United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Wyoming State Office
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In Reply Refer To:
(920Gertsch)
DES BLM/WY/PL-14/009+5101
WYW-174597

JAN 28 2014

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review is the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Land-use Plan Amendments (LUPAs) for the Energy Gateway South Transmission Project (Project). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared the DEIS in consultation with cooperating agencies and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), including Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provision of NEPA at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508; U.S. Department of the Interior guidance at 43 CFR Part 46; and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) NEPA procedures codified at 36 CFR 220; and other applicable laws and directives.

This DEIS has been prepared to analyze and disclose the impacts of granting a right-of-way on federal land to PacifiCorp (doing business as Rocky Mountain Power, the Applicant) for the purpose of constructing, operating, and maintaining the proposed 500-kilovolt single-circuit, alternating-current transmission line and amending BLM and USFS land-use plans to accommodate the proposed transmission line. The transmission line would begin at the planned Aeolus Substation near Medicine Bow, Carbon County, Wyoming, and would extend south and west to the planned Clover Substation (currently under construction) near Mona, Juab County, Utah, a distance of between 400 and 540 miles, depending on the route selected. The Project also includes (1) two series compensation stations at points between the Aeolus and Clover substations to improve transport capacity and efficiency of the transmission line, (2) the addition of new substation equipment for electrically connecting the transmission line at the Aeolus and Clover substations and the existing Mona Substation, (3) communication regeneration stations associated with the transmission line, (4) access roads to the transmission line structures where needed and where existing access is not available, (5) other ancillary facilities, (6) rebuilding and reconfiguring two existing 345kV transmission lines between the Clover and Mona substations, and (7) the existing Mona to Huntington 345kV transmission line would be rerouted through the Clover Substation.

The potential LUPAs are identified for areas where the Proposed Action is not consistent with the BLM and/or USFS land-use plans, and were prepared pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, implementing regulations, and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NFMA) as well as both the BLM and USFS land-use planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610 and 36 CFR 219.10, respectively.

The BLM has analyzed approximately 1,425 miles of alternative routes for the proposed 500kV transmission line. Portions of the alternative routes cross land administered by 10 BLM field offices (Rawlins, Little Snake, White River, Grand Junction, Vernal, Moab, Price, Salt Lake, Richfield, and Fillmore), three national forests (Ashley, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache, and Manti-La Sal), National Park Service, and Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission and cross land of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. The BLM determined the Project to be a major federal action requiring preparation of a DEIS. In addition, amendments would be required to land-use plans affected by the route selected for construction of the proposed transmission line. If the Proposed Action is approved, the BLM would issue a decision and right-of-way grant and the USFS would issue a decision and special use permit for constructing, operating, and maintaining the proposed transmission line and associated facilities. Depending on the route selected for the transmission line, other potentially affected federal agencies listed above may tier to the analysis in this EIS in issuing decisions and similar use authorizations.

As you may be aware, the BLM Wyoming State Office is also preparing a DEIS in response to another application for right-of-way on federal land for an extra-high-voltage, direct-current transmission line, the TransWest Express Transmission Project. This project is considered in the analysis of cumulative effects. The TransWest Express Transmission Project is proposed by a separate applicant (TransWest Express, LLC) to meet different interests and objectives. The two projects share many of the same transmission line alternative routes. At BLM's request, the two applicants are working together to co-locate their respective transmission lines, where the transmission line alternative routes coincide in accordance with the industry standards and to minimize environmental effects. Any adjustments to each project's transmission line alternative routes will be addressed in the Final EIS documents for each project.

An EIS is not a decision document. Rather, its purpose is to inform the public and interested parties of impacts associated with implementing the Applicant's proposal as associated with granting a right-of-way to construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line and associated facilities on federal lands, and to provide information to other regulatory agencies for use in their decision-making process for other permits required for implementation of the Project. The DEIS and LUPAs have been distributed to agencies required to review the Draft EIS and LUPAs and to other agencies, organizations, and individuals that requested copies. A newsletter announcing the availability of the DEIS was sent to approximately 14,200 individuals on the Project mailing list, including landowners within 1 mile on either side of the reference centerline of alternative routes considered for the Project.

