

Colorado Transmission Update

March 21, 2013

FRONT RANGE DISTRICT

San Luis Valley Field Office

Competitive Solar Application Process: On Oct. 12, 2012, a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was approved by Secretary Salazar to provide a road map for utility-scale solar energy development on public lands. Two solar energy development applications were filed within the De Tilla Gulch and Los Mogotes East Solar Energy Zones (SEZ). As required in the Record of Decision, new applications will be processed through a competitive process. **Status:** Estimated publication date for a Federal Register Notice (FRN) seeking public interest for solar energy development on public lands is scheduled March 22, 2013. **Next Step:** Determine whether competitive interest exists for solar energy development within the two SEZs 60 days after publication of the FRN.

San Luis Valley Field Office

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association Valley Corridor Transmission Project: Tri-State Generation is proposing to construct a 230-kilovolt overhead transmission line to increase electric system reliability in the San Luis Valley region of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. The project would connect the existing San Luis Valley Substation near Alamosa, CO, with an existing 345-kilovolt transmission line west of Taos, NM. **Status:** BLM Colorado hosted pre-application meeting with Tri-State on Feb. 5, 2013. Tri-State will begin public outreach and complete a macro-corridor study in 2013, prior to submitting a right-of-way application.

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association Montrose-Nucla Upgrade: Tri-State Generation is proposing to upgrade an existing overhead transmission line from 115 to 230 kilovolts in southwest Colorado. The line crosses 59 miles of BLM-managed public lands in the Uncompahgre and Tres Rios field offices and 46 miles of National Forest System lands in the Uncompahgre and San Juan National Forests. **Status:** Tri-State notified the BLM on Feb. 12, 2013, regarding the upgrade. The line is located within a designated West-Wide Energy Corridor, with a small portion located in a Corridor of Concern that was identified through a settlement agreement for energy corridors via the Energy Policy Act of 2005. **Next Step:** This is a qualifying project under the 2009 Interagency Memorandum of Understanding regarding coordination for electric transmission facilities on federal land, and a coordination meeting between the BLM and Forest Service will occur in spring 2013.

NORTHWEST DISTRICT

Energy Gateway South Transmission Line: Rocky Mountain Power is proposing to construct a high-voltage, overhead transmission line that would extend approximately 400 miles, depending on the route selected, from south-central Wyoming to central Utah, crossing northwestern Colorado. The transmission line would begin near Medicine Bow, in Carbon County, WY, at the planned Aeolus Substation, extending south and west to the planned Clover Substation, near Mona, in Juab County, UT. The project would also include two series compensation stations, about 200 acres in size, at two separate points between the planned Aeolus and Clover substations to improve transport capacity and transmission line efficiency. When completed, the project would transmit about 1,500 megawatts of electricity generated from renewable and thermal sources at planned facilities in Wyoming. Alternative routes identified so far would cross federal, state,



tribal and private lands. Authorization of this proposal may result in amending U.S. Forest Service and BLM land and resource management plans. **Status:** Notice of Intent published on April 1, 2011. Draft EIS is scheduled for public review in summer 2013. **Estimated completion date:** Final EIS expected summer 2014. **Website:** www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/gateway_south.html.

TransWest Express Transmission Line: TransWest Express, LLC, filed an application for a right-of-way to construct and operate a 600-kilovolt overhead direct current transmission line on public and private lands for the TransWest Express 600 kilovolt project. The high-voltage line is designed to carry renewable power generated in Wyoming to Nevada. The project begins in south-central Wyoming, crosses through Colorado and Utah, and ends south of Las Vegas in the Eldorado Valley area (near Boulder City, NV). Western Area Power Administration plans to partially fund the project under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and will be the joint lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act process. The project would provide 3,000 megawatts of capacity by 2015. **Status:** Notice of Intent was published on Jan. 4, 2011. Scoping ended on April 4, 2011. Draft EIS is expected June 2013. **Estimated completion date:** Final EIS expected summer 2014. **Website:** www.blm.gov/pgdata/content/wy/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/transwest.html

Zephyr Power Transmission Line: Zephyr Power Transmission is proposing to construct a 500-kilovolt direct current transmission line to transport wind energy generated on private land near Chugwater, WY to markets in the Eldorado Valley area southeast of Las Vegas, NV. The 950-mile project would carry 3,000 megawatts of capacity. A preliminary application was filed in March 2012. **Status:** Applicant is completing outreach plans and route siting studies. Public meetings will be held in 18-20 communities along the proposed route during April 2013. A modified right-of-way application will be filed in 2013.