

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SIGURD TO RED BUTTE NO. 2 345kV TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT

1. What is the purpose and need of the project for both Rocky Mountain Power and the BLM?

As a regulated utility, Rocky Mountain Power has an obligation to provide its customers with safe, reliable and efficient energy. Southwestern Utah represents one of the fastest growing regions in the state. As a result of this growth, the existing transmission line in the region will exceed its current capacity by 2014. To meet the growing needs of the region, Rocky Mountain Power is proposing to construct a new 345 kilovolt (KV) transmission line to increase the current system capacity.

The BLM is obligated to review the right-of-way application submitted by Rocky Mountain Power and to determine whether or not to grant a 150-foot wide right-of-way across federal lands (in association with cooperating agencies) for the transmission line.

2. What is the BLM process for identifying a proposed route?

According to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared to analyze the potential impacts on natural, human and cultural resources.

As part of the EIS process, a 45-day public scoping period is scheduled at the beginning of the project to solicit public comments regarding anticipated issues to be addressed in the EIS and to collect concerns and suggestions about the overall project.

A proposed route will be chosen based on public and agency issues and concerns, environmental impacts analyzed in the EIS, engineering, design and construction factors and compliance with federal resource management plans and associated laws and regulations.

3. What are the opportunities for the public to be involved in the project?

The public can be involved in five ways:

- Attend public scoping meetings in February 2010
- Request that Rocky Mountain Power hold a public meeting in their local community
- Send comments via email to utsrbproj@blm.gov
- Call the telephone comment line:
(801) 349-2893 or (888) 666-6470
- Send comments to:
Cedar City Field Office
ATTN: Rob Wilson
176 East D.L. Sargent Drive
Cedar City, UT 84721

4. How will private landowners be notified?

Interested parties will be notified at key milestones throughout the project by BLM newsletters. In addition, Rocky Mountain Power may contact landowners with landowner

letters. Media ads will be placed in local newspapers and radio ads announcing the project. If the project is approved, landowners would be contacted individually by Rocky Mountain Power right-of-way agents to negotiate easement agreements. In addition, right-of-way agents will contact property owners prior to staking of geotechnical soil sampling sites to obtain permission to enter the affected property.

5. When will the Draft EIS, Final EIS, and Record of Decision (ROD) be released?

Draft EIS:	1st quarter 2011
Final EIS:	3rd quarter 2011
ROD:	4th quarter 2011

6. What is the in-service date?

Construction is anticipated to begin after the ROD with an anticipated in-service date of June 2014.

7. Can high-voltage transmission lines be located underground?

According to the State of Utah Electrical Facilities Review Board Act, local governments may require the burial of an electrical transmission line but are required to pay the additional costs of such construction (Section 2, Section 54-14-201). This applies to both overhead and underground transmission lines. Some important points to consider:

- Each installation is unique. Costs per mile for underground lines can be as high as 10-20 times the cost of overhead lines. This range is based on actual costs incurred during recent projects. Extremely unique circumstances can force the costs even higher.
- This cost can vary depending upon conductor size, utility obstructions, labor and material costs, and completion deadlines.

The area of ground disturbance associated with the construction of underground facilities exceeds that of overhead construction. Reliability for underground vs. overhead lines is similar; however, repairing underground cables is more expensive and time consuming.

8. Why are the geotechnical soil sampling investigations required?

Rocky Mountain Power needs to conduct geotechnical soil sampling investigations to identify the geological conditions (i.e., soil type, water table, etc.) along each potential alternative route. Data obtained from the geotechnical soil sampling investigations will assist in foundation designs and development of more accurate construction costs.



9. Why is a separate EA being produced for the geotechnical investigations?

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared by the BLM because the results of the geotechnical investigations are needed before the completion of the EIS. In order to obtain authorization from the BLM and US Forest Service (USFS) to drill identified borehole sites, an EA will be prepared to analyze potential impacts to natural, human and cultural resources. Rocky Mountain Power has requested that geotechnical drilling begin in Summer/Fall 2010.

10. Will soil sampling boreholes be drilled for each alternative or just the proposed route?

Boreholes will be drilled for all alternatives considered for analysis in the EA and EIS. Most likely a proposed route will not be selected before drilling occurs.

