participants, that had wind and solar energy been considered that they would have been excluded from the same boundaries as the geo-thermal exclusion. The point of the Steens Act was to conserve the Steens Mountain area as it was – rugged, wild, with traditional old-west ranching culture still in tact.</i>	Comment acknowledged.

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154.05	REG	<i>The mission of the National Landscape Conservation System is to "conserve, protect, and restore these nationally significant landscapes that have outstanding cultural, ecological, and scientific values for the benefit of current and future generations." Establishment of hundreds of megawatts of utility-scale electricity generation, and the associated transmission lines is not consistent with either the purposes of the Steens Act, nor of the NLCS designation.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.037 regarding Section 122 of the Steens Act and 143.12 relative to the NLCS.
154.06	LND	<i>While I have great sympathy for the plight of Harney County, and the serious unemployment situation there, it is not the BLM's role to provide for local employment. The federal government is required to consider local issues, but is not allowed to elevate local issues and politics above its own management policies and purposes. Here, on Steens Mountain, the management purposes and policies are guided by the Steens Act, and the goals of the National Landscape Conservation System. Establishment of hundreds of megawatts of electricity generation is not consistent with either of those.</i>	DEIS Section 1.7.2.4 (Introduction) Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Act (CMPA) of 2000 describes the purposes and objectives of the Steens Act. DEIS Section 3.6.2.3 (Land Use Plans and Policies) describes how the Steens Mountain CMPA Resource Management Plan (RMP) imposes restrictions on ROWs, realty use, new road construction, and renewable energy authorizations based upon the potential effect of a proposed Project on other resource values. As stated in DEIS Section 3.6.2.3, BLM would not be responsible for siting the portions of the transmission line within the CMPA because all of the transmission line within the CMPA would be located on private property (see 16 U.S.C. § 460nnn-42 "[n]othing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law."). Please also refer to response to comment 143.12 regarding the NLCS.
154.07	LOC	<i>Although many, including myself agree, that we need more green energy, that need is not so desperate that we need to mar our most sacred places. We can choose where to place these towers. We don't need them everywhere. Here the conflicts and sacrifices are too large. The values sacrificed on Steens Mountain are too large.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
154.08	EIS	<i>[regarding recreation section] First, I believe that you must include the impacts of all three wind projects in the analysis of a transmission line. My understanding, from talking to energy developers, is that transmission lines cost near 300 million per mile to build. That investment is likely not worth it unless all three wind projects are going to be built. Even if only the Echanis project alone is permitted, this transmission line will make the other two reasonably foreseeable because once a right of way exists, sites on the Steens will be even more attractive than they are now. Hence their impact on both wildlife and recreation should be analyzed as "connected" actions in this EIS under the legal interpretation of connected in the NEPA case law.</i>	The East Ridge, the West Ridge, and the Riddle Mountain Projects are not active development proposals and, therefore, cannot be considered connected non-federal actions pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.7 and 40 CFR 1508.25(a). As stated in Section 6.5.2.1 Connected Actions in the BLM NEPA Handbook H-1790: "Connected actions are limited to actions that are currently proposed (ripe for decision). Actions that are not yet proposed are not connected actions, but may need to be analyzed in cumulative effects analysis if they are reasonably foreseeable." All three projects were included in the analysis of cumulative effects as "reasonably foreseeable future actions" (DEIS Section 3.19). The potential effects on fish, wildlife and special status animals from these Projects were acknowledged on page 3.19-15 of the DEIS, and the potential effects on recreation were acknowledged on page 3.19-24 and 3.19-25 of the DEIS. Any reasonably foreseeable future actions discussed in the Cumulative Effects section requiring a Federal action, along with any related connected actions, would be subject to the appropriate level of NEPA review, if and when, they become active development proposals.
154.09	REC	<i>Second, the EIS does not adequately address the impact to the experience of people coming to the mountain for a quiet, wilderness experience. The recreation section is very long, however the vast bulk of the information in the section is actually superfluous. The majority of the section is a very long list of the recreational facilities on Steens Mountain, including notes on how many vault toilets are available at various recreational sites – information which is entirely irrelevant to the impact on scenic and wildlands character values. There is also a table showing that the wind towers will be visible from most of the major lookout points on and around the mountain.</i>	Additional cross references between Section 3.7 (Recreation), 3.17 (Noise), and 3.13 (Wilderness) were added to the FEIS so that readers could review information pertinent to the discussion of noise impacts and its potential to impact wilderness experiences. Noise impacts to the Steens Mountain Wilderness, LWCs, and WSAs, as well as to primitive and unconfined recreation, are discussed in Section 3.13 (Wilderness). It should be noted that information pertaining to noise has been updated in Sections 3.7, 3.13, and 3.17 of the FEIS.
154.10	VIS	<i>Today, during our Advisory Council meeting I was advised that the towers will not be visible from the majority of acres within the CMPA. However, an analysis of the number of acres from which the towers are visible is not an appropriate measurement. The vast bulk of visitors, probably upwards of 90%, drive by car to key look out points. The wind towers are visible from nearly all those look out points. Thus the view from some places on the Steens are disproportionately important to the analysis. It is not nearly as critical that the towers will not be visible from places deep in the Wilderness that only see one or two visitors per year. It is critical that the towers will be visible to 90% of the 30,000 or so people who go to the Kiger Overlook and the East Rim Overlook. Without an analysis of the impact on the vast majority of visitors the EIS does not meet the requirements of NEPA.</i>	DEIS Section 3.9 (Visual Resources) and Appendix D included an analysis of Key Observation Points (KOPs) along the main roads experienced by a majority of visitors to the Steens Mountain area. Most KOPs, for instance, were chosen for analysis along the Steens Mountain Backcountry Byway, Diamond Loop, East Steens Tour Route, and along Route 205. The choice of KOPs was consistent with guidance published in BLM Manual 8431. The viewsheds conducted in DEIS Section 3.13 (Wilderness) were used to better understand the Project's potential impacts to characteristics of wilderness values and the wild and scenic qualities of one wild and scenic river (Kiger).

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154.11	REC	Insufficient literature review and analysis were provided in the EIS. <i>The EIS then went on to conclude that [SEE LETTER FOR CITATION] EIS, page 3.7-15. This short paragraph is the sum total of the analysis regarding one of the most significant and long lasting impacts on Steens Mountain, and it entirely fails to meet the standards required by NEPA. Specifically, it fails to identify a connection between the facts found and the conclusion drawn. In fact, it entirely fails to identify any facts at all that would lead a person to the unlikely conclusion that a new trade in windmill viewing would develop on the mountain. It further fails to explain how a new windmill-viewing attraction is consistent with the Steens Act, or the NLCS designation. It also fails to explain how, given the goals of the Steens Act and the NLCS, that the projected quantity of visitors is an acceptable substitute for the quality of experience available at Steens Mountain....citation should be provided [see letter]</i>	The first paragraph in Section 3.7.4.2 (Recreation) summarizes the findings of the visual analysis and the degree to which the turbines on the Echanis Project site would be visible from several Key Observation Points (KOP's). Many of these KOPs are also popular recreation sites (i.e., Mann Lake Recreation Site, East Rim Overlook, Kiger Wildhorse Viewing Area, Jackman and Fish Lake Campgrounds, Kiger Gorge Overlook, East Rim Overlook, Diamond Craters ONA, and the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge). Because the turbines would not be readily visible from most of these locations, the conclusion that there would be little to no change in the total number of visitors to the area if the Echanis Project were to be developed is a reasonable conclusion. Information was added to Section 3.7 the FEIS about visitation to some wind energy sites throughout the United States. There is no proposal for a new visitor center or other windmill viewing attraction. Additional text has been added that discusses the Steens area as a part of the NLCS.
154.12	REC	<i>this analysis is flawed on its face. It basically assumes that the novelty of windmills will attract a whole new set of visitors who will replace the visitors who will no longer come because of the degraded experience. However, it does not account for the fact that windmills will only be novel for a very short period of time in Oregon, if they remain novel at all given the vast seas of windmills that have been installed along the Columbia River....The authors of the EIS have provided no facts on which to base the conclusion that "some visitors would find the wind turbines interesting and would come to view the development." BLM is required by law to make a rational connection between the facts found, and conclusion reached. The above quoted paragraph does not provide either the facts, or sufficient analysis to satisfy the requirements of NEPA.</i>	See the response to Comment 154.11.
154.13	REC	<i>According to the RMP all WSAs and Wilderness Areas within the CMPA are designated VRM Class I, and all visual resources will be managed to "improve natural values". RMP at 45. From the slides shown at the meeting in Bend, it appears that the windmills will be visible from many of the Wilderness and WSAs in the area. The installation of up to 69 windmills in the Echanis project is not an improvement in natural values....The RMP does not provide for the provision of tourism based on the viewing of energy production facilities. The implicit conclusion that the BLM may simply substitute recreation based on windmill viewing for recreation based on appreciation of the natural values of the Steens area is contrary to the goals and objectives established in the Steens Act and the RMP. At the very least, such a change in management direction must be acknowledged by the EIS. If the BLM chooses to allow this development, the RMP should be amended accordingly to explicitly state that industrial-scale energy production viewing will be a new class of recreational opportunity.</i>	DEIS Section 3.13 (Wilderness) already confirms that the Project, as well as the reasonably foreseeable future actions (RFFAs), have the potential to be viewed from Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSRs), Wilderness Study Area (WSAs), Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWCs), and Steens Mountain Wilderness. Neither the Project nor any of the RFFAs, however, occur within Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class 1 areas managed by the BLM. The Project and the RFFAs, therefore, would not be subject to the management objectives associated with BLM VRM Class 1 areas. An RMP amendment would not be needed to address potential viewing opportunities of the Echanis Wind Turbines. No visitor centers or interpretive signage are currently proposed. Existing viewpoints would not be modified as a result of this Project.
154.14	REC	<i>Visitor quantity has never been a goal of the Steens Act. In fact, one of the reasons the CMPA was given the obscure name that it was given was to avoid too many visitors. On the other hand, the quality of the visitor experience has always been critical.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
154.15	REG	<i>The goal of the Steens Act and the National Landscape Conservation system designation was to create a long term sustainable – if not occasionally contentious – coexistence of ranching and environmental values on the mountain. Utility-scale energy development was never a part of that equation, and does not belong.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
155.01	WIL	<i>We believe that many of the resource impacts described in the DEIS could have been avoided by using the "macro-siting" process described in the 2008 Oregon Columbia Plateau Ecoregion Wind Energy Siting and Permitting Guidelines (Guidelines) (ODOE et al. 2008), or as described by BLM Instruction Memorandum No. OR-2009-038 (BLM sage-grouse IM) and ODFW Mitigation Policy (ODFW 2009).</i>	See response to Comments 39.02, 52.01, and 155.15 regarding ODFW mitigation.76.79
155.02	WIL	<i>Our comments focus on: 1) the adequacy of the biological information in the DEIS:...</i>	See response to Comments 39.02, 44.03, and 46.09.

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155.03	WIL	<i>Our comments focus on: ...2) Project impacts to sage-grouse, golden eagle, and migratory birds, and their associated habitats:...</i>	See response to Comment 39.02.
155.04	WIL	<i>Our comments focus on: ... 3) the assessment of overall cumulative impacts in the Project vicinity; ...</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.003, 76.009, 76.104, 76.107, and 76.194.
155.05	WIL	<i>Our comments focus on: ... 4) the adequacy of the proposed mitigation and avoidance measures to off-set Project impacts..</i>	See the response to Comment 76.117.
155.06	WIL	<i>We believe the direct and indirect impacts from the Project are much greater. Permanent and temporary effects for the Project include habitat fragmentation and species displacement, injury and mortality of migratory birds including golden eagle, loss of habitat from construction of Project facilities, loss of vegetation from construction of new access roads, improvement of existing access roads, construction of string roads, trampling of vegetation during project construction, direct or indirect impacts to special-status plant species (if present in the Project area), and introduction and spread of noxious weeds.</i>	See the response to Comment 156.02.
155.07	WILA	<i>The Service is concerned the Project will result in adverse impacts to sage-grouse and should be designed to be consistent with the Sage-grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy for Oregon (Conservation Strategy) (ODFW 2005) as amended by Recommendations for Greater Sage-grouse Habitat Classification Under Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Fish and Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Policy (OAR 635-415-0000) (Sage-grouse Mitigation Whitepaper) (ODFW 2009). Specifically, we recommend that wind projects not be sited within ODFW Mitigation Policy Category 1 and 2 habitats.</i>	See the responses to Comment 155.15 and 162.03.
155.08	WILA	<i>The Project's features including turbines, transmission, and roads, as proposed, are largely sited within Category 1 and 2 habitats for sage-grouse. Additionally, we recommend, per the Sage-grouse Conservation Strategy and Sage-grouse Mitigation Whitepaper, that transmission lines be located in existing utility corridors, or minimize impacts by placing corridors greater than two miles from occupied leks and greater than 0.5 mile from wintering areas and brood rearing habitat.</i>	See the responses to Comment 155.15 and 162.03.
155.09	WILA	<i>The Little Tiger lek is within two miles of the proposed access route and transmission line, under Alternative B and C (BLM 2010), and is considered ODFW habitat Category 1 habitat (ODFW 2009). The Ham Brown Lake 1-31leks are located near the East Ridge and West Ridge Wind Projects which would be connected to the new transmission line identified in Alternatives B and C. Any turbines, roads, and transmission lines within three miles of the Ham Brown Lake leks would be within Category 1 habitat. Category 1 designation habitat is considered irreplaceable and the mitigation goal is no loss of either habitat quantity or quality (ODFW 2009). Additionally, consistent with the BLM sage-grouse 1M, the Project should be designed such that the Project features are consistent with the amended Conservation Strategy.</i>	See the responses to Comment 155.15 and 162.03.
155.10	WILA	<i>The DEIS did not map seasonal sage-grouse habitats (wintering, brood rearing, and late summer) for any of the alternatives and did not characterize or quantify habitat types per the Sage-grouse Mitigation Whitepaper and use the associated habitat 4 classifications (ODFW 2009) to identify and analyze short and long term impacts to sage-grouse</i>	See the response to Comment 162.03 and 155.15. Also, additional descriptions of seasonal habitat use by greater sage-grouse have been added to Section 3.5.2.5 (Wildlife). Seasonal habitats for greater sage-grouse have not been mapped because of their variability, so specific estimates for acres of these habitat types surrounding the Project are not available. Additionally, movement patterns of greater sage-grouse are not well documented, and birds have been known to be migratory or resident, depending upon the habitat and landforms.

