

3.5 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

This section addresses potential impacts from the Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and Route Alternatives during construction, operations, and decommissioning. This section analyzes the potential for Project activities to have disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and/or low-income populations in accordance with EO 12898.

The BLM's Preferred Routes for each segment of the Project are listed below. Where applicable, the preferred route identified by another federal agency or a county or state government is also noted. The BLM's Preferred Routes only apply to federal lands. If approved, the BLM's Preferred Routes could affect private lands adjacent to or between federal areas; however, decisions on siting and construction requirements for non-federal lands are under the authority of state and local governments (see Table 1.4-1 for permits that would be required and Section 3.17.1.3 for a description of the regulatory requirements).

- **Segment 1W:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route (Figure A-2). This route is also the State of Wyoming's preferred route.
- **Segment 2:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route (Figure A-3). This route is also the State of Wyoming's preferred route.
- **Segment 3:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route, including 3A (Figure A-4). This route is also the State of Wyoming's preferred route.
- **Segment 4:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route (Figures A-5 and A-6) except within the Caribou-Targhee NF. The portion of this route in Wyoming is also the State of Wyoming's preferred route. The Forest Service's preferred route is the Proposed Route within the NF incorporating Alternative 4G (Figure A-6).
- **Segment 5:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route incorporating Alternatives 5B and 5E, assuming that WECC reliability issues associated with 5E are resolved (Figure A-7). Power County's preferred route is the Proposed Route incorporating Alternatives 5C and 5E (Figure A-7).
- **Segment 6:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the proposal to upgrade the line voltage from 345 kV to 500 kV (Figure A-8).
- **Segment 7:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route incorporating Alternatives 7B, 7C, 7D, and 7G (Figure A-9). The Proposed Route in the East Hills and Alternative 7G will be microsited to avoid sage-grouse PPH. Power and Cassia Counties' preferred route is Alternative 7K (Figure A-9).
- **Segment 8:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route incorporating Alternative 8B (Figure A-10). This is also IDANG's preferred route.
- **Segment 9:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route incorporating Alternative 9E, which was revised to avoid PPH and the community of Murphy (Figure A-11). Owyhee County's preferred route is Alternative 9D (Figure A-11).
- **Segment 10:** The BLM's Preferred Route is the Proposed Route (Figure A-12).

3.5.1 Affected Environment

This section discusses those aspects of the environment that could be impacted by the Project. It starts with a discussion of the Analysis Area considered, identifies the issues that have driven the analysis, and characterizes the existing conditions along the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives in Wyoming and Idaho.¹

3.5.1.1 Analysis Area

The Analysis Area for environmental justice is the counties crossed or potentially affected by the proposed transmission line and alternatives and associated facilities. These counties are identified in Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics (Tables 3.4-1 through 3.4-3).

3.5.1.2 Issues Related to Environmental Justice

The following environmental justice–related issues were brought up by the public during public scoping (Tetra Tech 2009) and comments on the Draft EIS, were raised by federal and state agencies during scoping and agency discussions, or are issues that must be considered as stipulated in law or regulation:

- What the effects would be on minority populations or communities,
- What the effects would be on low-income populations or communities, and
- What the effects would be on Tribes.

3.5.1.3 Regulatory Framework

EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, requires each federal agency to make the achievement of environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations. The EO further stipulates that the agencies conduct their programs and activities in a manner that does not have the effect of excluding persons from participation in them, denying persons the benefits of them, or subjecting persons to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin.

3.5.1.4 Methods

Identifying whether disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and/or low-income populations would occur typically involves two steps: first, identifying whether minority and/or low-income communities are present, and, then, if these types of communities are present, evaluating whether high and adverse human health or environmental effects would disproportionately affect the identified community or communities.

Data from the U.S. Census Bureau are used to identify minority and/or low-income communities that could be affected by the proposed Project. The results of other resource-specific analyses conducted for this Project are used to evaluate the potential for adverse or human health effects.

¹ The Project no longer has a route in Nevada.

3.5.1.5 Existing Conditions

Guidelines provided by the CEQ (1997a) and USEPA (1998) indicate that a minority community may be defined as either: 1) where the minority population comprises more than 50 percent of the total population, or 2) where the minority population is meaningfully greater than the minority population in the general population of an appropriate benchmark region used for comparison. Minority communities may consist of a group of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a geographically dispersed set of individuals who experience common conditions of environmental effect. Further, a minority population exists if there is “more than one minority group present and the minority percentage, as calculated by aggregating all minority persons, meets one of the above-stated thresholds” (CEQ 1997a).