The BLM will host 12 public open-house meetings in the Project area (refer to the enclosed calendar), to provide an overview of the Project and take comments on the proposed Project and the DEIS and LUPAs. The open-houses will be announced by the BLM at least 15 days in advance through a newsletter and local and regional media releases, and will be posted on the Project website at:

http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/gateway_south.html.

The 90-day comment period begins with the publication of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Notice of Availability (NOA) of the Draft EIS in the *Federal Register*. The review period will close at the end of the 90-day period, the date of which will be posted on the website shown below. Comments may be submitted electronically to **BLM_WY_GatewaySouth@blm.gov** and postal mail copies should be sent to:

Tamara Gertsch
National Project Manager
BLM Wyoming State Office
P.O. Box 21150
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003
(307) 775-6115

Hand delivery of written comments to 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming, may occur between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding federal holidays. Envelopes and the subject line of emails should be identified as "Energy Gateway South Transmission Project Draft EIS."

Comments received during the 90-day comment period following publication of the NOA will be considered prior to a decision on the Proposed Action.

Comments on the DEIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if the comments refer to chapters and pages of the DEIS. Comments may address the adequacy of specific analyses in the DEIS and the merits of the alternatives formulated and discussed in the document (40 CFR 1503.3). Responses to substantive comments (40 CFR 1503.3) will be included in the Final EIS.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or any other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may request in your comment that your personal identifying information be withheld from public review, BLM cannot guarantee that it will be able to do so. Comments submitted anonymously will not be accepted.

Electronic copies of the Draft EIS on CD are available for public distribution. The Draft EIS also is available for review and downloading from the BLM website noted above. Printed copies of the DEIS are available for review at the following locations:

Wyoming
BLM Wyoming State Office
BLM Rawlins Field Office

Colorado
BLM Grand Junction Field Office
BLM Colorado State Office
BLM Little Snake Field Office
BLM White River Field Office

Utah
BLM Utah State Office
BLM Fillmore Field Office
BLM Moab Field Office
BLM Price Field Office
BLM Richfield Field Office
BLM Salt Lake Field Office
BLM Vernal Field Office
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
Ashley National Forest
Manti-La Sal National Forest

If you have any questions regarding the NEPA or land-use planning process used to prepare the EIS and LUPAs or need additional information regarding the Project, please contact Tamara Gertsch, BLM National Project Manager, at **tgertsch@blm.gov** or (307) 775-6115.

Sincerely,

Donald A. Simpson
State Director

Attachment

ENERGY GATEWAY SOUTH TRANSMISSION PROJECT DRAFT EIS
OPEN HOUSES

The BLM will host 12 open houses in the Project area in March and early April 2014 to provide information about the Project and Draft EIS and will accept public comments on the Draft EIS. Stop by the open houses anytime between 4:00 and 7:00 p.m. on the dates and at the locations shown below.

MARCH AND APRIL 2014			
Monday	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**
March 10 **Grand Junction, Colorado** Colorado Mesa University, Ballroom 1100 North Avenue	**March 11** **Vernal, Utah** Western Park 302 East 200 South	**March 12** **Fort Duchesne, Utah** Ute Indian Tribal Office 988 South 7500 East	**March 13** **Roosevelt, Utah** Roosevelt Jr. High School 350 West 200 East
March 17 **Green River, Utah** Green River High School 745 West Pirate Avenue	**March 18** **Price, Utah** Carbon County Fairgrounds 450 South Fairgrounds Road, Room 130	**March 19** **Mount Pleasant, Utah** North Sanpete High School 390 East 700 South	**March 20** **Nephi, Utah** Juab High School 802 North 650 East
March 24 to 28 – no open houses scheduled			
March 31 **Rangely, Colorado** Colorado Northwestern Community College Weiss Conference Room 500 Kennedy Drive	**April 1** **Craig, Colorado** Colorado Northwestern Community College Academic Building Commons Area 2801 West 9th Street	**April 2** **Baggs, Wyoming** Valley Community Center 255 West Osborne	**April 3** **Rawlins, Wyoming** Jeffrey Memorial Community Center 315 West Pine Street