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155.11	WILA	<i>Until there is an updated Conservation Strategy that includes an implementable and enforceable core area approach that provides for the recovery needs of sage-grouse, the Service recommends the No Action Alternative. At that time the Service would review the Conservation Strategy and could potentially revisit our NEPA recommendation on this Project based on our evaluation of the effectiveness of the Conservation Strategy. We believe that, under the current ODFW Sage grouse Mitigation Policy and Conservation Strategy that the Project-related impacts to the Little Kiger lek, and potential future impacts to the Ham Brown Lake sage-grouse leks and other sage grouse year-round habitat will adversely affect the conservation status of sage-grouse and decrease the likelihood of recovery of this species from each alternative.</i>	The Sage-Grouse Strategy (Hagen 2011a) was adopted by the Wildlife Commission in April 2011. Additional descriptions of this document and its implementation have been added to Section 3.5.2.2 and 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife) of the FEIS. The maps were updated in July 2011. See also response to comments 52.01 and 39.02.
155.12	WILA	<i>The FEIS needs to fully describe all direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to sage grouse and its habitat from the transmission, roads, turbines and other features and activities of the entire Project, and include specific avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for these impacts.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.194.
155.13	WILA	<i>Project-related transmission, road, and turbine impacts to Category 1 and Category 2 habitats should be avoided per ODFW's mitigated policy. Any remaining impacts to Category 2 habitats should be mitigated consistent with ODFW's Conservation Strategy 5 (ODFW 2005), ODFW's Sage-grouse Mitigation Policy (ODFW 2009) and BLM's sage grouse Instructional Memorandum OR-2009-038 (BLM 2009).</i>	The BLM has recognized the ODFW Strategy habitat categorization map and has considered the recommendations contained in that document for disturbances such as Project-related roads, transmission lines, and turbines. The analysis of the effects of these manmade factors on greater sage-grouse habitat are included in Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife, Echanis Project Effects Common to All Action Alternatives). Additional text regarding these effects was also added to that section of the FEIS. Additionally, because monitoring has shown the Little Kiger lek to be active, construction activities would not be allowed during the March 15 to May 1 time period.
155.14	WILA	<i>The cumulative effects section of the FEIS should include a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the effects to the Ham Brown Lake lek complex from the East Ridge and West Ridge projects, including cumulative impacts from turbines, roads, and transmission. Specifically, the FEIS should determine cumulative effects to sage-grouse in the Bums District in Category 1 and Category 2 habitats.</i>	Additional information regarding greater sage-grouse leks near the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Wind Projects, as well as the existence of core and low density greater sage-grouse habitats near these Projects, was added to Section 3.19.5.2 (Cumulative Effects) of the FEIS.
155.15	WILA	<i>The Service believes that the proposed mitigation measures listed in the DEIS (pages 3.5-29-30 and 3.5-36-37) do not adequately mitigate Project impacts resulting from direct effects to the sage-grouse and its habitat, indirect effects of habitat degradation and fragmentation, and sage grouse displacement. The DEIS states that hundreds of acres of vegetation will be permanently lost due to the construction of new access roads and transmission corridor as well as construction of the Echanis turbines. It is important to take into consideration that additional habitat loss for wide-ranging species, such as sage grouse, will occur due to fragmentation of the landscape and displacement of sage-grouse from year-round habitats... Thus, the FEIS should analyze how to adequately avoid Project impacts from roads, transmission, and turbines in sage-grouse Category 1 and certain sage-grouse Category 2 habitat, and identify sufficient mitigation for direct and indirect Project impacts to sage-grouse and their habitat in Category 2 and other lower quality habitats that cannot be avoided</i>	The text has been modified in Section 3.5.3 (Wildlife) to incorporate additional analyses about the reduction of impacts through implementation of the proposed mitigation plan. The BLM recognizes the ODFW Sage-Grouse Strategy habitat categorization map and considers the recommendations for disturbances contained in that document, such as Project-related roads, power collection line, and turbines, and would implement the Sage-Grouse Strategy to the extent possible. The mitigation framework for the core area approach outlined in the Sage-Grouse Strategy is outlined in a document titled <i>Implementing Habitat Mitigation for Greater Sage-Grouse Under the Core Area Approach</i> ("Mitigation Framework"; Hagen 2011b). The effect of the presence of turbines in late brood rearing habitat is not certain at this time. The presence of roads would not necessarily reduce greater sage-grouse use, but the timing and amount of road use would determine the extent that greater sage-grouse and other wildlife would avoid the road. Application of the <i>Mitigation Framework</i> to the proposed Project is discussed under Mitigation in this section. Figure 3.5-5 shows the Sage-Grouse Strategy habitat categorization in the Project Area. The Applicant has committed to implement a greater sage-grouse mitigation plan consistent with the four phases of the <i>Mitigation Framework</i> , which are: assessment, mitigation site identification, conservation project identification, and creation and implementation of a monitoring and management plan. A discussion of implementation, including draft calculations, of the Sage Grouse Mitigation Framework (Hagen 2011b) has been developed and is discussed in the FEIS in Section 3.5.2.3. The Habitat Mitigation Plan is included in a new Appendix F of the FEIS. The draft calculation of mitigation acreage for the project is between 8,734 and 9,022 acres. The mitigation needs for the Project would be finalized through agreement between the Applicant, ODFW, and USFWS.

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155.16	WILA	<i>In the event that BLM authorizes a ROW permit for the Project, the Service recommends that BLM require Project features and activities avoid sage-grouse Category 1 habitats and certain Category 2 habitats per the ODFW 2009 Sage-grouse Mitigation Whitepaper and BLM's 1M 2009-038, and require mitigation measures for impacts to remaining Category 2 habitats and other lesser quality sage-grouse habitats, consistent with the recommendations listed below, as terms and conditions of any ROW permit issued for the Project. The mitigation measures should address Project impacts that occur to sage-grouse on all land ownerships.</i>	See the response to Comment 155.15. The BLM cannot require mitigation to occur on private lands as part of this ROW grant. The Applicant has agreed to work with agencies through the TAC to determine what mitigation should occur on private lands, and to work with the USFWS to develop an ABPP/ECP (see response to comment 46.09) for the Echanis Project site. The Applicant has estimated that between 8,734 and 9,022 acres of mitigation would be provided for the Project; much of that would be for impacts occurring on private lands, as is discussed in Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife).
155.17	WILA	<i>All Category 1 and 2 habitats should be avoided per the ODFW 2009 Sage-grouse Mitigation Whitepaper and BLM's 1M 2009-038. We recommend that the applicant implement mitigation measures to provide significant conservation benefits for sage-grouse on all land ownerships where Project impacts cannot be avoided. The Service is available to work with you and other agencies and Technical Advisory Committee members to assist in developing these essential mitigation measures.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
155.18	WILA	<i>• Key components of the mitigation plan should include the following provisions for Category 2 habitats: Direct and indirect impacts from all Project features on all land ownerships to Category 2 and lesser quality sage-grouse habitats should be mitigated through acquisition of equal or higher quality sage-grouse habitat at a 2:1 ratio or greater to try to achieve no net loss of habitat.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
155.19	WILA	<i>• Key components of the mitigation plan should include the following provisions for Category 2 habitats: Due to anticipated long-term impacts of sage-grouse habitat removed resulting from turbine, road, and transmission line placement and design, the habitat acquired for mitigation for impacts should occur greater than two miles from transmission lines, three miles from turbines, 0.5 miles for unimproved roads, and one mile for improved gravel and paved roads.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
155.20	WILA	<i>• Key components of the mitigation plan should include the following provisions for Category 2 habitats: The mitigation lands should be protected from degradation and be located in an area that will reasonably be expected to maintain habitat values over the life of the Project.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03
155.21	WILA	<i>• Key components of the mitigation plan should include the following provisions for Category 2 habitats: The mitigation lands should be protected in perpetuity through the use of fee title acquisition with a conservation easement held by ODFW or a third party, or similar mechanism.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
155.22	WILA	<i>• Key components of the mitigation plan should include the following provisions for Category 2 habitats: A mitigation lands management plan, acceptable to the Service, ODFW, and BLM, should be prepared and adequate funding provided to implement management, monitoring, and reporting actions in the future</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
155.23	WILA	<i>The mitigation lands management plan should contain clear provisions describing: (a) biological surveys (e.g., BLM's ecological site index); (b) a description of how the long-term habitat mitigations efforts will be accomplished; (c) responsible party(ies) and a specific timeline for implementing the mitigation; (d) implementation and evaluation of mitigation measures including an annual assessment; and (e) an adaptive management strategy.</i>	Additional information regarding mitigation has been added to the Wildlife section (3.5.2.3). Also, see the responses to Comments 52.01, 39.02, and 155.15.

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155.24	WILA	<p><i>The DEIS states that both bald and golden eagles have been observed within the Project area, but no active nest of either species was found during recent surveys. Four inactive nests that were large enough to be golden eagle nests were found within the Echanis site (BLM 2010a). However, the Service met with the BLM on August 24, 2010, and was informed that there are multiple golden eagle nests, both active and historical in the Project area. Three active golden eagle and four inactive golden eagle nests are located within two miles of the Project transmission lines and wind turbine sites. One of the active nests is located within one mile of the transmission line in the Windy Point area. A second active golden eagle nest is located approximately one mile from the transmission line east of Crane, and a third active golden eagle nest is located on the east side of the Steens Mountains approximately 1.5 miles from the Echanis site. An adult golden eagle was observed feeding one eaglet at this third site on June 10, 2010 (Clowers 2010). The four inactive golden eagle nests were on the East side of the Steens Mountains within 0.25 miles to two miles of the transmission line in Alternative B and the Echanis site (BLM 2010). The BLM also informed us during the August 24 meeting that there is a "high concentration" of bald eagle use at a winter roost site in the Crane area near the transmission line in Alternative C. We do not currently have similar golden eagle nest site or habitat use information for the three other wind project sites that may eventually connect to the Project's proposed transmission line. The FEIS cumulative effects analysis should also include information on golden eagle use and occupancy near these connected project areas.</i></p>	<p>Some of the information about the large stick nests near the transmission line was not available to the agencies until after the DEIS was published. The USFWS was knowledgeable about the information that was collected before the DEIS was published. Other information was presented to the USFWS as it was made known to the BLM and, sometimes before, as in the case of the golden eagle nest 1.5 miles northeast of the northern most turbine at the proposed Echanis Project site. The "high concentration" of wintering bald eagles was discussed at the cooperating agency and partners meeting at which the USFWS was present, before the DEIS was sent to print. At the August 24, 2010 meeting, USFWS personnel indicated that mortality of golden eagles nesting within 1 mile of the transmission line should not be a concern if APLIC (2006) design features were incorporated. The EIS acknowledges that the proposed Project could have an effect upon raptors, and would rely upon the TAC (which would include BLM) to develop mitigation measures to offset the mortality of raptors. For the Echanis Project, turbines would be located at least 500 feet from the cliff-top edge, which would reduce the potential for collisions with raptors. The effectiveness of this placement to protect birds from collision has been supported by the USFWS in Project discussions regarding the ABPP/ECP. The Applicant is working with the USFWS to develop an Avian and Bat Protection Plan/Eagle Conservation Plan (ABPP/ECP) for the Echanis Project site (Appendix F). This plan would be used to ensure compliance with the MBTA and the BGEPA, including requirements for a take permit and would be implemented under guidance from the TAC. This plan would apply to species covered under the MBTA and BGEPA. In compliance with the ABPP/ECP, together with recommendations of the TAC, the Applicant would monitor wildlife impacts through post construction monitoring and implement additional mitigation measures if impacts exceeded threshold levels. The Applicant is proposing to offset golden eagle mortalities at the Echanis Project site with conservation measures in or near the Project Area. Specifically, the Applicant would implement conservation actions that would prevent mortalities at the same rate or greater within 10 to 20 miles of the Project Area, as described in the ABPP/ECP (Appendix F).</p>
155.25	WILA	<p><i>Although Project mitigation measures implement Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC) (2006) standards for transmission lines and wind turbines would be sited more than 500-feet from the south and east edges of ridges at Echanis, we believe that the project design and operational measures are not sufficient to support the goal of stable or increasing golden eagle breeding populations.</i></p>	<p>The Applicant is working with the USFWS on an Avian and Bat Protection Plan (ABPP) for the Echanis Project site and for the transmission line once a preferred route is determined. The TAC, once convened, would discuss and implement measures to alleviate concerns about the Project impacts to golden eagles. A finalized ABPP, with USFWS concurrence, would be necessary before a Notice to Proceed can be issued to the Applicant.</p>
155.26	WILA	<p><i>In the absence of clear solutions to address golden eagle mortalities at wind energy projects, to enhance populations through conservation measures, or to off-set losses in other ways, our best efforts should be directed at avoidance of mortalities by siting wind turbines well away from areas where resident and migrating eagles are known to concentrate their activities. The Service believes the Project, including all turbines, transmission and roads, and connected actions at other wind project sites that will eventually connect to the Project's proposed, extra-capacity transmission line, will result in injury and mortality of individual golden eagles and potential loss of historically-used nest sites and territories over the life of the Project.</i></p>	<p>See the response to Comment 155.24.</p>