The CEQ and USEPA guidelines indicate that low-income populations should be identified based on the annual statistical poverty thresholds established by the U.S. Census Bureau. Like minority populations, low-income communities may consist of individuals living in geographic proximity to one another, or a geographically dispersed set of individuals who would be similarly affected by the proposed action or program. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a poverty area as a census tract or other area where at least 20 percent of residents are below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau 2013a).

The potentially affected counties range from approximately 600 square miles to more than 10,000 square miles (see Table 3.4-4 in the Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics). Larger and more populated geographic areas may have the effect of “masking” or “diluting” the presence of concentrations of minority and/or low-income populations (CEQ 1997a; USEPA 1998). Data were therefore also reviewed at the census block group level to identify the potential existence of minority and/or low-income communities. A census block group is a subdivision of a census tract and typically contains between 600 and 3,000 people.

The Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and Route Alternatives cross 64 census block groups, which range in size from approximately 4 square miles to 4,367 square miles. Approximately 78 percent (50 out of 64) of these block groups are less than 1,000 square miles. The large areas included in some of these census block groups reflect the lightly populated and undeveloped nature of much of the Analysis Area. Slightly more than a third of the affected block groups (24 out of 64) had less than 1,000 residents in 2010 and just four had more than 2,000 residents (U.S. Census Bureau 2011b).

Race and Ethnicity

Counties

The populations of Wyoming and Idaho are predominantly White, with White persons comprising 86 percent and 84 percent of the estimated populations in these states in 2010, compared to 64 percent in the United States as a whole (Table 3.5-1). In the potentially affected Wyoming counties, the percent of the population identified as White in 2010 ranged from 80 percent in Carbon County to 94 percent in Lincoln County. In the Idaho counties, the percent of the population identified as White ranged from 66 percent in Power County to 95 percent in Bear Lake and Oneida Counties (Table 3.5-1).

Persons of Hispanic or Latino origin are the largest minority group in Wyoming and Idaho, and in all of the potentially affected counties. Hispanic or Latino populations comprised more than 20 percent of the total population in seven of the counties in Idaho in 2010 (Table 3.5-1).

Table 3.5-1. Race and Ethnicity by County, 2010

Geographic Area	Total Population	Percent of Total Population				
		White ^{1/}	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian and Alaska Native ^{1/}	Other Race ^{1/2/}	Two or More Races ^{1/}
Wyoming	563,626	85.9	8.9	2.1	1.7	1.5
Carbon	15,885	79.8	16.8	0.8	1.5	1.1
Converse	13,833	91.3	6.3	0.6	0.6	1.1
Lincoln	18,106	93.5	4.3	0.7	0.6	0.9
Natrona	75,450	89.1	6.9	0.8	1.6	1.6
Sweetwater	43,806	80.9	15.3	0.7	1.8	1.3
Idaho	1,567,582	84.0	11.2	1.1	2.0	1.7
Ada	392,365	86.5	7.1	0.5	3.8	2.1
Bannock	82,839	86.4	6.7	2.8	2.3	1.8
Bear Lake	5,986	94.7	3.6	0.4	0.6	0.7
Canyon	188,923	72.3	23.9	0.7	1.5	1.7
Cassia	22,952	72.9	24.9	0.5	0.8	0.9
Elmore	27,038	75.1	15.2	0.8	5.9	2.9
Franklin	12,786	91.8	6.6	0.3	0.4	0.9
Gooding	15,464	69.6	28.1	0.6	0.6	1.2
Jerome	22,374	66.9	31.0	0.7	0.6	0.9
Lincoln	5,208	69.3	28.3	0.6	0.8	1.0
Oneida	4,286	95.0	2.9	0.5	0.7	0.8
Owyhee	11,526	68.3	25.8	3.7	0.8	1.4
Power	7,817	66.1	29.8	2.1	0.7	1.4
Twin Falls	77,230	82.7	13.7	0.6	1.7	1.4
United States	308,745,538	63.7	16.3	0.7	17.2	1.9

1/ Non-Hispanic only. The federal government considers race and Hispanic/Latino origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. People identifying Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race. The data summarized in this table present Hispanic/Latino as a separate category.