11. How will visual impacts be mitigated?

Where possible, structures would not be located on top of ridgelines or prominent viewpoints. Structures would be made of COR-TEN, self-weathering steel, or dull galvanized steel to blend in with the surrounding landscape. Nonspecular conductors would be used to mitigate sunlight reflection. Where vegetation clearing is required, feathering (blending) the edges of the right-of-way might be used. In other instances, the right-of-way may be reclaimed and ground disturbance would be minimized. In addition, the transmission line would conform to federal visual resource management plans.

12. Why is separation required between transmission lines?

To ensure reliability, improve system redundancy and maximize the capacity of lines, WECC (Western Electricity Coordinating Council), a regional regulatory body under the authority of NERC (North American Electric Reliability Corporation), has been established. Rocky Mountain Power must go through a series of studies to demonstrate to WECC and its members that its system expansion or improvements will not result in adverse impacts to the transmission grid. As a starting point, a minimum separation criteria has been established by WECC for the planning of transmission lines. This NERC/WECC standard states that transmission lines must be physically separated by the greater of 500 feet or the length of the longest span (distance between adjacent transmission structures). Typical span lengths for this project are anticipated to be 800 to 1,200 feet but could be greater, depending upon the terrain. If lines are not separated, utilities must plan additional lines and capacity into the area to account for the higher likelihood of two adjacent lines being forced out of service simultaneously.

Additionally, if a significant event (e.g. fire, lightning, earthquake, high winds, etc.) takes multiple transmission lines out of service in the same geographic area resulting in a major system disturbance, WECC and its members can de-rate transmission lines to mitigate the chance of event reoccurrence. This can happen at any time during the life of the line to preserve the integrity of the transmission grid. This means if Rocky Mountain Power's new transmission line is not fully utilized or is de-rated, a new transmission line would need to be constructed in a new corridor to compensate for lost capacity due to any de-rating of the line.

13. Will the new transmission line interfere with agricultural practices?

Rocky Mountain Power has attempted to ensure that their

preliminary alternative routes avoid irrigated agricultural areas; therefore, the transmission line is not anticipated to interfere with irrigated agricultural practices. Research has been conducted on the possible effects of electric and magnetic fields (EMFs) on the health, behavior and productivity of wild and domestic animals, including cattle. Since the 1970's, this research has been carried out in response to concerns about the effects of high-voltage and ultra-high-voltage transmission lines in the vicinity of farms and the natural habitat of wild animals. Agricultural departments at universities overseas and across Canada and the United States have conducted research on an assortment of animals using a variety of study designs, from observational studies of animals in their natural habitats to highly controlled experimental studies. The research does not suggest that magnetic or electric fields result in adverse effects on the health, behavior or productivity of fauna, including livestock such as dairy cows, sheep, pigs, and a variety of other species, including small mammals, deer, elk, birds, and bees.

14. Will Rocky Mountain Power hire local companies to construct the transmission line?

Whether or not local companies would be hired to construct the transmission line will depend on the construction contractor that will be selected to build the line. The selection of the construction contractor will not occur until after the geotechnical investigations have been completed in fall of 2010. However, surveying for the geotechnical investigations has employed one local surveying company.

15. Does Rocky Mountain Power have the right of eminent domain?

Yes. The State, through legislation, has delegated its condemnation powers to various agencies, political subdivisions, and even private companies. As a private company (utility), Rocky Mountain Power can use the power of eminent domain to acquire private property for a public purpose. However, it is Rocky Mountain Power's policy to negotiate in good faith to acquire easements before invoking eminent domain.

16. Will the transmission line attract lightning? Will it make noise?

Substation structures and transmission lines may attract lightning; however, the shield wire (found along the top of the structures) provides protection to the facilities. Audible noise (often referred to as "corona") may be described as a sputtering sound or a low frequency humming sound. Irregularities on the surface of the conductor such as nicks, scratches, contamination, insects, and water droplets can increase audible noise. Consequently, during periods of rain and foul weather, line noise may be more audible (although this may be masked by the sound of rain). Under most circumstances, line noise would typically be inaudible past the edge of the right-of-way during fair weather. To minimize noise levels, substation and transmission line materials are designed according to industry standards, and best possible construction techniques would be used to insure that hardware is tight and that the conductor surface is not scratched or nicked during construction.

17. Will the transmission line cause radio or television interference?

Occasionally, power lines do interfere with radio or television reception. Some computer monitors may also experience some type of interference. When complaints are received, Rocky Mountain Power responds and identifies the source of the interference. Appropriate mitigation measures are implemented once the source is identified.