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155.27	WILA	<i>In light of information that indicates a declining golden eagle population (USFWS 2009) and the presence of three active golden eagle nests and multiple inactive golden eagle nests in the Project area, as well as guidance within the BLM Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act Instruction Memorandum No. 2010-156 (Eagle IM) (BLM 2010a), we recommend that BLM provide additional analysis of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the Project and interconnected wind projects on the golden eagle population on the Bums District. Please include information in the FEIS regarding how the Project will avoid and minimize impacts, implement monitoring and adaptive management measures, and provide conservation measures that support the goal of stable or increasing golden eagle breeding populations.</i>	See the response to Comment 155.24.
155.28	WILA	<i>In the absence of incorporating the measures listed below, we believe the Project will require the development of an alternative Project design to avoid take of golden eagles.</i>	See the response to Comment 155.24.
155.29	WILA	<i>To reduce the likelihood of golden eagle take and to minimize Project impacts to golden eagles we recommend the following measures be included in the development of the Project and conditions of any future ROW permit: 1. Minimize the potential for resident golden eagle collisions by locating individual Project wind turbines a sufficient distance from golden eagle nest sites. Based on the best information available to us, a radius of a minimum of six miles from a golden eagle nest to the nearest turbine will likely avoid take of adult golden eagles associated with that nest. Any wind turbines proposed closer than six miles to golden eagle nests should not be constructed until specific golden eagle studies have been implemented that define areas where no golden eagle use occurs (see studies in #2, below). These golden eagle specific data should then be integrated into a protective turbine location "micrositing" design where turbines within six miles of a golden eagle nest are only sited in areas determined to be golden eagle non-use locations:</i>	See response to comment 155.24.
155.30	WILA	<i>To reduce the likelihood of golden eagle take and to minimize Project impacts to golden eagles we recommend the following measures be included in the development of the Project and conditions of any future ROW permit:2. Conduct site specific studies to help define areas of use and non-use by golden eagles including: • Complete nest surveys within six miles of the Project location; • Conduct observation-post studies to observe the behavior of the adults (if present) without disturbing nesting behavior. These studies collect information on territory occupancy, productivity, fledging success, foraging and winter habitat and other information per the Interim Golden Eagle Inventory and Monitoring Protocols (Pagel et al. 2010); and • Satellite telemetry of nesting golden eagles within six miles of Project location.</i>	See the response to Comment 46.09.
155.31	WILA	<i>To reduce the likelihood of golden eagle take and to minimize Project impacts to golden eagles we recommend the following measures be included in the development of the Project and conditions of any future ROW permit:3. Develop a Project construction plan that fully integrates avoidance of golden eagle disturbance during construction activities by implementing concurrent protective timing windows and distance buffers during sensitive nesting and fledging activities. • Distance and timing: Construction and maintenance activities between January 1 and July 15 should not be conducted within 1 mile of an active nest (or Y:z mile if not line-of-sight), unless site specific surveys indicate otherwise.</i>	See the response to Comment 46.09.
155.32	WILA	<i>It is possible that a programmatic permit issued by the Service when it becomes available, would include as permit conditions many of the recommendations for monitoring, adaptive management and conservation actions described below: 1. Develop and implement a golden eagle monitoring plan (including monitoring of Project related golden eagle mortality, golden eagle territory occupancy, nest success, and productivity) over the life of the Project to ensure all golden eagles injured or killed by wind turbines or other impacts to golden eagles are immediately identified and reported. 2. Develop and implement an adaptive management plan</i>	See the response to Comment 46.09.

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		<p>to address new information that is obtained during operation of the Project, including all turbines, transmission, and roads, and connected wind projects that effectively address any identified problems. • Utilize turbine feathering and cut-in speeds of 5 m/sec to 6 m/sec at times of low wind speed to reduce bird (and bat) fatalities; • Lock rotors during daytime and at night during peak migration periods and peak presence of migrating birds and bats; • Specific commitment to integrate turbine operation curtailment (seasonally or permanently) into Project management; • Specific commitment to remove turbines if they are found to cause repeated mortalities of golden eagles; • Experimental procedures (e.g. blade painting for higher visibility); • Minimize lighting associated with the Project including: a) FAA visibility lighting of wind turbines should employ only strobed, strobe-like, or blinking incandescent lights, preferably with all lights illuminating simultaneously; and b) Keep lighting at both operation and maintenance facilities and substations located within 1/2 mile of the turbines to a minimum level by using motion or infrared light sensors and switches to keep lights off when not required, shield operation lights downward, and do not use high intensity, steady burning, bright lights; and • Commitment to implement future technology when available.</p>	
155.33	WILA	<p>...The local-area eagle population of concern in this case is the area encompassed by a circle 140 miles from the Project boundary, by definition (USFWS 2009). This is the area within which we would expect evaluations of the effects of this Project on eagles would take place. The following should guide any collaborative development of proposed conservation measures: • Ensure no net loss or an increase in golden eagles in the local-area population via: - Land acquisitions or easement purchases; - Nest site protection; - Habitat enhancement via: • .Restoration projects (e.g. Juniper removal in shrub-steppe systems that will enhance prey base); • Grassland restoration efforts with native grasslands; • Cheatgrass control programs; Nest platforms; • Nest enhancements; - Reduce electrocution mortality via partnering with utilities to implement APLIC standard retrofits of problem distribution lines; - Reduce losses to lead poisoning via: • Education program on lead poisoning; • Raptor rehabilitation centers; - Contribute to regional or population-wide monitoring and research on golden eagles and wind turbines to better inform management across the West.</p>	<p>For overall permit management, we would consider local-area population effects within the species-specific natal dispersal distances (43 miles for bald eagles, 140 miles for golden eagles). However, we believe it would be too burdensome to ask the Applicant to provide data on that large a scale. We have found, in implementing the resource-recovery permit for take of inactive golden eagle nests (50 CFR 22.25), that data within a 10-mile radius of the nest provides us with adequate information to evaluate many of the factors noted above. Also see response to comment 46.09 regarding development of an ABPP/ECP.</p>
155.34	WILA	<p>The DEIS did not provide fatality estimates for either of the transmission line alternatives due to the lack of existing studies on injury and death to passerines and raptors. We recommend that the Project and FEIS address migratory bird impacts from transmission lines. We recommend that any ROW permit be conditioned with the following requirements: • Develop an Avian and Bat Protection Plan consistent with the Service "white paper" titled Consideration/or Avian and Bat Protection Plans (FWS 2010). • Complete preconstruction nesting bird surveys for all alternatives within and outside the nesting season utilizing the Service's guidance; • Implement appropriate buffers for active nests based upon species ecology; • Where practicable, implement timing restrictions on habitat (tree and shrub) removal to avoid the migratory bird nesting season; and • Where practicable, implement timing restrictions on activities that could cause disturbance or disruption of migratory bird brooding periods (April 1 to July 15).</p>	<p>See the response to Comment 155.24.</p>
155.35	WILA	<p>The "Cumulative Effects" section of the DEIS (page 3.19-13 to -21) seems to be more of a restatement of previous sections and does not adequately address the potential cumulative impacts resulting from the Project due to four additional wind projects identified in the DEIS that would not be linked to transmission but for the transmission line proposed in Alternatives B and C.</p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.194.</p>
155.36	WILA	<p>The DEIS does not address cumulative effects to Service trust resources resulting from: increased vehicle traffic, human disturbance, loss of habitat connectivity, habitat avoidance due to permanent structures, effects of further build-out due to the Project, and additional access road construction. This section should discuss qualitatively and quantitatively the interrelated, interdependent, and cumulative impacts that are likely to occur as a result of the Project.</p>	<p>See the response to Comment 76.194.</p>

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155.37	WILA	<i>The assessment of cumulative impacts should include habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation, displacement and mortality data, and an estimation of the additional effect of the four new proposed wind projects on sage-grouse and golden eagle. Specific cumulative impact evaluation should be conducted on a limited number of key species including but not limited to golden eagle and sage-grouse that are expected to be adversely affected by additional mortality or are highly sensitive to disturbances or habitat loss. We recommend that BLM include a more specific assessment of cumulative impacts on shrub-steppe habitat and associated species.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.194.
155.38	WILA	<i>...Impacts to sage-grouse and golden eagle resulting from the proposed Project are significant, and we anticipate that cumulative effects to sage-grouse and golden eagles will be significantly greater with the additional wind projects that use the Project's transmission capacity. Therefore the Service recommends the No Action Alternative.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.13 regarding the ODFW strategy, 76.194 regarding cumulative effects to wildlife and 155.24 relative to development of an ABPP/ECP.
155.39	WILA	<i>Additionally, the proposed mitigation is inadequate to ameliorate the Project's adverse effects to sage-grouse. Should BLM decide to permit the Project as proposed, we believe that the impacts to Category 1 and 2 sage-grouse habitat, including impacts to the Little Kiger lek and sage grouse nesting and brood-rearing habitat, will negatively affect the conservation status and potential for recovery of sage-grouse.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
155.40	WILA	<i>We are concerned that BLM and the applicant have not conducted necessary surveys and analysis to assess Project impacts on golden eagles and have not included avoidance, adaptive management, and conservation measures that are consistent with the goal of maintaining a stable or increasing breeding golden eagle population as identified in the Eagle Permit Final Rule, BLM's Eagle Instruction Memorandum, and Executive Order 13186. Finally, the assessment of cumulative effects from the Project's Connected activities are not fully addressed in the DEIS.</i>	See the response to Comment 46.09.
156.01	VIS	<i>425-foot tall turbines associated with this project would be visible along the Steens Loop Road at Fishlake Campground, Whorehouse Meadows, the Kiger Gorge overlook, and along the ridgeline above Mann Lake and the Alvord Desert... Approval of the ROW will assure the installation of these towers negatively impacting the scenic beauty along the Steens Loop Road & viewpoints. The night sky will be tarnished by the tower lights. The public should have been made aware of this.</i>	See the responses to Comments 79.006 and 76.139 relative to the night sky.
156.02	WIL	<i>The EIS did not fully consider the impact the power lines, roads, towers, and laydown areas will have on migratory & non-migratory birds.</i>	BLM is aware of the effects of the Project on birds, and considered the effects during analysis in DEIS Section 3.5 (Wildlife). The potential effects of transmission lines on wildlife, including birds specifically, was provided in the DEIS Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife). Additional survey data have been made available to the agencies and incorporated into the FEIS. A table (Table 3.5-1) was added to the FEIS to show all wildlife surveys that were conducted. Surveys conducted after the DEIS was produced are as follows: aerial raptor nest surveys for the Alternative C - North Route (report dated August 11, 2010), avian use surveys for the Alternative B - West Route (report dated October 11, 2010) and Alternative C - North Route (report dated October 4, 2010), special status wildlife surveys for the Alternative C - North Route (report dated August 31, 2010), special status plants for the Alternative C - North Route (report dated September 8, 2010), small plot avian use for the Alternative B - West Route (report dated August 18, 2010), and habitat mapping for the Alternative C - North Route (report dated November 02, 2010).
156.03	GEN2	<i>For these reasons & more we strongly recommend the "No Action" Alternative A. No construction of roads or power lines should be allowed through this area.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
157.01	GEN2	<i>...the BLM proposes the disruptions of the migration of many different species of birds that frequent the refuge. Not only birds, but wildlife...Why must technology take precedence over wildlife? Technology can be adapted and often becomes obsolete, not WILDLIFE!!! Find another place for your transmission lines and wires.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.

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158.01	REQ	<i>The Burns Paiute Tribe therefore in addition to providing our comments related to the draft EIS, would like to take this opportunity to request initiation of dialogue with the appropriate agency and/or agencies in concert with the Project for the foregoing reasons, Alternative C meets the criteria and objectives for ROW avoidance areas designated in the Three Rivers RMP, and is therefore consistent with the planners, Columbia Energy Partners, regarding mitigation of the negative impacts the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line Project will have for the Burns Paiute Tribe.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
158.02	WIL	<i>The 1.9 mile access road to the Echanis site along Mud Creek is particularly disconcerting from a water quality and a redband health perspective. The proposed road veers within 6 ft of Mud Creek in some places, and there doesn't seem to be an alternative route because of the narrow canyon space available. Spawning habitat for redband in Mud Creek is likely at or below this elevation, and increased sedimentation in spawning areas will have deleterious effects on reproductive success. Spawning areas, spawning attendance, and habitat connectivity for the Mud Creek spawning population to alternate spawning locations should be further investigated before access road construction begins.</i>	DEIS Appendix A, starting on Page A-17, detailed erosion and sediment control measures that would be used to reduce the impacts of road construction to Water Resources and Floodplains. The FEIS was updated to reflect methods for stream crossings (bottomless arch culverts), as was previously discussed in DEIS Section 3.2 (Water Resources). As now described in Section 3.5.3.2 (Wildlife), Improvement and construction of the access road to the Echanis Project site would be confined to a narrow canyon along Mud Creek for 2.5 miles where the road would be located 6 to 75 feet from the channel. Run-off from the access road would have the potential to contribute to additional sedimentation of Mud Creek, causing clogged gills of fish, reduced oxygen in the stream, formation of additional sandbars, and filling-in of coarse substrate. As required by the Echanis Project's Conditional Use Permit from Harney County, facilities would be designed to operate so as to minimize erosion and disturbance to natural drainages. The Applicant would be required to obtain a NPDES 1200-C permit from ODEQ prior to commencement of construction. This would require the Applicant to maintain any and all stormwater, flood control and drainage facilities required by that permit in a safe condition, in good repair, and in a manner capable of being operated as designed. Affects to redband trout were discussed in Section 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife) of the DEIS.
158.03	LND	<i>From the brief description of the potential increased cattle impacts, it appears that methods to exclude cattle from concern areas needs further planning.</i>	Methods to be used to exclude cattle from work areas and staging areas will be developed during the final Project design.
158.04	WIL	<i>The EIS does not address or propose mitigation for the displacement of wildlife as a result of this fragmentation and increased disturbance of over 28 miles of new, improved, or unimproved overland access (26.07 miles). Displacement from usable habitat resulting from motor vehicle use is the equivalent to habitat lost. After project completion the continued use and travel by landowners and recreationist's will continue to result in displacement, mortality, and habitat fragmentation.</i>	See the response to Comment 39.02.
158.05	WIL	<i>The result of the collision of an individual in spring and summer has a direct impact on the fecundity of that individual. Those already with young will have reduced chances of being recruited to the breeding population. Though this effect is measurable only with intensive monitoring and man power, it is an effect that should be addressed and mitigated for.</i>	We acknowledge that the Proposed Action would change the landscape, and cause wildlife mortality where the transmission line crosses the MNWR. Under existing regulations, projects such as this can only be approved if they are determined to contribute to the achievement of MNWR purposes or National Wildlife Refuge System mission. The MNWR will utilize available information to determine the Project's appropriateness and compatibility. For portions of the transmission line occurring on MNWR lands, mortality predictions and appropriate mitigation based upon the best scientific protocols available must be completed prior to a ROW being granted. Additionally, through mitigation proposed by the TAC, measures would be implemented to minimize bird mortality and offset any losses that occur. The Applicant is working with the USFWS on an Avian and Bat Protection Plan (ABPP) for the Echanis Project site, and for the transmission line. The TAC, once convened, would discuss and implement measures to alleviate concerns about the Project impacts to birds. A finalized ABPP, with USFWS concurrence, would be necessary before a Notice to Proceed can be issued to the Applicant.
158.06	WILT	<i>The over arching assessment is that elk and deer avoid roads. With depressed levels of mule deer in the Steens Management Unit (~4,000 individuals under objective) in an area once known for trophy mule deer, this project will only add one more hurdle for the state to meet their management objective of 11,000 deer with a 25:100 buck to doe ratio.</i>	See the response to Comment 151.02.