2/ The "Other Race" category presented here includes census respondents identifying as "Black or African American," "Asian," "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander," or "Some Other Race." The relative high percentage of the U.S. population in this category (17.2 percent) reflects the inclusion of the Black or African American population, which comprised 12.2 percent of the national population in 2010, but just 0.8 percent and 0.6 percent in Wyoming and Idaho, respectively.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2011c

American Indians and Alaska Natives comprised less than 1 percent of total population in the affected Wyoming counties in 2008. There are no Indian Reservations located in these counties. In Idaho, American Indians and Alaska Natives comprised less than 1 percent of the population in most of the potentially affected counties; the exceptions were Owyhee (3.7 percent), Bannock (2.8 percent), and Power (2.1 percent) Counties. The relatively high percentages in these three counties reflect the presence of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, part of which is in Power and Bannock Counties; and the Duck Valley Indian Reservation, partially located in Owyhee County, Idaho. The Preferred and Proposed Routes would not cross either of these reservations and would be located more than 60 miles north of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation. Alternative 5C would

cross the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Power County and this is reflected in the census block group data discussed below.

Census Block Groups

Race and ethnicity data from the 2010 Census are available at the census block group level. The percent of the population identifying as White alone in the 2010 Census exceeded 50 percent in all of the potentially affected census block groups, with shares ranging from 55 percent to 97 percent, and, as a result, the population in these census block groups did not meet the definition of a minority community based on the criteria that the minority population comprises more than 50 percent of the total population (Table 3.5-2).

The minority population in each census block group was also compared with its respective county average in 2010 to identify areas where the minority population is potentially “meaningfully greater” than the minority population in the general population. This comparison identified eight census block groups where the Hispanic or Latino share of the population was more than 10 percent higher than the county average. In addition, the American Indian and Alaska Native share of the population of one of the census block groups in Power County was 15 percent, compared to a county average of 2 percent (Table 3.5-2).

Table 3.5-2. Race and Ethnicity Census Block Group Comparison

County/Block Group	Percent of Total Population 2010					
	Total Population 2010 ^{1/}	White ^{2/}	Hispanic or Latino	American Indian and Alaska Native ^{2/}	Other Race ^{2/3/}	Two or More Races ^{2/}
Cassia County, Idaho	22,952	72.9	24.9	0.5	0.8	0.9
Block Group 1, Census Tract 9501	680	61.5	36.2	2.2	—	0.1
Block Group 1, Census Tract 9506	1,024	59.6	38.4	0.3	0.6	1.2
Elmore County, Idaho	27,038	75.1	15.2	0.8	5.9	2.9
Block Group 2, Census Tract 9601	1,164	69.3	27.2	1.0	0.7	1.7
Block Group 2, Census Tract 9604	1,316	68.5	25.5	1.3	2.7	1.9
Gooding County, Idaho	15,464	69.6	28.1	0.6	0.6	1.2
Block Group 3, Census Tract 9602	1,699	59.4	38.3	0.8	0.5	1.1
Block Group 7, Census Tract 9602	1,037	59.5	38.5	0.6	0.4	1.1
Power County, Idaho	7,817	66.1	29.8	2.1	0.7	1.4
Block Group 2, Census Tract 9601	820	68.9	11.3	15.0	1.2	3.5
Twin Falls County, Idaho	77,230	82.7	13.7	0.6	1.7	1.4
Block Group 1, Census Tract 3	909	73.5	24.9	0.4	0.9	0.3
Block Group 1, Census Tract 14	1,159	55.2	43.6	0.1	0.7	0.4

1/ Data are for 2010.

2/ Non-Hispanic only. The federal government considers race and Hispanic/Latino origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. People identifying Hispanic or Latino origin may be of any race. The data summarized in this table present Hispanic/Latino as a separate category.

3/ The “Other Race” category presented here includes census respondents identifying as “Black or African American,” “Asian,” “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander,” or “Some Other Race.”

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2011b

Income and Poverty

Counties

Median household income in Wyoming and Idaho was equivalent to 111 percent and 86 percent, respectively, of the national median in 2011 (Table 3.5-3). Median household income in the potentially affected counties in Wyoming ranged from 94 percent to 124 percent of the state median. Median household income was below the state median in all the potentially affected Idaho counties, with the exceptions of Ada, Franklin, and Oneida Counties (Table 3.5-3).

