

Bureau of Land Management Wyoming

Wyoming State Office

Wyoming State Office
5353 Yellowstone Road
P.O. Box 1828
Cheyenne, WY 82003-1828



Date: April 30, 2015

Contacts: Beverly Gorny, 307-775-6158, bgorny@blm.gov
Jen Neville, 720-962-7050, mediarelations@wapa.gov

Final Environmental Impact Statement for TransWest Express Transmission Project Available for Public Review

The Bureau of Land Management and Western Area Power Administration today announced the availability of the final environmental review for a 730-mile transmission line project that would deliver up to 3,000 megawatts of electric power to major load centers, including Las Vegas, Nevada and San Diego, California, by tapping in to abundant wind energy resources in southern Wyoming.

The notice of availability for the Final Environmental Impact Statement on the TransWest Express Transmission Project will publish in the *Federal Register* on May 1, 2015, initiating the 30-day public availability and protest period on the proposed land use plan amendments associated with the project.

The TransWest Express project is one of seven priority projects of the Obama Administration's Rapid Response Team for Transmission, which works to improve the overall quality and timeliness of permitting for electric transmission infrastructure on both federal and non-federal lands. When built, these projects will help increase electric reliability, integrate new renewable energy into the grid, and save consumers money.

This project could facilitate the delivery of up to 3,000 megawatts of renewable energy, which would provide sustainable power for more than one million homes while avoiding 4.5 million metric tons of carbon emissions per year – the equivalent of taking 890,000 cars off the nation's highways.

The Final EIS is the result of a comprehensive analysis process involving Native American Tribes, federal and state agencies, state and local governments and interested parties to study options for a balance of uses in the planning area.

“This Final EIS is a major step forward in facilitating utility-scale renewable energy generation in Wyoming and providing clean energy to markets in the Desert Southwest,” said Acting BLM Wyoming State Director Mary Jo Rugwell.

“We are proud to be part of this great government partnership with BLM that supports modernizing the nation's energy infrastructure,” said Western Administrator and CEO Mark Gabriel. “Ensuring a reliable and resilient 21st century energy grid while protecting our natural resources is key; and this final EIS provides the ground work for how to do it.”

TransWest Express, LLC is proposing to construct, own, and operate the project which would construct a 730-mile, 600-kilovolt, direct current (DC) transmission line and two terminals, each containing an alternating current (AC)/DC converter station. The northern AC/DC converter station would be located near Sinclair, Wyoming, and the southern near the Marketplace Hub in the Eldorado Valley, about 25 miles south of Las Vegas, Nevada. The project would retain an option for a future interconnection with the Intermountain Power Project transmission system in Millard County, Utah.

The BLM and Western are co-lead federal agencies in preparing the EIS for this project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, and are working with cooperating agencies in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah and Nevada. The Final EIS responds to comments received on the draft EIS and agency-preferred alternative by making clarifications and adjusting some routes.

The project area encompasses lands managed by the BLM, U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, various state agencies, Native American tribes, municipalities and private parties. The Final EIS includes amendments of Forest Service Land and Resource Management Plans and BLM land use plans. The BLM and the Forest Service have integrated the land use planning process with the NEPA analysis process for this project. The Environmental Protection Agency's publishing of the notice of availability in the Federal Register on May 1, 2015, initiates the 30-day protest period on the BLM and Forest Service land use plan amendments.

Protests must be submitted in writing by June 1, 2015. To submit a protest via regular mail, send to BLM Director (210), Attention: Brenda Williams, P.O. Box 71383, Washington, D.C. 20004-1383. Protests submitted via overnight mail should be sent to: BLM Director (210), Attention: Brenda Williams, 20 M Street SE, Room 2134LM, Washington, D.C. 20003.

The BLM and Western will issue separate Records of Decision on the proposed project. The BLM will issue its ROD after protests are resolved. Western will issue its ROD no earlier than 30 days after the Final EIS is available.

The Final EIS will be available to download on Friday, May 1, from the BLM's project website at: www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/transwest.html and Western's project website at: <http://go.usa.gov/YCeC>.

Copies of the FEIS are available for public inspection during business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, at the following locations:

- BLM Wyoming State Office, Public Reading Room, 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming;
- BLM Rawlins Field Office, 1300 North Third Street, Rawlins, Wyoming;
- BLM Colorado State Office, Public Reading Room, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, Colorado;
- BLM Little Snake Field Office, 455 Emerson Street, Craig, Colorado;
- BLM White River Field Office, 220 East Market Street, Meeker, Colorado;
- BLM Grand Junction Office, 2815 H Road, Grand Junction, Colorado;

- BLM Utah State Office, Public Reading Room, 440 West 200 South, Suite 500, Salt Lake City, Utah;
- BLM Cedar City Field Office, 176 East DL Sargent Drive, Cedar City, Utah;
- BLM Fillmore Field Office, 95 East 500 North, Fillmore, Utah;
- BLM Moab Field Office, 92 East Dogwood, Moab, Utah;
- BLM Price Field Office, 125 South 600 West, Price, Utah;
- BLM Richfield Field Office, 150 East 900 North, Richfield, Utah;
- BLM St. George Field Office, 345 East Riverside Drive, St. George, Utah;
- BLM Vernal Field Office, 170 South 500 East, Vernal, Utah;
- BLM Nevada State Office, Public Reading Room, 1340 Financial Blvd., Reno Nevada;
- BLM Caliente Field Office, U.S. Highway 93, Building #1, Caliente, Nevada;
- BLM Las Vegas Field Office, 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, Nevada; and
- Forest Service (Lead Forest Office) Dixie National Forest, 1789 North Wedgewood Lane, Cedar City, Utah.

Copies of the FEIS will also be delivered to public libraries in project-area communities.

Compact disc versions of the document are available by contacting Sharon Knowlton, Project Manager, BLM Wyoming State Office, P.O. Box 20678, Cheyenne, WY 82003.

The Bureau of Land Management 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 2014, the BLM generated \$5.2 billion in receipts from public lands.

Western Area Power Administration annually markets and transmits more than 25,000 gigawatt hours of clean, renewable power from 56 hydroelectric powerplants owned and operated by the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 15 western and central states. It is part of the Department of Energy.

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