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158.07	WILT	<i>With little human presence in this area it is likely that the effects to bighorn sheep will be minimal. However, with the presence of the access road the potential for disturbance exist. With the amount of visitors to the Steens it is recommended that the access road be closed and monitored for use. BPT recommends avoiding this area during spring lambing when possible to reduce disturbance to bighorn sheep.</i>	Access into the Echanis Project site, which is on private land, and that part of bighorn sheep habitat on private land, would be regulated by the private landowners and the Applicant. The area around the wind farm is usually not accessible during lambing season. Lambing most likely occurs to the north where snow is less likely to occur. Disturbance from workers at the Echanis Project site would keep sheep from using the top of the east rim. The sheep would use the east face to avoid the disturbance.
158.08	WILA	<i>the EIS does not address other impacts associated with the transmission line. Linear right of ways (transmission lines and roads) benefits both ravens and raptors. These species, predators on sage-grouse and sage-grouse nests, are attracted to these manmade features over adjacent habitat due to increase food sources (carrion) and/or superior perch sites. Transmission lines have been documented to negatively impact sage-grouse populations by increasing predation rates through attracting predators to perch sites (Nielsen). Although the Project addresses building transmission lines with perch deterrents, it is unrealistic to expect any deterrent to completely prevent raptor or corvid perching, especially in relative open landscape that dominates the Project. These perch limited habitats include sage-brush, grassland, and agricultural lands. Deterrents discourage perching but do not prevent perching entirely. The BPT suggest that deterrents be used on all transmission line structures to reduce perching by raptors and corvids, and that an annual maintenance and replacement budget be allocated to maintain deterrents. In order for perch deterrents to successfully reduce perching and thus predation, continued maintenance and replacement must occur throughout the life of the transmission line.</i>	The tower structures were shown in Figures 2.0-1, 2.0-2, 2.0-3, and 2.0-4 in the DEIS. In addition, a detailed typical diagram of the powerline crossarms showing their size, shape, and other details of the powerpoles, as well as details of associated structures necessary is included for reference. Please see the response to Comment 44.03 for more about perch deterrents.
158.09	WILA	<i>The transmission line proposed route for all alternatives runs ~1.85- 2.0 miles from the Little Kiger Lek. This is much closer than the 3.0 miles that ODFW recommends. However, BPT agrees that the topography in this area alleviates much of the concern with the proximity of the transmission line to the Lek site.</i>	See the response to Comment 155.13.
158.10	VEG	<i>The EIS references a noxious weed control plan or strategy, but no plan or strategy exists in the document. Addressing the effort to be put forth in containing and limiting the spread of invasive and noxious weeds along the right of way is of critical importance. The BPT does not believe that weed control in the spring only is adequate to address this issue. Weeds emerge at different times of the year. By only focusing efforts along the ROW in the spring many species, such as kochia will be missed on a yearly basis, enabling a new invasion to occur. Based on BPT's experience with weed control and restoration, BPT recommends at a minimum two control efforts; spring, and July/August.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.156. A Draft Noxious Weed Management Plan is included in Appendix F of the FEIS.
158.11	CUL	<i>From the review of the draft Environmental impact statement: it is apparent that any option in moving forward with the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line Project will have some level of negative effect to the cultural and spiritual integrity of the Steens Mountain and its viewshed. The Burns Paiute Tribe continues to anticipate a copy of the cultural resource inventory report and associated site forms for the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line Project.</i>	Visual simulations of the proposed turbines and associated powerline have been put together by the BLM 3rd-party contractor for this Project, Cardno ENTRIX. These examples were shown at public meetings in Burns and Bend in September 2010. Except from the Mann Lake area on the east side of Steens Mountain, the topography of Steens Mountain, and location of the turbines make the turbines almost unnoticeable from key vantage points such as Fish Lake, Kiger Overlook, and the East Steens Overlook, places where many visitors to the mountain stop to view the expanses of southeastern Oregon. Farther away from the mountain in locations such as Diamond Valley, Frenchglen, Fields, the Narrows, and the Crane-Princeton area, the turbines would be unnoticeable. The powerline, the main focus of the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line Project Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), would follow existing powerlines and roads along some of the proposed and alternative routes. Where the routes were not in areas where human intrusions existed, its color and height would be such that it would fade from view if more than 1 mile away. The predominant view of Steens Mountain to people living in the Harney Basin, including Burns Paiute Tribal members, is from the north and west where topography and the Project location would mostly screen it from view. Limited exposure to views of wind turbines atop the northern end of Steens Mountain would be seen by people viewing the mountain from the east. The East Steens area is very sparsely populated.

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			East Steens Road is a county road, and primarily used by ranchers and tourists. BLM provided Burns Paiute Tribe with copies of the cultural resource inventory reports and site forms for the initial inventories. BLM is also working with the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office and other agencies to develop a Programmatic Agreement that would insure important cultural properties are identified, inventoried and protected prior to commencement of construction of any project components. Under the terms of the agreement BLM would consult with the Tribe and other agencies if additional cultural resources are discovered prior to and during construction. The Burns Paiute Tribe approved the Programmatic Agreement on 9/14/11.
159.01	EIS	<i>I could not find the Malheur Refuge comments and the relevant information and data related to the impacts of the North Steens 230 Volt Transmission Line on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. I have asked the Refuge for this information so that my comments could address the important aspects of the Transmission Line on the Refuge, but there has been no response. The statement of the Refuge Wildlife Biologist at our SMAC meeting last week indicates that the Refuge was not provided the data and information they need for evaluating the impacts. This is an exceptionally serious problem with the Draft EIS.</i>	DEIS Section 3.6 (Land Uses - Grazing and Realty) included information describing the potential effects of Alternative B (including the two Alternative B route options) on the MNWR. DEIS Section 3.5 (Fish, Wildlife and Special Status Animal Species) was updated with new wildlife survey data that was not available at the time that the DEIS was prepared.
159.02	GEN2	<i>The N. Steens 230 Volt Transmission Line is incompatible with the purpose and legislation of the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area. This Draft EIS is incomplete... I urge BLM to not approve/permit the North Steens 230 Volt Transmission Line and the windmills associated with it.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
161.01	WILA	<i>The wildlife section fails to identify impacts to waterfowl, shorebirds and other aquatic birds that frequent the Diamond Valley, Dry Lake and adjacent areas.</i>	See the responses to Comments 44.02 and 156.02 addressing new surveys completed.
161.02	WILA	<i>...wetlands at Buena Vista and Benson Pond (both on MNWR) are attractive to aquatic birds and the issue isn't only Special Status Species such as the white-faced ibis and trumpeter swans.</i>	See the response to Comment 44.02.
161.03	WILA	<i>Burying the powerline in the Grain Camp area where it crosses the refuge is excellent mitigation but the remainder that is not buried will still be a hazard to low flying birds.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
161.04	WILA	<i>Powerline marker...are useful but not effective during heavy fog...Also, it is not a practical alternative in the Dry Lake area for Alt C because those birds leaving Dry Lake go all different directions.</i>	Alternative C - North Route would be located at least 3 miles east of Dry Lake, which would reduce the possibility that waterfowl would collide with the transmission line, except during a dense fog. Two existing distribution powerlines, although shorter than the proposed transmission line, are within 0.5 mile and 1.5 miles from Dry Lake and are configured with smaller and closer together conductors that would be more problematic in a dense fog. The BLM has no knowledge about these lines causing avian mortality around the Dry Lake area.
161.05	ACK	<i>.... I hope you select a BLM representative that cares about the natural resources. The desire to be buddies with contractors should not be the primary concern of the BLM representative. Hopefully this will not be a state office employee.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
162.01	EIS	<i>The DEIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess all environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment.</i>	The DEIS was prepared meeting the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQs) Guidelines, the BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (H-1790-1), Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), Clean Water Act, or applicable federal regulations, applicable Oregon State Law, and other regulations. It also was carefully reviewed by the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to ensure that the DEIS met applicable agency requirements. The DEIS evaluated the No Action Alternative, a western route with two options (Alternative B), and a northern route (Alternative C). In addition, Section 2 of the DEIS considered several other options that were not considered to warrant detailed analysis in the remainder of the EIS. Thus, the DEIS was deemed to be sufficient under this requirements.
162.02	P&N	<i>The DEIS does not sufficiently support with facts and analysis the underlying need of the Project.</i>	See the responses to Comments 76.171 and 76.051, regarding BLM's Purpose and Need and the range of alternatives.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
162.03	WILS	<i>The DEIS does not categorize and disclose Greater Sage-Grouse habitat according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's Habitat Management Plan</i>	The categorization of greater sage-grouse core and low density areas in the Project areas, as described in the ODFW GIS data (July 2011) and the "Greater Sage-grouse Conservation and Assessment Strategy for Oregon" (Hagen 2011a), have been updated and expanded upon in the FEIS in Sections 3.5.2.3 (Wildlife) and 3.16.2.5 (Cumulative Effects - Wildlife).
162.04	VIS	<i>The DEIS does not sufficiently establish that impacts to visual resources are not significant.</i>	The measure of impacts to visual resources is described by the BLM in terms of a contrast rating. Several KOPs, as noted in Section 3.9 (Aesthetics and Visual), have a contrast rating that ranges from low to high. This section never says that impacts to visual resources would be "not significant."
162.05	NOI	<i>The DEIS does not sufficiently analyze and disclose noise impacts from the West Ridge and East Ridge Wind Energy Projects.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.191.
162.06	WSA	<i>The DEIS does not sufficiently disclose which mitigation measures minimize adverse impacts to wilderness values.</i>	DEIS Section 3.13.3 provided a description about the effects to wilderness values. As a result of public comments, several potential mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce impacts to Visual Resources, Recreation, Wilderness, WSAs, WSRs, and LWCs. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have authority to implement mitigation measures on private lands.
162.07	LND	<i>The DEIS inconsistently links land use plans, laws, regulations, policies, permits, approvals and consultations requirements to the Project.</i>	No specific inconsistencies were noted by the commenter. However, 40 CFR 1502.16(c) and 40 CFR 1506.2(d) requires an EIS to identify or reference any germane land use planning or zoning statutes or requirements; 40 CFR 1502.25(b) requires a list of all Federal permits, licenses and other entitlements that must be obtained in implementing the proposal. BLM Handbook H-1790-1 (page 93) requires an explanation of the relationship of the proposed action to BLM policies, plans and programs. See Section 1.7 (Conformance with Land Use Plans, Laws, Regulations and Policies). In addition, please see Section XX (Land Uses) for more information.
162.08	VIS	<i>The DEIS inconsistently analyzes cumulative effects to visual resources and socioeconomic impacts.</i>	No specific inconsistencies were noted by the commenter. The methods used to analyze cumulative effects to visual resources and socioeconomic impacts was consistent with BLM standards and guidelines. See Section 3.19 of the DEIS for discussions on the respective methods to analyze cumulative effects to visual resources and socioeconomic impacts.
162.09	ECO	<i>The DEIS inconsistently analyzes cumulative effects to visual resources and socioeconomic impacts.</i>	No specific inconsistencies were noted by the commenter. All cumulative effects for each of the technical resource areas were evaluated based upon the amount and type of information that was available, and consistent with professional practices for conducting those analyses. Each technical specialist used the available data and appropriate methodologies to evaluate the cumulative effects of the proposed Project and other potential projects (i.e., reasonably foreseeable future actions). Methods used for one technical area often are inappropriate for other technical areas and, thus, the same analysis cannot be conducted across disciplines.
162.10	VEG	<i>The DEIS does not sufficiently disclose the control strategy for noxious weeds that may become established as a result of the project.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.156. A Draft Noxious Weed Management Plan is included in Appendix F of the FEIS.
162.11	VIS	<i>There are numerous errors and inconsistencies throughout the tables and text of the visual resource analysis.</i>	The inconsistencies have been identified and the text of the FEIS was modified to include these corrections.
162.12	P&N	<i>We recommend the FEIS include additional facts and analysis which support how the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line and the connected Echanis Wind Energy Project will "reduce constraints in existing power generation and transmission infrastructure to meet current and future energy demands. "We are interested in how producing"...energy without capacity..." (DEIS, 3.18-4) reduces constraints to meet current and figure energy demands...</i>	The second paragraph in DEIS Section 3.18.3.2 (Energy) was revised to read: "The Echanis Wind Energy Project, and the other potential wind energy generation projects being proposed in the Project Area, would be different from most of the wind energy projects in Oregon currently located along the Columbia River Gorge. The Echanis Project and the other possible North Steens wind energy projects would produce peak power during winter months, which would complement the Columbia Gorge projects and potentially benefit the balancing required by BPA."
162.13	WAT	<i>Where potential impacts to impaired water bodies are identified, the FEIS should disclosed the specific actions which will be taken to avoid, mitigate and/or minimize the impacts. General BMPs do not necessarily mitigate specifically identified impacts.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.124.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
162.14	AIR	<i>We recommend that the FEIS include additional information on how The Climate Registry General Reporting Protocol, Version 1.1 was used to accurately estimate GHG offsets from the Echanis Wind Energy Project. Key issues may include, but are not limited to: the unique mix of PNW power generating sources; factors to be considered when power is sold to another utility (E.g., South California Edison); and, the current and future state of "firm capacity" and "balancing reserves" to create flexibility for wind energy. Please disclose how and whether these - or other pertinent - issues were accounted for in determining the DEIS's GHG emissions factor of 926 lb/MW-hr CO2 eqv. Also, discuss the relative certainty associated with the conclusions stated in DEIS section 3.16.3.1</i>	The cited emission factor is from the most recent (2008) emissions factors published by the South Coast Air Quality Management District and EPA. These factors were relied upon by BLM to perform the GHG analysis. Assessing the veracity of cited official information developed by a third party, i.e., Climate Registry (also USEPA for the GWPs), is beyond the scope of this EIS.
162.15	WILA	<i>The DEIS does not disclose the amount of the location of Category 2 habitat that would be impacted.</i>	See the response to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
162.16	WILA	<i>... We are unsure whether the project would impact Category 1 habitat (sage grouse)</i>	See the response to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
162.17	WILA	<i>We recommend that the FEIS categorize and disclose the wildlife habitat in the project area according to ODFW's Habitat Mitigation Policy. ODFW's "Recommendations for greater sage grouse habitat classification under Oregon department of fish and wildlife's fish and wildlife habitat mitigation policy" provides specific suggestions for categorizing Greater Sage Grouse habitat.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.15 and 162.03.
162.18	NOI	<i>The noise analysis for the East and West Ridge Wind Energy Projects is not sufficient...</i>	See the response to Comment 76.191.
162.19	NOI	<i>We recommend that the FEIS disclose a quantitative estimate, similar to the estimate for Echanis and Mann Lake Campground, of the noise impacts from the East and West Ridge Wind Energy Projects on Fish Lake Campground.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.191.
162.20	NOI	<i>We recommend the FEIS discuss how a 31 to 38 dBA increased noise level at Mann Lake Campground is a "slight increase in noise levels." According to the DEIS, a "...10dBA change is subjectively heard as approximately a doubling of loudness and can cause an adverse response." (DEIS< 3.17-2 from EPA< Information on Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety, 1974). Disclosing noise impacts in comparative form (e.g., a microwave in a quiet room) may be an effective way of sharply defining the issues for the public and the decision maker.</i>	See the response to Comment 75.11. Section 3.17.1.1 (Noise) of the DEIS provided examples of typical noise levels for a quiet room, computer, refrigerator, forced air heating system, microwave, and a clothes dryer. It should also be noted that information pertaining to noise generated by the Echanis wind turbines has been updated and integrated into sections 3.7, 3.13, and 3.17. It is anticipated that noise impacts would be less than those anticipated in the DEIS.
162.21	NOI	<i>New wind turbine technology may present an opportunity to mitigate specifically identified noise impacts. See the Depart of Energy's Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy website for more information on the "High Efficiency Shrouded Wind Turbine(S)"</i>	Additional information supplied by CEP and the manufacturer (Siemens) has been supplied to the BLM and reviewed. The amount of noise generated by the proposed model is less than the range originally estimated in the DEIS. Anticipated noise effects, therefore, particularly as they apply to Recreation and Wilderness are less than originally anticipated.
162.22	NOI	<i>We recommend that the FEIS disclose how mitigation measures for the wilderness values minimize specifically identified effects. Please discuss the effectiveness of relevant mitigation measures - such as found in the Harney County Conditional Use Permit - for the following identified effects...1) Acres with view of project facilities, as identified in Table 3.19-5, and 2) Effects to opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation and sense of solitude. We are particularly interested in which specific mitigation measures minimize noise effects.</i>	Potential permanent and temporary noise and vibrations effects from construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Action and alternatives are described in DEIS Section 3.17.3 (Noise). Project Design Features and Best Management Practices (see Section 2 and Appendix A) would be implemented to mitigate effects. DEIS Section 3.17.3.5 detailed the residual effects expected after mitigation. As a result of public comments, several potential mitigation measures have been proposed to reduce impacts to Visual Resources, Recreation, Wilderness, WSAs, WSRs, and LWCs. To the extent that these measures apply to private land, the BLM does not have authority to implement mitigation measures on private lands. Effects will also be reduced through the implementation of PDFs and BMPs, are proposed. Additional information pertaining to noise generated by wind turbines was obtained from CEP and reviewed by the BLM. Through the use of the anticipated wind turbine model, noise effects would be less than what was anticipated in the DEIS.
162.23	REG	<i>We recommend that the FEIS's version of Section 1.7 include additional information on the following issues... 1)The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act should not be listed as a sub-section of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. We recommend the BGEPA be addressed in a separate sub-section.</i>	Section 1.7 (Introduction) was revised to include a separate section (Section 1.7.2.6) about the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