Table 3.5-3. Income and Poverty by State and Affected County

State/County	2010 Median Household Income		Percent of Population Below Poverty, 2011 All Ages	Percent of Households Below Poverty, 2011
	2011 (\$)	Percent of U.S./State Median ^{1/}		
Wyoming	56,044	111	11.3	9.8
Carbon	52,855	94	13.8	8.7
Converse	59,507	106	10.3	8.8
Lincoln	60,062	107	9.2	7.1
Natrona	52,904	94	11.5	8.5
Sweetwater	69,756	124	10.0	8.0
Idaho	43,345	86	16.5	13.4
Ada	50,701	117	13.4	10.5
Bannock	41,749	96	18.7	14.7
Bear Lake	42,327	98	14.0	13.6
Canyon	39,132	90	20.1	15.7
Cassia	41,393	95	16.7	17.8
Elmore	43,120	99	12.9	10.7
Franklin	46,348	107	11.1	10.3
Gooding	39,670	92	18.5	15.8
Jerome	39,454	91	18.0	16.6
Lincoln	40,460	93	16.1	12.0
Oneida	43,519	100	14.7	15.0
Owyhee	33,518	77	25.1	21.1
Power	39,288	91	17.2	11.8
Twin Falls	41,942	97	17.7	13.7
United States	50,502	NA	15.9	14.6

^{1/} Statewide median household incomes are presented as a percent of the national median; county medians are shown as a percentage of their respective state medians.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2012j, 2013b

The percent of the population below the poverty level in Wyoming in 2011 was lower than the national average (11.3 percent versus 15.9 percent). The percent of population below the poverty rate in the Wyoming Analysis Area counties ranged from 9.2 percent in Lincoln County to 13.8 percent in Carbon County (Table 3.5-3).

The percent of the population below the poverty level in Idaho in 2011 was higher than the national average (16.5 percent versus 15.8 percent) (Table 3.5-3). Poverty rates were higher than the state average in 8 of the 14 potentially affected Idaho counties,

with the highest rates occurring in Canyon (20.1 percent) and Owyhee (25.1 percent) Counties (Table 3.5-3).

Viewed in terms of households, the estimated percent of households in Wyoming below the poverty level in 2011 was lower than the national average (9.8 percent versus 14.6 percent). The estimated percent of households below the poverty level in the potentially affected Wyoming counties ranged from 7.1 percent (Lincoln County) to 8.8 percent (Converse County) and was below both the national and state averages (Table 3.5-3).

The estimated percent of households below the poverty level in Idaho in 2011 was also lower than the national average (13.4 percent versus 14.6 percent). At the county level, estimated household poverty rates ranged from 10.5 percent (Ada County) to 21.1 percent (Owyhee County) (Table 3.5-3). The household poverty data summarized in Table 3.5-3 are from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, as discussed below for census block groups.

Census Block Groups

Household poverty data compiled as part of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey are presented for 2011 by county and census block group in Table 3.5-4. These data are 12-month estimates based on data compiled from 2007 to 2011. The U.S. Census Bureau defines a poverty area as a census tract or other area where at least 20 percent of residents are below the poverty level (U.S. Census Bureau 2013a). More than 20 percent of households were estimated to be below the poverty level in 12 of the affected census block groups (Table 3.5-4).

Table 3.5-4. Poverty Census Block Comparison

County/Block Group^{1/}	Number of Households	Percent of Households Below Poverty
Carbon County	6,217	8.7
Block Group 1, Census Tract 9681	380	21.3
Bear Lake County	2,427	13.6
Block Group 1, Census Tract 9501	326	27.6
Block Group 4, Census Tract 9501	446	23.5
Elmore County	9,532	10.7
Block Group 2, Census Tract 9604	408	28.2
Gooding County	5,357	15.8
Block Group 2, Census Tract 9601	510	36.3
Block Group 3, Census Tract 9602	606	21.8
Block Group 7, Census Tract 9602	300	22.0
Owyhee County	3,873	21.1
Block Group 1, Census Tract 9502	579	24.9
Block Group 2, Census Tract 9502	282	20.2
Block Group 3, Census Tract 9502	194	31.4
Twin Falls County	27,940	13.7
Block Group 3, Census Tract 3	346	20.5
Block Group 3, Census Tract 15	106	27.4

^{1/} Data are only shown for those census block groups with more than 20 percent of households below the poverty level.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013b

3.5.2 Direct and Indirect Effects

This section is organized to present effects to environmental justice from construction, then operations, followed by decommissioning activities for the proposed Project. Route Alternatives are analyzed in detail below in Section 3.5.2.3.

