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News Release

Oregon/Washington

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BLM Announces Its Preferred Alternative for the Vantage to Pomona Heights Transmission Line Project

Project seeks to provide more reliable service to Yakima region

Spokane, Wash. -- The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has announced the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Vantage to Pomona Heights Transmission Line Project with alternative routes located in Benton, Grant, Kittitas, and Yakima counties.

Pacific Power is proposing to construct, operate, and maintain a new 230 kV transmission line, associated access roads, and facilities to provide more reliable electric power to the Yakima region. The new transmission line would run from Pacific Power's existing Pomona Heights Substation east of Selah, Washington, in Yakima County to the Bonneville Power Administration's existing Vantage Substation east of Wanapum Dam in Grant County, Washington.

The BLM has identified the New Northern Route (NNR) Alternative as the Agency Preferred Alternative in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). BLM identified the preferred alternative after reviewing comments from Cooperating Agencies, affected Tribes, and interested members of the public.

The NNR Alternative is 40.5 miles in length and is located primarily on Federal land. The route parallels Pacific Power's existing Pomona-Wanapum 230 kV transmission line for the majority of its length. The proposed route crosses the U.S. Department of the Army Joint Base Lewis-McChord Yakima Training Center (JBLM YTC) on its north side for over 60 percent of its total length. It crosses Bureau of Reclamation land east of the Columbia River and BLM-managed land in the Yakima River Canyon Management Area. Relative to other alternatives analyzed, the NNR has fewer resource impacts because of its shorter overall length, its distance from known occupied Greater Sage-Grouse use areas, and the fact that it is co-located with other existing transmission facilities.

As the lead Federal agency in the development of the EIS, the BLM analyzed the effects of the proposed transmission line on public health and safety; cultural resources and traditional cultural properties; agricultural operations and property values; wildlife habitat; plants and animals including the Greater Sage-Grouse; military training operations at the JBLM YTC; visual resources; and more. The BLM will consider information contained in the Final EIS

when deciding whether to grant, grant with modifications, or deny Pacific Power's Application for a right-of-way across BLM-managed lands.

The 30-day FEIS public availability period will begin Oct. 21 and end Nov. 20, 2016. The FEIS is available for review online at: <http://1.usa.gov/1S4ssrO>

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The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2015, the BLM generated \$4.1 billion in receipts from activities occurring on public lands.