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162.24	REG	<i>We recommend that the FEIS's version of Section 1.7 include additional information on the following issues... 2) Table 1.1-1 notes that the USFWS requirement for the project is, "A Programmatic or Individual Incidental Take Permit for bald or golden eagles pursuant to the BGEPA (p 1.8-20). USFWS is not currently issuing incidental take permits for bald and golden eagles. Please describe how this project will meet BGEPA requirements. We are aware of BLM's instructional memorandum to require Avian Protection Plans. If such a plan is required for this project, we recommend that the Avian Protection Plan addresses the impacts of the wind energy project(s) as well as transmission lines.</i>	See the responses to Comments 155.24 and 155.25.
162.25	REG	<i>We recommend that the FEIS's version of Section 1.7 include additional information on the following issues... 3) According to the DEIS, it is illegal to "take" migratory birds, and, "Activities associated with the construction and operation of the proposed transmission line project will be subject to the provisions of the MBTA." (DEIS p. 1.8-19). Please disclose the specific mitigation measures or project design features for this Project which ensure compliance with MBTA provisions.</i>	See the responses to Comments 46.09, 155.24 and 155.25.
162.26	REG	<i>We recommend that the FEIS's version of Section 1.7 include additional information on the following issues... 4) Discuss the relationship, if any, between 43 CFR 2804.26 and Section 122(a) of the Steen's Act. We are unclear how the project is consistent with Section 122(a), which states that "Development on public and private lands within the boundaries of the CMPA which is different from the current character and uses of the lands is inconsistent with the purpose of this Act." In particular, it is not clear that the intended development is no different from the current character and use of the land and therefore consistent with the Steens Act. Please provide an explanation of this issue.</i>	43 CFR 2804.26 states, "BLM may deny an application if: (1) the proposed use is inconsistent with the purpose for which BLM manages the public lands described in the application; (2) The proposed use would not be in the public interest; (3) You are not qualified to hold a grant; (4) Issuing the grant would be inconsistent with the Act, other laws or these or other regulations; (5) You do not have or cannot demonstrate the technical or financial capability to construct the project or operate facilities within the right-of-way; or (6) You do not adequately comply with the deficiency notice ... or with any BLM requests for additional information needed to process the application." The BLM will certainly apply the criteria in 43 CFR 2804.26 when making a final decision. At the outset, BLM notes that Congress, through the Energy Policy Act of 2005, has stated the importance of renewable energy generation on lands including public lands. Accordingly Congress has found a general public interest in BLM's authorizing renewable energy development on some public land locations. Section 122 (a) of the Steens Act states, "Development on public and private lands within the boundaries of the Cooperative Management and Protection area which is different from the current character and uses of the lands is inconsistent with the purposes of this Act." The Steens Act goes on to say under Section 122 (d), "Nothing in this Act is intended to affect rights or interests in real property or supersede State law". There are no facilities proposed on public lands within the Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection area; therefore, the current character and uses of public lands would not be directly affected.
162.27	REG	<i>We recommend that the FEIS's version of Section 1.7 include additional information on the following issues... 5) Because the manager of the MNWR must make a decision to grant a ROW across the refuge that contradicts 340 FW 3.3, "It is the policy of the Service to discourage the type of uses embodied in ROW requests." we believe it is especially important for the FEIS to sufficiently disclose how granting the ROW for the N. Steens Transmission Line would contribute, "...to the achievement of the national wildlife refuge purposes or the National Wildlife Refuge System mission" (50 CFR 29.1). We recommend that the FEIS include data and analysis which more sufficiently discloses how compensatory mitigation measures on the refuge would ensure consistency with 50 CFR 29.1.</i>	A use such as a transmission line on a MNWR could only be approved if it were found to contribute to Refuge purposes or the National Wildlife Refuge System mission. The MNWR would use available information to determine if the Project meets the "contributes to" requirement. In addition, if the USFWS were to receive a rights-of-way application for crossing the Refuge utilizing the deeded right-of-way held by Harney County, that application would have to be reviewed and evaluated under a subsequent NEPA process, in addition to being evaluated under the other regulations and policies previously noted.
162.28	REG	<i>The FEIS should briefly discuss how granting a ROW permit though an avoidance area doesn't not require an RMP amendment.</i>	The rationale for not requiring an RMP amendment was presented in Section 3.12.3.4 (Wild Horses and Burros). Because the Kiger Mustang ACEC is designated as a right-of-way avoidance area in the Three Rivers RMP, a right-of-way request can only be granted if the proposed use is compatible with the objectives of the ACEC and no feasible alternative exists.