Plan Amendments

Proposed amendments to BLM RMPs and MFPs are summarized in Table 2.2-1 of Chapter 2, while BLM plan amendments associated with other routes are summarized in Table 2.2-2. BLM plan amendments are discussed in detail in Appendices F-1 and G-1. Proposed amendments to Forest Plans are summarized in Table 2.2-3 of Chapter 2 and discussed in detail in Appendices F-2 and G-2. Amendments are needed to permit the Project to cross various areas of BLM-managed lands and NFS lands. Effects described for areas requiring an amendment in order for the Project to be built would only occur if the amendment were approved. Amendments that alter land management designations could change future use of these areas. No amendments specific to environmental justice are proposed for the Project and no impacts to environmental justice resulting from approving the amendments beyond the impacts of the Project are anticipated.

3.5.2.1 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, the BLM would not issue a ROW grant to the Proponents of Gateway West and the Project would not be constructed across federal lands. No land management plans would be amended to allow for the construction of this Project. No Project-related impacts to environmental justice would occur; however, impacts would continue as a result of natural events (such as fire, drought, and severe weather) as well as from existing developments within the Analysis Area and from other projects, including wind farms, oil and gas extraction, and coal, trona, phosphate mines. The demand for electricity, especially for renewable energy, would continue to grow in the Proponents' service territories. If the No Action Alternative is implemented, the demand for transmission services, as described in Section 1.3, Proponents' Objectives for the Project, would not be met with this Project and the area would have to turn to other proposals to meet the transmission demand. Under the No Action Alternative, impacts similar to those described below may occur due to new transmission lines built to meet the increasing demand in place of this Project.

3.5.2.2 Effects Common to All Action Alternatives

Disproportionate High and Adverse Effects on Minority or Low-Income Populations

Construction

Geographic Communities

Construction of the proposed Project is not expected to have high and adverse human health or environmental effects on nearby communities. Adverse construction-related impacts would likely include increases in local traffic and noise, as well as dust, and could result in temporary delays at some highway crossings. These impacts would be temporary and localized, and are not expected to be high. Construction workers temporarily relocating to the Project area would increase demand for local housing

resources. Potential impacts on public safety are discussed in Section 3.22 – Public Safety.

Construction-related activities would result in some short-term visual impacts primarily on high-sensitivity viewers with foreground and possibly middleground views. Visual impacts would likely result from the use of cranes, pulling and tensioning equipment, other construction equipment, and temporary lighting, as well as dust from clearing and grading. However, disturbance would be transient and of short duration as construction activities progress along the transmission line route. Visual impacts are discussed in more detail in Section 3.2 – Visual Resources.

Construction could also increase demand for education, health care, and municipal services, as well as potentially increase demand for police and fire protection services. However, these impacts, were they to occur, would be expected to be temporary and would not be expected to measurably affect the quality of services currently received by local communities and residents.

Local construction expenditures for materials and supplies and spending by workers directly employed by the Project are expected to benefit local economies. Construction would also generate state and local tax revenues (see Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics).

Communities of Shared Interest

The term community of shared interest is used here to refer to geographically dispersed individuals who could experience common conditions of environmental effect. The National Agricultural Workers Survey for fiscal years 2001 and 2002 found that 83 percent of crop workers in the United States identified themselves as members of a Hispanic group, and 78 percent of crop workers were born outside the United States, primarily in Mexico (75 percent of all crop workers) (U.S. Department of Labor 2005). This survey also found that 30 percent of all farm workers had total family incomes below federal poverty guidelines.

The potential effects of construction on agricultural production are addressed in Section 3.18 – Agriculture. Potential effects to the agricultural sector and employment are discussed in Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics. Viewed in terms of agricultural operations in the potentially affected counties, total estimated construction disturbance represents a very small share of the 13 million acres of land in farms in the 19 potentially affected counties and is unlikely to noticeably affect overall agricultural production and employment in the affected counties. In addition, the impacts to agricultural production that would occur are not expected to have adverse human health or environmental effects on farm workers.

