

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Stirling Mountain to Northwest Transmission Line Project Bureau of Indian Affairs Southern Paiute Agency

The attached Final Environmental Assessment (EA), October 2011, analyzes the construction and operation of a 5.7-mile-long segment of a 230 kV transmission line, of which 1.5 miles cross Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands and 4.2 miles cross the Las Vegas Paiute Snow Mountain Reservation (Reservation). This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is specific to the portion of the project that crosses the Reservation on land held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the Las Vegas Paiute Tribe (Tribe). The project involves the Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) issuance of an easement to the Valley Electric Association (VEA) to operate and maintain the project.

Based on the Final EA, I have determined that by implementation of the agency proposed action and environmental protection measures specified in the EA, the proposed project will not have a significant impact to the quality of the human environment. In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

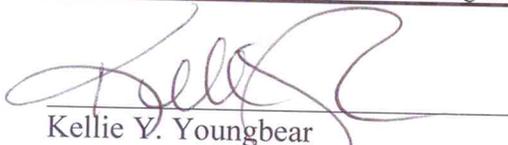
This determination is supported by the following:

1. The EA discloses the environmental consequences of the proposed action and the "no action" alternative. The proposed action does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.
2. Agency and public involvement was conducted during the development of the Draft EA. A public review and comment period for the Draft EA was conducted for 30 days.
3. The project was reviewed and analyzed for biological resource impacts. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued a Biological Opinion (BO) on July 13, 2011 in response to BLM's request for reinitiation of formal consultation. On July 28, 2011 the USFWS issued a memorandum correcting the acreage listed on the July 13, 2011 BO. Approximately 25.82 acres of Tribal land will be disturbed by the project. The BO included an incidental take statement, terms and conditions, modifications to existing measures, and conservation recommendations.
4. The entirety of the area of potential effects has been surveyed by various earlier projects with negative findings. As a result, the BLM, as lead for the Section 106 consultation process prescribed by the National Historic Preservation Act, made a determination of "No Potential to Cause Effects" pursuant to 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1). No impacts to cultural resources are expected.

5. The proposed action would improve the economic conditions of the Tribe through compensation for the easement and increases the number of entities with electrical transmission facilities on or adjacent to the Reservation, thereby providing potential opportunities for future development. Also, the project is designed to accommodate relocating the existing 138kV transmission line (the “Mercury Line”), a Tribal land management and community-development priority. The project would not have a disproportionate or adverse effect on minority or low income populations.
6. Environmental protection measures will be implemented to minimize impacts of the project as described in the EA and stated below:

| Resource | Environmental Protection Measure |
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| Air Quality | All requirements of those entities having jurisdiction over air quality matters would be adhered to and any permits needed for construction activities would be obtained. Open burning of construction trash would not be permitted. |
| Air Quality | In compliance with the Clark County Department of Air Quality Management (DAQM) dust control standards and permit requirements, all roads and structure pads would be watered prior to and during all construction activities. All project personnel would be educated on the site dust mitigation plan. |
| Air Quality | Construction and operation vehicles would be properly maintained to reduce emissions. |
| Air Quality, human health and safety | <p>All Proposed Project construction activities shall comply with relevant provisions of the Clark County Department of Air Quality Environmental Management (DAQEM). Best Management Practices will be implemented including under Sections 91 and 94 of Clark County Air Quality Regulations. These requirements will typically include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All disturbed areas, including storage piles, which are not being actively utilized for construction purposes, shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water, chemical stabilizer/suppressant, or vegetative ground cover. • All on-site unpaved roads and off-site unpaved access roads shall be effectively stabilized of dust emissions using water or chemical stabilizer/suppressant. • All land clearing, grubbing, scraping, excavation, land leveling, grading, cut and fill, and demolition activities shall be effectively controlled of fugitive dust emissions utilizing application of water or by presoaking. • When materials are transported off-site, all material shall be covered, effectively wetted to limit visible dust emissions, or at least six inches of freeboard space from the top of the container shall be maintained. |
| Biological Resources | All appropriate NDOW and USFWS permits will be obtained prior to initiation of the project. |
| Biological and Visual Resources | The aerial limits of construction activities normally would be predetermined with activity restricted to and confined within those limits. No paint or permanent discoloring agents would be applied to rocks or vegetation to indicate limits of survey or construction activity. |
| Cultural Resources | If any archaeological remains are unearthed during project construction, the BLM/BIA Archaeologist shall be notified immediately of any inadvertent discoveries and all activities associated with the project within 100 meters of the discovery shall cease until further authorization is received. |
| Cultural Resources | If the archaeological resources include human remains, the County Coroner, the Native American heritage Commission (State of Nevada), and the BLM/BIA Archaeologist shall be notified immediately of any inadvertent discoveries and all activities associated with the project within 100 meters of the discovery shall cease until further authorization is received. |
| General | Prior to construction, all supervisory construction personnel would be instructed on the protection of cultural, and ecological resources. To assist in this effort, the construction contract would address: (a) Federal, state and tribal laws regarding antiquities, fossils, plants and wildlife, including collection and removal; (b) the importance of these resources and the purpose and necessity of protecting them. |
| Human Health and Safety | All proposed electrical facilities will be designed in accordance with adopted VEA engineering practices, or the equivalent. |

| Resource | Environmental Protection Measure |
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| Human Health and Safety | Workers will be instructed not to drive or park vehicles where catalytic converters can ignite dry vegetation and to exhibit care when smoking in natural areas. Vehicles would carry water and shovels or fire extinguishers during times of high fire hazards. |
| Human Health and Safety, and Land Use | VEA will utilize construction methods reasonably calculated to avoid damage to other utilities within the utility corridor. |
| Human Health and Safety, and Land Use | VEA will notify affected utility providers immediately in the event of accidental damage to their lines. |
| Human Health and Safety, and Transportation | VEA will utilize all necessary precautions to minimize safety concerns when working within public road ROWs. Traffic safety cones, construction signage or other measures will be used to alert drivers to construction activities. |
| Land Use | VEA will consult with local planning agencies during the project review process in order to identify applicable land use policies and related concerns. |
| Land Use | VEA will comply with applicable land use controls. |
| Land Use | VEA will incorporate project design features as required to minimize potential land use conflicts. |
| Land Use | VEA will obtain, negotiate and abide by the terms and conditions of any adopted permission agreements. |
| Land Use | Fences and gates would be repaired or replaced to their preconstruction condition prior to disturbance as required by the landowner or the land management agency if they are damaged or destroyed by construction activities. |
| Soils | Potential grading requirements will be identified during preliminary project review. Grading needs will be minimized wherever possible. |
| Transportation | All construction vehicle movement outside the ROW on dirt roads normally would be restricted to previously disturbed access. Should unforeseeable circumstances occur during construction that require more non-existing road access than initially requested, permission would be requested from the land agency. |
| Vegetation | In construction areas where recontouring is not required (i.e. drive-and-crush locations), vegetation would be left in place wherever possible and original contours would be maintained to avoid excessive root damage and allow for resprouting. |
| Vegetation | The contractor would use weed-free, native seed mixes if revegetation is required. |
| Water Resources | In compliance with Clark County standards and the Federal Clean Water Act, all necessary permits relating to storm water would be obtained. |


 Kellie Y. Youngbear
 Superintendent
 Bureau of Indian Affairs
 Southern Paiute Agency

11/22/11
 Date