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162.29	VIS	<i>...significant adverse impacts to scenic resource and values identified as significant or important in local land use plans, tribal land use management plans and federal land management plans for any lands located within the analysis area described in the project order should be avoided or mitigated.</i>	Best management practices (BMPs) and project design features that would minimize impacts were discussed in Section 2.0 (Project Description) and Appendix A of the DEIS. Several of these measures are derived from, or are similar to, measures developed by the Applicant during the Harney County land development review process, as noted in Section 3.6 (Land Use). The level of Project analysis conducted for visual resources was done within federal guidelines, as expressed in BLM's VRM manual. This analysis has the most detailed requirements that extend beyond federal, tribal, and state requirements. Also see response to comment 162.30 regarding conformance to plans, regulations and policies.
162.30	VIS	<i>We recommend that the FEIS summarize and disclose how the Echanis, East Ridge, West Ridge and Riddle Mtn. Wind Energy Projects are consistent with relevant specific components of the Harney County Comprehensive Plan, Oregon's "Goal 5" rules and "General Standards for Siting Facilities" (OAR 345-022-000). Consistency with the relevant specific aspects of the above plan, rules and general standard is an important step in establishing that the Project will not result in significant adverse impacts to scenic resources and values.</i>	A description of the conformance of the Project with various land use plans, laws, regulations, and policies was presented in Section 1.7 (Introduction) and Section 3.6.2.3 (Land Use) of the DEIS. Additional discussion about the Federal regulations and guidelines, as they pertain to the proposed Project, were presented in Section 3.9.1 (Aesthetics and Visual) of the DEIS.
162.31	CME	<i>We are concerned that the cumulative effects analysis deals with visual resources and socio-economic benefits inconsistently. Table 3.19-1 discloses project impacts to visual resources from the East Ridge, West Ridge, and Riddle Mountain Wind Energy Projects. Impacts to visual resources from the Echanis Wind Energy Project are accounted for elsewhere (eg the main body of the DEIS and Appendix D). Table 3.19-2 and Table 3.19-3; on the other hand, discloses socioeconomics and income effects from all four wind projects as well as the transmission line.</i>	See the response to comment 162.32.
162.32	CME	<i>We recommend that the cumulative effects section of the FEIS account for effect to resources consistently. If the cumulative socioeconomics effects of all four wind projects as well as the transmission line are disclosed in the cumulative effects section then, all other resources should be analyzed in the same manner. (See comment letter 162.31 for more info)</i>	All DEIS Section 3.19 (Cumulative Effects) resource subsections were organized using the same subheadings and methods of analysis, including Social and Economic Values. The Cumulative Effects Section has been amended to include additional detail on impacts for all resource areas.
162.33	EIS	<i>We recommend that the FEIS identify the decisions to be made by USACE and BPA in the "Agency Decisions to be Made" Section.</i>	The text in the FEIS Section 1.4 (Introduction), first paragraph, was revised to clarify that the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would be making the decision about the granting, denying, or granting with stipulations of the ROW. A cooperating agency, such as USACE and BPA may adopt a lead agency's EIS and issue a Record of Decision (40 CFR 1506.3).
162.34	VEG	<i>The DEIS sufficiently accounts for the first aspect of noxious weed control - the rate of spread or introduction. The DEIS does not sufficiently disclose, however, the control strategy for noxious weeds that may become established as a result of the project.</i>	A Draft Noxious Weed Management Plan is included in Appendix F of the FEIS.
162.35	VEG	<i>State and Federal herbicide application guidelines - which are referenced in the DEIS - include a wealth of information on noxious weed ...management. DEIS should disclose the aspects which are most relevant to the requirement for the applicant to repair any measurable damage.</i>	A Draft Noxious Weed Management Plan is included in Appendix F of the FEIS. Also, see the response to Comment 76.156.
162.36	VEG	<i>We recommend Appendix A of the FEIS include additional information on specific control measures for any noxious weeds which are introduced and established as a result of the project. Clearly differentiate between those measures which are meant to minimize the risk of spread from those measures which are designed to repair measurable damage.</i>	Appendix A provides for (I assume it provides measure to limit spread)..... Specific treatments would be tailored to the weed species, site, size of infestation, etc. If the weeds occurred on BLM-administered lands, they would be treated in conformance with the Burns District Weed EA or subsequent NEPA analysis currently being undertaken as part of the Oregon Vegetation Management ROD. Also, see the response to Comment 76.156.
162.37	SOI	<i>...we believe the impacts disclosed in the DEIS may underestimate actual impacts to biological soil crusts.</i>	See the response to Comment 162.38.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response																
162.38	SOI	<i>We are concerned that the actual impacts to BSC may be larger due to the fact that the area impacted by overland travel is substantially larger...we recommend the FEIS estimate the area of BSCs which would be impacted by overland travel.</i>	<p>BSCs are present in the area, but the exact extent of BSCs in the Project Area is unknown. Assuming BSCs are present in all areas potentially disturbed by overland access roads, impacts to BSCs from overland vehicle access for each alternative would be as follows:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Alt B - West Route</td> <td>26.07 mi (25.28 acres)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Diamond Lane</td> <td>21.68 mi (21.02 acres)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hog Wallow Route</td> <td>26.38 mi (25.58 acres)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alt C - North Route</td> <td>25.05 mi (24.29 acres)</td> </tr> </table> <p>DEIS Section 3.1.3 (Geology) was revised to include these figures for potential effects on BSCs. It should be noted that this acreage is only a fraction of the acreage of the entire 150-foot ROW. ROW acreage is presented below.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Alt B - West Route</td> <td>525.32 acres</td> </tr> <tr> <td>South Diamond Lane</td> <td>514.10 acres</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hog Wallow Route</td> <td>528.77 acres</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Alt C - North Route</td> <td>835.85 acres</td> </tr> </table>	Alt B - West Route	26.07 mi (25.28 acres)	South Diamond Lane	21.68 mi (21.02 acres)	Hog Wallow Route	26.38 mi (25.58 acres)	Alt C - North Route	25.05 mi (24.29 acres)	Alt B - West Route	525.32 acres	South Diamond Lane	514.10 acres	Hog Wallow Route	528.77 acres	Alt C - North Route	835.85 acres
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162.39	EDT	<i>We recommend the FEIS change all reference to "Chapters." The document is actually organized according to "Sections".</i>	The inconsistencies have been identified and the text of the FEIS was modified to include these corrections.																
162.40	MIT	<i>We recommend that the FEIS eliminate general statements which are linked to specific impacts such as, "These potential effects would be minimized by the design features and best management practices described in Chapter 2." These general statements do not sufficiently disclose the effectiveness of mitigation measures for specific impacts.</i>	Appendix A of the DEIS lists PDFs and BMPs by technical resource area. Furthermore, residual effects after mitigation were discussed in each resource section of the DEIS. The FEIS was updated to reference the reader to specific mitigation measures in Appendix A, as they apply to the each resource.																
162.41	VIS	<i>Fix the following inconsistency. Table 3.9-2 lists the effect from the Echanis Wind Energy Project on KOP 46 Mann Lake as "moderate" while the text states the effect would be high - "...a high effect level would be experienced from KOP 46." (DEIS, D-11)</i>	This information was corrected in the FEIS. The effect for this KOP was listed as High.																
162.42	VIS	<i>Fix the following inconsistency. Table 2.1-9 states that KOP 61, "Steens Overlook", would have a low level effect from Echanis. Table D1-2 and the text in Appendix D (p D-18) states, "East Rim Overlook", also KOP 61, would have a "Moderate effect from Echanis".</i>	This information was corrected in the FEIS. The effect for this KOP was listed as Moderate.																
162.43	VIS	<i>Fix the following inconsistency. Table 2.1-9 states that Alternative B (West Route) would have a "Low Effect for all KOPs". Tables 3.9-3 and D1-3 both show that there would be a "Moderate" effect to visual resources at KOP 3 Diamond Lane from Alternative B (West Route)</i>	This information was corrected in the FEIS. The effect for this KOP was listed as Moderate.																
162.44	VIS	<i>Fix the following inconsistency. Table 2.1-9 and Table D 1-2 state that East Steens Look (KOP 48) would have a "moderate level of change". Text in Appendix D states that KOP 48 would have "Impact Level: Low". (DEIS, D-17)</i>	This information was corrected in the FEIS. The effect for this KOP was listed as Low.																
163.01	GEN1	<i>The county court supports either the West or North Route. It is our position that using the existing transmission route (west route between Burns and Fields) is the best from a public policy prospective. It prevents many miles of new line when compared to the North route; and serves the economic vitality of the community in the manner in which it creates a partnership with the wind developer and Harney Electric Co-o for long term maintenance of the existing line. This is particularly true in light of the deeded right of way across the Refuge held by Harney County. The Court will support the North if selected...but it would be our second choice.</i>	Preferences for transmission line routes are acknowledged. It should be noted that whether the transmission line is routed along the western routes currently evaluated in the DEIS or if the transmission line were routed on the deeded right-of-way across the MNWR held by Harney County, both of these routes would require an authorization to cross some portions of the Refuge. As noted previously, such a use on a National Wildlife Refuge could only be approved if it were found to contribute to MNWR purposes or the National Wildlife Refuge System mission. In addition, if the USFWS were to receive a right-of-way application for crossing the Refuge utilizing the deeded right-of-way held by Harney County, that application would have to be reviewed and evaluated under a subsequent NEPA process, in addition to being evaluated under the other regulations and policies previously noted.																

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
164.01	GEN1	<i>This energy industry will be a big shot in the arm for the County and everyone who lives here. It will have maybe as much as 100 workers building the power plants for maybe six years and a maintenance crew of between 30 to 50 steady high paying jobs for years to come. This is all new money coming into the County, the Hospital and all School Districts and not tax dollars. The industry will improve our economy...I strongly urge the support of all the people to bring in this much needed industry.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
165.01	VIS	<i>Please include a more complete explanation of the impact of the lights on the night sky.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.139.
165.02	VIS	<i>Please include a map of exactly where and under what conditions (clear skies, cloudy skies, fog) the lights will be visible.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.139.
165.03	VIS	<i>Please include the map presented to the SMAC by the USFWS showing that this area has the fewest night lights of anywhere in the lower 48 states.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.139. Additional information was added to the FEIS concerning the relative "darkness" of the Steens area from the relative absence of manmade light sources.
165.04	GEN2	<i>Please choose Alt A (no action) and don't disturb our unique night sky.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
166.01	GEN2	<i>I firmly oppose the building of any structures effecting the sanctity of pristine wilderness areas on or near Steens Mountain. Specifically, this is in opposition of building wind turbines on the north side of the Steens Mountain wilderness area including private ranches within the mountain range itself, southeast of Burns in Oregon.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
166.02	WHB	<i>...crosses through Federally protected wild horse herd management areas, such as Kiger and Riddle HMAs and would go against the Free-roaming Wild Horse and Burro Act of 1971.</i>	See the response to Comment 18.04.
174.01	GEN1	<i>Please build the transmission line. The country need both the power availability and to put Americans back to work.(this is at the beginning of the ONDA form letter which goes on to oppose the transmission line)</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
178.08	ACK	<i>Sustainable energy resources should be developed, so long as they do not cause harm to the existing wildlife and natural beauty of the area.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
180.01	GEN2	<i>I support Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative for the immediate future of Steens Mountain. The proposed transmission line and associated wind turbines are unacceptable in their impacts on wildlife and the landscape. The proposed route jeopardizes numerous wildlife species, including Greater sage grouse. Placing over 100 wind turbines on Steens Mountain will forever degrade the ecological integrity and unique beauty of this area.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
182.08	CME	<i>Insofar as I understand, the draft EIS only analyzes the impacts of one wind turbine site, but any decision must be made in the context of how it would affect the subsequent decisions about rights of way for the many more turbines in three additional sites that would be constructed for the convenience of people living over 1200 km to the southwest, in the rapacious energy sink of southern California.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.009.
182.09	CME	<i>It seems axiomatic that the BLM and USFWS should conduct a more inclusive EIS that will adequately analyze the many deleterious impacts if all four of the presumptive wind energy generation sites are developed.</i>	See the response to Comment 76.009.
189.08	ACK	<i>The only people that are for this project are the people that stand to gain from it financially. Most people that are for alternative power know that it is just wrong to put any industrial anything within this place. Aren't there already laws and protection forbidding the very project you are trying to put in? There are better places for this to be put in. Don't we want to have some things sacred on this planet? This world isn't getting any bigger...</i>	Comment acknowledged.
191.01	GEN1	<i>As a life-long Oregonian who has hiked, camped, climbed imbed, and birded extensively in Steens, Pueblo, and Trout Creek mountains, I support the No Action Alternative (Alternative A).</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
191.02	GEN1	<i>The proposed transmission towers and lines, turbines, roads, and substations create intolerable biological threats to multiple bird species and their habitats, including sage grouse, golden eagles, and other large birds. The draft EIS inadequately analyzes these threats.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
191.03	ACK	<i>I am appalled that the infrastructure will be clearly visible from the only designated wilderness in Oregon's Northern Basin & Range province.</i>	Comment acknowledged.
191.04	VIS	<i>The DEIS considers only the visual impacts of the transmission lines and the Echanis site. It fails miserably to consider the effects of the East and West ridge sites. The East Ridge in particular will be visible from several parts of the Wilderness, most especially the Kiger Gorge area. After Oregonians collaborated in good faith to establish the Steens Mountain Wilderness and CMA, it would be a slap in the face to impede the endless vistas that are so central to the very concept of this particular area.</i>	The potential cumulative visual effects of the proposed Project and other projects, such as the reasonably foreseeable East Ridge and West Ridge Wind Energy Projects, were analyzed in DEIS Section 3.19.2.9 (Cumulative Effects).
199.01	GEN2	<i>To Whom it May Concern, Count me as one person who thinks the visual impact of both the transmission line and the wind turbines is a serious detraction of the visual landscape which, time will tell, will provide no real benefit to anyone other than profit to the parties directly involved - at great expense to the rest of us. I support Alternative A -NO Bulled! !!!</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
208.01	LND	<i>The EIS did not address the impact of increased human traffic on the new roads that will access the wind projects and transmission lines. Some mention (a few sentences) were given over to the potential of disturbance of cultural and archeological resources, without much detail, but little on disturbances to wildlife and noise due to increased vehicle use, particular ATVs and even snowmobiles, increased access to hunting, nor to the 'shoot 'em if they move' mentality of some weapons owners. What about the potential of increase of fires due to careless campers? Can some of these new roads be closed off except for maintenance? Can road use be limited (no ATV's for instance)? Who would pay for damages that result from increased use on every level addressed here? And where would money come for enforcement? None of this was addressed.</i>	As explained in Appendix A of the DEIS (page A-5), public use of Project-related access roads would be determined on a case-by-case basis with the BLM and USFWS. Existing BLM policies and management objectives related to recreational access, hunting, ATV use, and disturbance of cultural and archeological resources would continue to apply to all BLM-administered lands in the Project Area.
208.02	DEC	<i>The EIS did not address in any detail the impacts of deconstruction of wind and transmission lines when the project ends.</i>	For portions of the Project that would occur on MNWR, decommissioning would be specified through the right-of-way process. Because rights-of-way of this nature are normally granted for 50 years, with an option to renew, removal strategies would be speculative and outside of the scope of this EIS. It is also common for these types of rights-of-ways to require restoration of land to its original condition upon termination of the rights-of-way. As described in Appendix A of the DEIS (page A-12), the Harney County Conditional Use Permit No. 07-14 issued to Columbia Energy Partners, LLC on April 18, 2007 included provisions that addressed ceased operations or abandonment and decommissioning and reclamation. These provisions, among others, were presented on page A-14 (second to last bullet) and A-15 (first bullet) in Appendix A of the DEIS. If a ROW is granted for the transmission line, BLM may bond the Applicant consistent with BLM policy to ensure performance and compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant, including removal and restoration of the transmission line and affected public lands.
208.03	ECO	<i>The EIS did not address the economic benefit to ranchers who will see new profits generated from leasing rights of ways. One person reminded me that one 'benefit' of this increase in profits would be that ranchers won't be as 'incentivized' to fragment the ranch by 'children and grandchildren' and build private homes. This is fairly specious speculation, but it is a common one.</i>	The rent that landowners would receive from leasing the transmission line ROW easement are assumed to be the same as is currently generated on that property. The benefit of the ROW easement is the lease payment they receive from the Project. The effects of the Project were discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.3 (Social and Economic Values).