The Proposed Route and Route Alternatives would benefit service industry occupations that are typically relatively low paid, particularly those associated with accommodation and food service. These benefits would result from increased demand and spending by construction workers temporarily relocating to the Project region, and would be short-term.

Operations

Geographic Communities

Operation of the proposed Project is not expected to have high and adverse human health or environmental effects on nearby communities. Long-term visual impacts would result from the long-term presence of the transmission line structures and overhead conductors. Other long-term visual impacts could include land scarring from grading and other construction activities in semi-arid environments where vegetation recruitment and growth are slow. Vegetation would also remain cleared or partially cleared along some portions of the ROW for the operational life of the Project (see Section 3.2 – Visual Resources). Tall vegetation would be removed, with low-lying vegetation left in place or allowed to grow back following reclamation activities, where possible.

Local operation expenditures for materials and supplies and spending by workers would, however, have beneficial effects on the local economy, and the Project would generate state and local tax revenues (see Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics).

Communities of Shared Interest

Operation of the Proposed Route and Route Alternatives has the potential to negatively affect minority and low-income farm workers. However, as noted above with respect to construction, operation-related impacts to agricultural operations are not expected to noticeably affect overall agricultural production and employment in the affected counties or have adverse human health or environmental effects on farm workers. Potential effects on agricultural production are addressed in Section 3.18 – Agriculture and potential effects to the agricultural sector and employment are discussed in Section 3.4 – Socioeconomics.

Decommissioning

Overall impacts associated with decommissioning the proposed Project are expected to be similar to those that would occur under construction. Decommissioning would not be expected to result in high and adverse human health or environmental effects on nearby communities, workers employed in decommissioning activities, or agricultural workers and these activities would, therefore, have no potential to disproportionately affect minority and low-income communities. There would be residual visual impacts resulting from the long-term presence of the ROW after the Project has been decommissioned and the structures removed. These impacts would primarily be related to ground disturbance and visible at ground level, and would be expected to diminish over time.

Public Participation

Construction and Operations

The BLM has considered all input from persons or groups regardless of race, income status, or other social and economic characteristics. Public scoping efforts are described in Chapter 5.

Native American Consultation

Potentially affected minority populations include American Indian Tribes with an interest in the federal lands that could be affected by the Project. The BLM initiated government-to-government consultation with seven Native American Tribes in the

Project area in April 2008. The consultation was conducted to inform the various Tribes of the proposed undertaking and solicit their concerns and/or comments regarding the possible presence of TCPs or places of cultural, traditional, or religious importance to the Tribes in the proposed Project area. The following Tribes have been contacted:

- Northern Arapaho
- Northern Cheyenne
- Eastern Shoshone
- Shoshone-Bannock
- Northern Ute
- Shoshone-Paiute
- Northwest Shoshone Band
- Southern Arapaho
- Southern Cheyenne
- Oglala Sioux

This is discussed further in Section 3.3 – Cultural Resources and a summary of the status of the Native American consultation process is presented in Table 3.3-2.

Decommissioning

Decommissioning would be conducted in a manner that would not exclude minority and low-income groups from participation or subject persons to discrimination because of their race, color, or national origin.

3.5.2.3 Comparison of Alternatives by Segment

The analysis of minority and low-income populations by Census Block Group presented in the preceding Affected Environment section suggests the potential presence of minority and low-income communities in the vicinity of the Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and Route Alternatives. This analysis identified nine potential minority Census Block Groups. These block groups and the Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and Route Alternatives that would cross them are identified in Table 3.5-5.

Table 3.5-5. Potential Minority Populations by Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and Route Alternative

County/State	Census Tract	Block Group	Preferred / Proposed Route / Route Alternatives ^{1/}	Percent Minority Population
Cassia County, Idaho	9501	1	P7, 7, 7C, 7D, 7K	39
Cassia County, Idaho	9506	1	P7, 7	40
Elmore County, Idaho ^{2/}	9601	2	P8, 8, 8A, P9, 9, 9B	31
Elmore County, Idaho ^{2/}	9604	2	9D, 9F, 9G, 9H	31
Gooding County ^{2/}	9602	3	8A	41
Gooding County ^{2/}	9602	7	8A	41
Power County, Idaho	9601	2	5C	31
Twin Falls County, Idaho ^{2/}	3	1	9B, 9C	27
Twin Falls County, Idaho ^{2/}	14	1	P10, 10	45

1/ Preferred Route segments are identified by the letter P (e.g., P7); Proposed Route segments are identified by their number only (e.g., 7); and Route Alternatives are identified by segment and letter (e.g., 7C).