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
208.04	ALT	<i>Nowhere did the EIS mention that the choice of West B alternative would likely 'stall' the wind project at least another year because further studies about potential adverse impacts in the Malheur Refuge would have to be made. Nor did it mention what kind of studies would likely have to be made.</i>	The USFWS would conduct a separate evaluation process prior to deciding whether or not to grant the ROW request from the Applicant to cross Federal lands within the MNWR. As stated in DEIS Section 1.4.2 (Introduction), the USFWS would reach that decision by evaluating the appropriateness and compatibility of the transmission line proposal with the policies and procedures in Part 603 National Wildlife Refuge System Uses; as well as Rights-of-Way-Specific regulations and policies found at 50 CFR 25.21, 29.21, and 29.22; 340 FW 3; and 603 FW 2; and Specialized Uses policy found at 5 RM 17.
208.05	VIS	<i>The EIS did not address the visual impact of lighting up the night skies at the Echanis and other nearby wind sites and possibly near some transmission lines . . . The area is known for the 'blackness' of its night skies when there is no moon. Few areas are so sheltered from lighting effects as this one.</i>	The DEIS analyzed the potential Project's effects to the night sky. See the response to Comment 76.139. No lighting is currently proposed for any transmission line poles, because they would be below the 200-foot FAA threshold that requires lighting.
208.06	WIL	<i>6. The EIS did not address in any detail the adverse results of habitat fragmentation, particularly to existing wildlife migration routes, both overland (e.g. Elk, etc) and in the air (e.g. eagles, bats, etc).</i>	See the response to Comment 39.02.
208.07	GEN2	<i>I'm not in favor of the project at all. Too small an economic benefit against large potential adverse affects to cultural, wildlife, botanic, recreational and other resources for a project of such a small life span (20-40 years)</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
209.01	GEN2	<i>I support Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative and hope Steens Mountain is left as is, and that the turbines are built in one of the other equally windy areas in southeast Oregon.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
211.01	WHB	<i>In Section 3.12, Wild Horses, Burros, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, page 3.12-2 does NOT present information on water sources for the Warm Springs HMA and impact on Burros living there. Information on the negative impact the 150-foot-wide transmission line would have on water sources within the Warm Springs HMA is omitted.</i>	The BLM is not aware of any data that suggests that wild horses or burros avoid use of forage, shelter, and water sources located within existing transmission line rights-of-way.
211.02	GEN2	<i>Alternative A - No Action, is the best alternative, which would deny ROW on Oregon Herd Management Areas. Wild horses in Oregon already compete for forage with livestock on almost every acre of all HMAs in Oregon. Removing any available forage and land for wild horses is unacceptable.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
211.03	WHB	<i>In Section 3, pages 3.12-6 and 3.12-7, regarding Alternative B, the source of data on the movement of wild horses within the Warm Springs HMA is omitted. Furthermore, the Figure 3.12-1 is a "snapshot" census of horses in April, and does NOT describe movement of horses within the HMA throughout the year, for each month. Additionally, the counting of horses is usually done via helicopter or "fly over," and these vehicles (indeed any vehicles) will cause a flight reaction from the horses: they will move away to avoid the sounds associated with helicopters, planes and vehicles. To report that the areas being considered for this ROW are areas "where horses do not frequent" lacks credible evidence.</i>	Any time a technician is out in the area, they record horse sightings and plot them into the GIS system. Flight census is conducted typical in areas that horses are generally sighted. Flight and on-the-ground observations can occur together to determine horse locations. The horse observation data include more than just the one-time fly-over snapshot. It also includes ground observations made by BLM personnel while in the field. Census data is inputted and updated periodically. The DEIS used data collected in April 2010 to determine potential impacts to the herd.
211.04	WHB	<i>In Section 3, page 3.12-7, no consideration is given for the cumulative effects of other disturbances that occur within the HMA. This Draft EIS considers only INDIVIDUAL disturbances and no cumulative disturbances upon the wild horses that live in the Warm Springs HMA.</i>	The discussion about cumulative effects to wild horses and burros was presented in DEIS Section 3.19.2.12.

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211.05	WHB	<i>Alternative B, South Diamond Lane Route Option, (page 3.12-7) proposes a permanent loss of 0.69 acres of vegetation to wild horses within the Warm Springs HMA. Because of the two phases of this project, human disturbances would be doubled, and there is no certainty that wild horses would return to find forage and shelter between the transmission line poles, especially when humans will frequent these areas for maintenance and upgrades.</i>	As explained in DEIS Section 3.12.3.3 (Wild Horses and Burros) Alternative B - West Route (Proposed Action), construction of the interconnection station adjacent to the HEC 115-kV transmission line would permanently remove 0.69 acre of vegetation from within the Warm Springs HMA currently available for wild horse forage and shelter. This amount of area is a tiny fraction of the 474,501-acre Warm Springs HMA and its change in use would have no noticeable effect on the current wild horse and burro populations in the Warm Springs HMA. Human disturbance during construction would be temporary (i.e., days or weeks) and maintenance activities would be infrequent and of short duration (i.e., hours or days).
211.06	WHB	<i>• NO information or data is offered on the responsiveness of wild horses to transmission lines; and therefore, there is no reason to assume that the wild horses will be drawn to any forage or shelter that might be available between the transmission line poles, as suggested in this Draft EIS. It is more likely that the entire corridor of land that supports the transmission line proposed in Alternative B will impose a loss of forage and shelter for the wild horses, totaling at least the full suggested 5.8 acres.</i>	See the response to Comment 211.01.
211.07	WHB	<i>• Alternative B, Hog Wallow Route Option, (pages 3.12-7 to 3.12-8), this project would remove 0.80 acres permanently from the wild horses for forage and shelter. As mentioned above, for the South Diamond Lane Route Option, there is no evidence that the wild horses will return to the corridor of transmission lines for forage and shelter, and the loss of land to the wild horses is closer to the full 7.5 acres rather than the 0.80 acres suggested. Furthermore, this Hog Wallow Option would remove 2.17 miles of land from the wild horses in order to build new access roads, suggesting a total loss of 2.77 acres for these roads alone. This is unacceptable for already-diminished wild horse forage and shelter.</i>	The DEIS Section 3.12.3.3 (Wild Horses and Burros) provide a discussion about permanent and temporary effects to wild horses.
211.08	WHB	<i>Alternative C, presented on pages 3.12-9 and 3.12-10, would affect 132.2 acres and 81.1 acres directly within the Kiger HMA. This Alternative C would also require 3.48 miles of new access roads within the Kiger HMA. This is unacceptable for public lands, designated for wild horses and especially for lands already designated as "Area of Critical Environmental Concern". Why have such a designation if it will simply be ignored by our Department of Interior BLM? Furthermore, the ACEC designation includes a "right-of-way avoidance".</i>	The commenter is correct, that the Kiger Mustang ACEC is in an avoidance area. The BLM may grant rights-of-way within avoidance areas such as the Kiger Mustang ACEC if the right-of-way grant is compatible with the objectives of the ACEC and no feasible alternative exists. See Section 3.12.3.4 (Wild Horses and Burros)...
211.09	WHB	<i>• Regarding Alternative C, on page 3.12-9, it states that this project would be in an area " where BLM horse observation data indicates that horses do not frequent." Again, BLM horse data for year-round, month-by-month observation is NOT included in this Draft EIS. Furthermore, there is no evidence presented that the disturbances imposed by the transmission lines and their poles will NOT affect the horses themselves. Conclusions are drawn without evidence in this Draft EIS.</i>	See the response to Comment 211.03.
211.10	WHB	<i>• Alternative C, page 3.12-9, suggests that the total loss of acreage to the wild horses would be 6.76 acres due to new access roads, and another 2.34 acres due to "overland roads within the Kiger Mustang ACEC." Creating "overland roads" within an ACEC is not consistent with this designation. Overland roads and access roads will increase year-round disturbances to the forage areas and shelters for the wild horses that live in these lands.</i>	See the response to Comment 211.08.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
211.11	WHB	<i>Alternative C, page 3.12-9, states that "there are also no feasible routes outside the ACEC". How can this be, since this Draft EIS offers both Alternative A and Alternative B? Alternative B offers feasible (yet unacceptable) routes. Yes, there is a feasible alternative, and that is the alternative of NO ACTION.</i>	The text in Section 3.12.3.4 (Wild Horse and Burros) describing the permanent effects of Alternative C has been revised to include wild horse observation data showing that the horses do not frequent the area around Alternative C.
211.12	WHB	<i>• This Draft EIS does NOT present enough evidence to claim, as it does on page 3.12-9, that "Alternative C meets the criteria and objectives for ROW avoidance areas designated in the Three Rivers RMP." Year-round studies of herd movement in the Kiger HMA is required. Studies of the effects of transmission lines on wildlife, including wild horses, need to be presented. Year-round affects of "new access roads" and "overland roads" on wildlife and wild horses are not discussed nor considered in this Draft EIS.</i>	See the responses to Comments 211.05, 211.08, and 211.11.
211.13	WHB	<i>• Nowhere in this Draft EIS is there any proposal for ADDING acreage amounts for forage and shelter so that the wild horses will continue to have needed land and resources for their survival. This Project only proposes TAKING AWAY acreage from wild horses. This Project does not reflect the intent and purpose of the 1971 Wild Horses and Burros Act, nor does it consider the wild horses as an integral part of our public lands.</i>	The text in Section 3.12.3.4 describing the permanent effects of Alternative C has been revised to include wild horse observation data showing that the horses do not frequent the area around Alternative C.
211.14	GEN2	<i>In conclusion, I support Alternative A - No Action for the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line Project. Wild horses and HMA acreage have been taken away, little by little, over the years by the Department of the Interior BLM. It is time to say "NO" to any further removal of land and forage for America's wild horses...Additional, I support ONDAs comments and concerns regarding the project</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
212.01	X	<i>duplicate comment</i>	No response required.
213.01	GEN2	<i>I support Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative. The proposed transmission line and associated wind turbines are unacceptable in their impacts on wildlife and the landscape.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
214.01	X	<i>duplicate comment</i>	No response required.
215.01	GEN2	<i>Please keep Steens Mountain pristine, there should be no man-made intrusions. Choose Option A - No Action</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
216.01	GEN2	<i>I am for wind energy! However, I also believe placement is just as important as using renewable sources. The Steens Mountain is a bad location. Beside the unique beauty, it is also a fly-zone for many birds. I am certain you can find other windy spots that do not have these negative site location elements. (Negative for wind farm, but very positive for quality of life for creation .) For these reasons ask you not to place a wind farm to the Steens</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
218.01	GEN2	<i>We support the No Action Alternative A on the proposed right of way for the Steens transmission line and resultant wind turbines. We have visited the southeastern Oregon area several times and know it is very important to bird migration and other wildlife. We fear the long term impact of wind turbines on the ecology of the Steens area and support its protection.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
219.01	GEN1	<i>I fully support this project. No Turbines, transmission lines, and no project structures will be located in the wilderness or other protected area. The potential for economic stability far out weigh any possible environmental impact.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
220.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens transmission line either B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on " Green Jobs".</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.

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221.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens transmission line either B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on " Green Jobs".</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
222.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens transmission line either B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on " Green Jobs".</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
223.01	GEN2	<i>I oppose the use of public lands for private wind generation systems, particularly the North Steens 230-kV Transmission Line Project. The aesthetic damage of the transmission lines to the stupendous Steens Mountain viewscape would be immense. Wind farms are factories. They destroy views capes. Please don't encourage such abuse of our wild mountain spaces by permitting the construction of a powerline over our land. Wind farms should be built in open agricultural land where views capes aren't an issue and where our farmers can reap the benefit of the leases. Don't give away public land to private entities.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
224.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens transmission line either B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on " Green Jobs".</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
225.01	GEN2	<i>Locating this on the exact boundary of the Steens agreement doesn't mitigate the visual and physical pollution within the Steens. I won't debate the merits of wind power, but surely there has to be respect for our obligation to maintain such beauty for posterity and not sell it out for supposed economic gain clothed as green. Certainly there is alternative locations available for development that doesn't violate such a unique area.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
225.02	DEC	<i>What happens when wind power becomes technologically obsolete or Echanis or another operator goes bankrupt? Who cleans it up so that posterity isn't looking at broken down windmills forever? What does Harney County do with a transmission line going nowhere?</i>	As described in Appendix A of the DEIS (page A-12), the Harney County Conditional Use Permit No. 07-14 issued to Columbia Energy Partners, LLC on April 18, 2007 included provisions that addressed ceased operations or abandonment and decommissioning and reclamation. These provisions, among others, were presented on page A-14 (second to last bullet) and A-15 (first bullet) in Appendix A of the DEIS.
225.03	ECO	<i>The owners have made reference to a sinking fund being started in seven years. Who manages that for posterity</i>	BLM is not a party to any conversations or commitments made by the Applicant relative to removal and restoration of the wind turbines and other private land aspects of the Project, including maintenance of a "sinking fund" to ensure removal. If a ROW is granted for the transmission line, BLM may bond the Applicant consistent with BLM policy to ensure performance and compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant, including removal and restoration of the transmission line and affected public lands.
226.01	GEN1	<i>I am a supporter of the wind projects being proposed to be built on private property by Columbia Energy Partners. As such, I am writing this to tell you that I support the North Steens Transmission Line, either Alternative B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on green jobs.?</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
227.01	GEN1	<i>As a professional electrical engineer and residence of California, I support the development of "green" generation sources wherever they are. Therefore, I support the North Steens Transmission Line, either Alternative A or Alternative B. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally appropriate route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country reduce our reliance on foreign energy, slow the impacts of global climate change and assist the local economy while rebuilding the US economy.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.

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227.02	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative: 1. The private landowners who own the project sites will eventually be forced to break up their ranches, selling off parcels to meet operating expenses. The wind projects will keep these large ranches intact for several more generations that should be a priority concern among thoughtful conservationists and the BLM;</i>	The potential No Action Alternative effects are discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.3.1 (Social and Economic Values). The current state of the affected environment is discussed in DEIS Section 3.11.2. Under the No Action Alternative, the Project would not be built so the social or economic changes with implementation would not be realized.
227.03	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative: 2. Harney County has suffered many years of unemployment rates around 20%. These projects are vitally important for revitalizing the local economy in terms of jobs, tax benefits and economic diversification;</i>	See the response to Comment 227.02.
227.04	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative:3. Oregon has above-average unemployment and faces a \$3 billion budget gap in the next legislative session;</i>	See the response to Comment 227.02.
227.05	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative: 4.Oregon has set a policy of building a "green economy" - these projects are essential to continuing that forward momentum.</i>	See the response to Comment 227.02.
227.06	ECO	<i>The EIS should consider the economic impacts of the No Action Alternative:5. For all practical purposes, western utilities will be shut out forever from one best wind generation sites available to them.</i>	See the response to Comment 227.02.
228.01	GEN1	<i>It is time to get on with the North Steens Transmission Line. Please allow the construction of the power line.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
229.01	GEN1	<i>Odd's are that not one of ONDA's or the Sierra Club's members even live in Harney County . Get out of the way and put people to work building this Wind resource . I support the North Steens Transmission Line.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
230.01	GEN1	<i>This is just to let you know I whole-heartedly support the North Steens transmission line, either Alternative B or Alternative C. The wind projects being proposed by Columbia Energy Partners (CEP) would certainly be a benefit to Harney County, the Northwest and the nation as a whole. With the nation trying to reduce their dependence on fossil fuel, the wind turbines would provide much-needed green power. The projects will also provide much-needed jobs in the area.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
231.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens Transmission Line Right of Way. I have spent time in Harney County and know first hand that the unemployment rate is perhaps the highest in the State . Our State has mandated a transition to "Green Energy" and it is my understanding that the power generated by this North Steens project will create more MW of clean power than PGE derives from the Boardman Coal Plant. How can anyone not support this project based on that alone.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
233.01	GEN1	<i>I support the proposed wind power on the Steens.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
234.01	GEN2	<i>I support Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative. The proposed transmission line and associated wind turbines are unacceptable in their impacts on wildlife and the landscape. In recent years there has been significant progress in protecting this State and National treasure. In our haste toward "green" energy we cannot trample over the environmental treasures we are trying to preserve. So, I encourage you to take the "No Action" Alternative.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
235.01	GEN1	<i>"The Wind Power Project in Harney County is vital to the economy of Harney County, it will create "Green Energy" and create many livable wage jobs in one of the most economically depressed areas of the State. Millions of dollars have been invested by Columbia Energy Partners to insure that the environmental impact is minimal. Environmental groups including the Sierra Club and ONDA have made and will continue to make untrue statements regarding the impact this project will have on the environment. We live off the land in Harney County and no one can take better care of the environment that the residents. We urge our friends at the BLM to approve the North Steens Transmission Line, allowing the Wind Energy projects to move</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.

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		<i>forward.</i>	
237.01	GEN1	<i>As a business owner in Harney County, Radio Stations KBNH and KORC-FM, we are in favor of the wind farm and transmission line. We believe this will bring added employment and enhance the prosperity of Harney County.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
238.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens transmission line either B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on " Green Jobs".</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
239.01	GEN1	<i>I am in favor of the transmission line on the Steens wind farm.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
240.01	GEN1	<i>I fully support this endeavor either alternative B or C. Our county is in dire need of jobs as we have a very high unemployment rate.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
241.01	GEN1	<i>I support the construction of the Steens transmission line.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
244.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens Transmission Line, either Alternative B or Alternative C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on 'green jobs. I love the Steens Mountain area, having had the opportunity to adopt a Kiger Mustang from BLM back in 1996. I have visited the area only once to see the wild herd in there management area.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
245.01	GEN1	<i>As a resident of Harney County, I totally support the North Steens Transmission line. Living in Burns, with the high unemployment, we certainly need all the jobs that would be created by this project.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
246.01	GEN1	<i>I am writing as an individual, and not as a consultant that worked on the project. I support the transmissions lines, which will serve the Echanis Wind Farm. As the welland consultant on the project I have been all the proposed routes. The environmental impacts by any of the alternative routes are relatively minor in my opinion. When the impacts are weight against the benefit of green, renewable power there is a net gain.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
247.01	GEN1	<i>We are in support of the transmission line, for the North Steen's Transmission Line project. We are in favor of renewable energy projects. Renewable energy projects have to be built where the resource is good and productive. We want to see this country less dependent on foreign oil, dirty coal technology. Also Jobs are need in this country that cannot be shipped over seas renewable energy projects do just that.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
248.01	GEN1	<i>After reviewing the proposed routes vs. alternate routes, I highly recommend the Alternative B - West Route (proposed action) be the chosen route. It is the least landscape altering option with minimal crossing of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. Also, I strongly urge you to disregard any and all comments made by the environmental groups trying to weasel in the sage grouse issue. That is all just review and recommendations to the ODFW Commission Lo consider late this fall. These groups as usual will try anything they can for their benefit.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.

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249.01	GEN1	<i>These four projects give something to Harney County that we are unable to do as a family ranch and that is an economic project that turns wind in to a product that will help others use electricity for manufacturing and feeding the huge energy needs of our country. This additional employment will help the citizens of Harney County build wealth and independence. It will help fund the schools and the services of the county court. I find it reprehensible that small groups of attorneys have the power to impoverish the western states through these hearings and legal action. This transmission line needs to be approved not only to allow this project to move forward but the president for these kind of projects being stopped by the environmental groups has huge implications on our way of life. I understand that the national grid is in needed of replacement and upgrades. These projects will be blocked, causing brownouts. National security interests will be impacted. Payoffs and extortion will be required to site any project.</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
250.01	GEN2	<i>NO! An emphatic NO to transmission across our public lands for a very intrusive, inefficient energy source. You should never consider industrial wind energy as a necessity or an alternative energy source...I have lived in Harney County and we bird in Harney County every year. The vistas and beauty of this great part of Oregon would be blighted forever by these lines and by the wind turbines. I go to Harney County to get away from the wind farm and all their stinking transmission lines that I live with every day here in the Walla Walla Valley. Call me and lets visit about wind farms and their impacts across the board . 509-529-0080...There are so many issues that a wind farm brings to an area that most people never think of asking about. The lights at night, the huge foot print across the landscape, the impacts to ground nesting birds like Sage Grouse, Grasshopper Sparrows, Western Meadowlarks, Short-eared Owls-all are protected species, yet these wind farms kill them with impunity without a take permit or any fines.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
251.01	GEN2	<i>I am generally in favor of developing wind power facilities in Oregon. However, this particular project will negatively impact bird life in one the richest and most unique bird sanctuaries in Oregon. I am particularly concerned about the impact on Sage Grouse and an Ibis nesting area near Diamond. Please consider alternative sites that will not impact the Malheur refuge area.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
252.01	GEN2	<i>Habitat fragmentation is a serious issue. The effects of wind turbines, transmission lines, roads, and all of the sundry development will absolutely fragment valuable wilderness and wilderness-potential land. This land, part of the pacific flyway, is highly valuable, despite its sometimes "desolate" appearance. The impact of these developments -- to avian species, brown bats, and other species - is simply unknown. The rush to "green energy" should be slowed down, particularly when the costs of that green energy are so destructive to Oregon's valuable wild lands.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
254.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens transmission line either B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on " Green Jobs".</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
255.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens transmission line either B or C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on " Green Jobs".</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
257.01	GEN1	<i>I do support the North Steens Transmission Line. Harney County has long been overdue for something to bring jobs, tax benefits and economic diversification...</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
258.01	GEN2	<i>I do not support a transmission line crossing public land in this area. I have visited this area for the past 30 years, whenever I need a respite from civilization. An industrial level transmission line would destroy this experience. Therefore, I support Alternative A, the "No Action" Alternative.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
14.01-14.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
15.01-15.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
17.01-17.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
20.01-20.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
21.01-21.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
22.01-22.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
24.01-24.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
25.01-25.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
26.01-26.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
27.01-27.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
28.01-28.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
29.01-29.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
30.01-30.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
31.01-31.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
34.01-34.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
35.01-35.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
36.01-36.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
37.01-37.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
38.01-38.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
60.01-60.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
64.01-64.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
65.01-65.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
80.01-80.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
81.01-81.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
87.01-87.09	FORMA	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 85.01 through 85.09.</i>	See the responses to Comments 85.01 through 85.09.
115.01 - 115.09	FORMA	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 85.01 through 85.09.</i>	See the responses to Comments 85.01 through 85.09.
136.01-136.09	FORMA	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 85.01 through 85.09.</i>	See the responses to Comments 85.01 through 85.09.
146.01-146.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
149.01-149.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
160.01-160.09	FORMA	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 85.01 through 85.09.</i>	See the responses to Comments 85.01 through 85.09.
167.01-167.01	FORMC	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 166.01 through 166.02.</i>	See the responses to Comments 166.01 through 166.02.
168.01-168.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
169.01-169.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
170.01-170.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
171.01-171.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
172.01-172.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
173.01-173.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
175.01-175.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
176.01-176.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
177.01-177.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
178.01-178.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
179.01-179.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
181.01-181.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
182.01-182.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
183.01-183.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
184.01-184.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
185.01-185.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
186.01-186.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
187.01-187.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
188.01-188.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
189.01-189.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
190.01-190.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
192.01-192.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
193.01-193.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
194.01-194.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
195.01-195.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
196.01-196.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
197.01-197.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
198.01-198.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
200.01-200.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
201.01-201.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
202.01-202.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
203.01-203.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
204.01-204.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
205.01-205.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
206.01-206.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
207.01-207.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
210.01-210.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
217.01-217.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
232.01-232.06	FORMD	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 227.01 through 227.06.</i>	See the responses to Comments 227.01 through 227.06.
236.01-236.06	FORMD	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 227.01 through 227.06.</i>	See the responses to Comments 227.01 through 227.06.
242.01-242.06	FORMD	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 227.01 through 227.06.</i>	See the responses to Comments 227.01 through 227.06.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
243.01-243.06	FORMD	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 227.01 through 227.06.</i>	See the responses to Comments 227.01 through 227.06.
253.01-253.07	FORMB	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 13.01 through 13.07.</i>	See the responses to Comments 13.01 through 13.07.
256.01-256.06	FORMD	<i>Replicated comment, see Comments 227.01 through 227.06.</i>	See the responses to Comments 227.01 through 227.06.

COMMENTS RECEIVED LATE -- AFTER THE DRAFT EIS EXTENDED COMMENT PERIOD
 CLOSED ON SEPTEMBER 17, 2011
 (Some comments were summarized from the letters, they are not exact quotes like above.)

259.01	WILA	BLM should prepare a Supplemental DEIS to evaluate new information concerning Greater Sage-Grouse submitted by ONDA including a declaration by Dr. David Dobkin an ecologist and director of the High Desert Ecological Research Institute.	See the responses to Comments 76.051 and 76.007.
259.02	WILA	BLM should delay any decision on the project and the right-of-way until the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife releases its revised Greater Sage-Grouse Conservation Assessment and Strategy similar to the action the Vale District took when it withdrew it's proposed grazing decisions on the Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area.	See the response to Comment 162.03.
259.03	WILA	BLM should require conditions that prohibit any turbine associated with the transmission line right-of-way to be within 6 miles of a golden eagle nest or within Category 1 Sage-grouse habitat.	See the responses to Comments 52.01, 155.15, 155.24, 162.03, and 155.29
259.04	WILA	BLM should adopt the "no action" alternative because of likely unacceptable harm to bats and a lack of any certainty that mitigation measures for birds, bats, or other wildlife could be successful.	See the response to Comment 51.25.
260.01	WILA	Please ensure that comments like those of Dr. Merlin Tuttle, founder of Bat Conservation International, and the views of other bat and bird experts, including those at the agencies responsible for protection of sage-grouse, golden eagles, and other bird species, are fully disclosed and described in any NEPA documents BLM prepares.	See the responses to Comments 44.03, 155.15, 155.24, and 162.03.
261.01	GEN1	<i>I support the North Steens Transmission Line, either Alternative B or Alternative C. I hope the BLM will direct the applicant to move forward with the most environmentally sensitive route that accomplishes the important goals of helping our country slow the impacts of global climate change while rebuilding the US economy based on 'green jobs.'</i>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
262.01	GEN2	<i>STOP ruining our Heritage! I am opposed to any power lines or wind generators near/in/on the Steens Mts. and Malheur Wildlife Refuge. I support Alternative A: the NO ACTION alternative. Protect the America that belongs to ALL of US and our children and their children. Be wise. Be smart. There ARE better alternatives than ruining our great country. Are YOU up to the challenge?!</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.
263.01	GEN2	<i>I have been Camping, hiking, and fishing in the Steens for over 50 years and cannot imagine that the BLM would consider power lines to deface this jewel. Future generations deserve to see this very special place as I have. Natural.</i>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.

Comment ID	Issue Code	Comment	Final Response
264.01	GEN1	<p><i>On behalf of Jenkins Ranches Inc., Round Barn Visitor Center, and Jenkins Historical Tours, I would like to go on record of being in full support of the development of the wind turbine project proposed on the private lands on Steens Mt. It will help the economy of the entire county as well as the immediate people involved.</i></p> <p><i>We want green power, so let's get with the program and get it developed.</i></p> <p><i>It is time that the BLM and other agencies insist that ONDA file formal lawsuits rather than just appeals if they oppose this type of project. They know they will lose in the courts, is why they go the appeal route, and it is time to make them step up and end this frivolous use of tax payers' money and get with the management of the mountain for the good of the mountain instead of their special agendas.</i></p>	Your support for the Project is acknowledged.
265.01	GEN2	<p><i>I expressly oppose the building of turbines in the proposed area of the Steens Mountain Range. It will impact protected wildlife there, and the impact has not been studied with the required EIS. While I support green energy in general, I do not support this project as it stands. There are other routes, through the badlands that would have far less negative impacts to the native wildlife. Please reconsider your decision to build these turbines in this wildly beautiful, and pristine area. Nature will thank you, the public will thank you, and I will thank you.</i></p>	Your opposition to the Project is acknowledged.