2/ Also identified as a potential low-income community, with 20 percent of more of the total population estimated to be below the poverty level in 2011.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2011b

Alternative 5C would cross the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Power County. Although the Shoshone-Bannock Tribal Council gave permission for BLM to consider the route across the reservation, the Fort Hall Business Council has voted not to permit the Project across the Reservation.

The low-income analysis identified 12 Census Block Groups where 20 percent or more of households were estimated to be below the poverty level in 2011. These block groups and the Preferred Route and Proposed Route segments and Route Alternatives that would cross them are identified in Table 3.5-6. Three of these block groups were also identified as potential minority communities in 2010. The block groups in Carbon County, Wyoming, and Bear Lake County, Idaho, are relatively small, 11 and 12 square miles, respectively, with population densities approaching the national average.

Table 3.5-6. Potential Low-Income Populations by Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and Route Alternative

County/State	Census Tract	Block Group	Preferred / Proposed Route / Route Alternatives ^{1/}	Percent Below Poverty Level
Carbon County, Wyoming	9681	1	P1W, 1W(a), 1W(c), 2	21.3
Bear Lake County, Idaho	9501	1	P4, 4	27.6
Bear Lake County, Idaho	9501	4	P4, 4, 4B, 4C, 4D, 4E, 4F	23.5
Elmore County, Idaho ^{2/}	9604	2	9D, 9F, 9G, 9H	28.2
Gooding County, Idaho	9601	2	P8, 8	36.3
Gooding County, Idaho ^{2/}	9602	3	8A	21.8
Gooding County, Idaho ^{2/}	9602	7	8A	22.0
Owyhee County, Idaho	9502	1	P8, 8, 8B, 8E, P9, 9, 9D, 9E, 9F, 9G, 9H, 9I	24.9
Owyhee County, Idaho	9502	2	9	20.2
Owyhee County, Idaho	9502	3	P9, 9, 9D, 9E, 9F, 9G, 9H	31.4
Twin Falls County, Idaho	3	3	9B	20.5
Twin Falls County, Idaho	15	3	8A, P9, 9, 9B, 9C	27.4

1/ Preferred Route segments are identified by the letter P (e.g., P9); Proposed Route segments are identified by their number only (e.g., 9); and Route Alternatives are identified by segment and letter (e.g., 9D).

2/ Also identified as a potential minority community.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2013b

The Owyhee County Board of County Commissioners has commented that location of a transmission line in Owyhee County rather than adjacent Ada County represents a potential environmental justice issue because Owyhee County has a larger minority population and a larger share of households below the poverty line than Ada County (Tables 3.5-1 and 3.5-3). The potentially affected census block groups in Owyhee County do not meet the definition of a minority community, but 3 of the 12 census block groups with more than 20 percent of households below the poverty level are located in Owyhee County (Table 3.5-6).

As discussed above, while the preceding analysis suggests the potential presence of minority and low income communities in the vicinity of the Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and Route Alternatives, construction of the proposed Project is not expected to have high and adverse human health or environmental effects on nearby communities. The Project would, however, have high, long-term visual impacts in some locations as discussed in detail in Section 3.2 – Visual Resources. The Census Block Groups

identified in Tables 3.5-5 and 3.5-6 are, for the most part, large, sparsely populated areas. Visual impacts have the potential to be high in these areas where the structures and overhead conductors would be visible to private residences. This is, for example, the case with the portion of Alternative 5C that crosses the Fort Hall Indian Reservation. The visual resources analysis found that there would be some areas of high impact where residential areas are located in the vicinity.

While these potential impacts exist, the proposed Project overall does not appear to exhibit systematic bias toward placing the Project in minority or low-income communities. The Preferred Route, Proposed Route, and Route Alternatives cross a total of 64 Census Block Groups; approximately 13 percent or 8 of these have the potential to be minority communities, and 19 percent or 12 could potentially be low-income. The major factors influencing routing decisions are described by proposed segment in Chapter 2 of this EIS.