

# ATTACHMENT A

## **BLYTHE ENERGY PROJECT TRANSMISSION LINE**

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION,  
WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION &  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

### **New Transmission Lines Proposed in Riverside County**

The Western Area Power Administration (Western) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) want to hear from you about the proposed Blythe Energy Project transmission lines. Blythe Energy, LLC, proposes to develop two new transmission lines in the vicinity of its Blythe Energy 520-megawatt Power Plant located in the City of Blythe in Riverside County. The proposed modifications would be located entirely within Riverside County, between the Western Buck Substation situated adjacent to the Blythe Energy Power Plant and the Julian Hinds Substation near Hayfield, California. The two proposed transmission lines are described as follows:

#### **Buck to Julian Hinds Transmission Line**

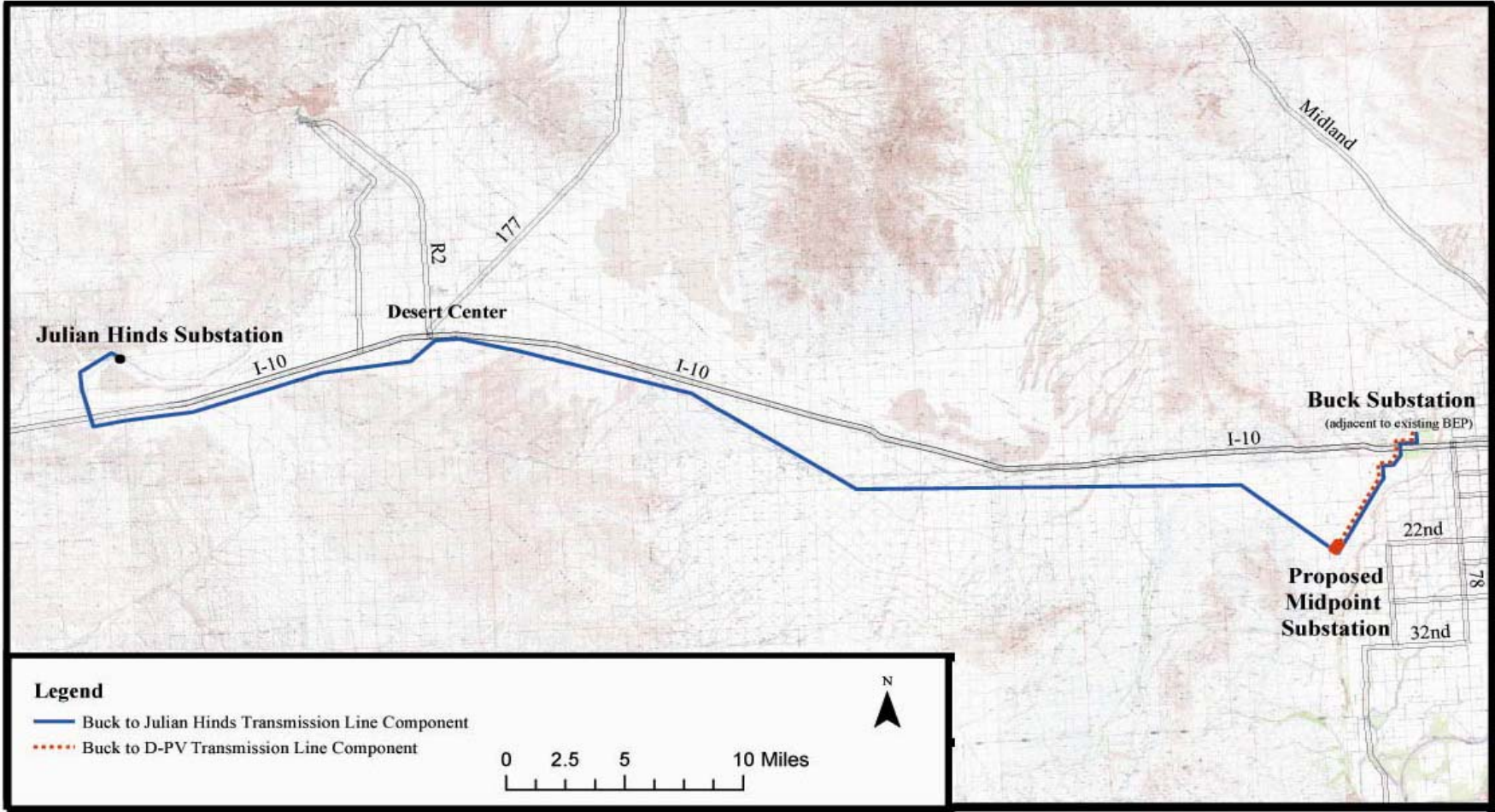
- Upgrades to Buck Substation.
- Installation of approximately 67.4 miles of new 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line on concrete pole structures between the Buck Substation located adjacent to the Blythe Energy Power Plant and the Julian Hinds Substation located approximately sixty miles to the west.
- The proposed transmission line route would generally follow the existing Southern California Edison (SCE) 500-kV Devers-Palo Verde ("D-PV1") transmission line south of Interstate 10.
- Upgrades to the Julian Hinds Substation.

#### **Buck to Devers-Palo Verde Transmission Line**

- Upgrades to Buck Substation.
- Installation of approximately 6.7 miles of a new 230-kV transmission line between the Buck Substation and the existing SCE Devers-Palo Verde 500-kV transmission line south of the Blythe Energy Power Plant and Interstate 10.
- The transmission line would use concrete single-pole structures.
- Construction of a new "Midpoint" Substation at the point of interconnection with the existing SCE transmission line.

The Blythe Energy Power Plant is a merchant power plant. Blythe Energy delivers the power generated at its facility into the transmission system to sell the electric energy to any buyer willing to make a purchase. The owners bear the financial risk and, in return, reap any benefit of owning and operating the power plant and selling the power. The proposed transmission lines described herein are generally designed to increase the electrical capability of the transmission paths between the Blythe Energy Power Plant and the electrical transmission system serving Southern California electric load centers. The proposed new transmission facilities are specifically intended to enhance the ability of Blythe Energy to deliver the majority of its electric output into the Southern California transmission system. Blythe Energy anticipates that it will fund the entire cost of the construction of the proposed transmission facilities, if approved, and the cost for their operation.

The Proposed Blythe Energy Transmission Line Project is located in eastern Riverside County as shown below.



## What's the project schedule?

Western, BLM and the Energy Commission are conducting a joint scoping meeting on November 10, 2004, at the Blythe City Hall Council Chambers 235 N. Broadway, Blythe CA, 92225 beginning at 1:00 p.m. The following timeline shows other planned near-term project milestones. These dates may change due to project demands but will be re-noticed should that be required.

- February 27, 2005 -- Combined Energy Commission Final Staff Assessment and Western/BLM Draft EA
- March 3, 2005 -- Combined Energy Commission Public Hearing and Western/BLM Public Comment Meeting
- April 12, 2005 -- Close of Energy Commission and Western/BLM Public Comment Period

We will need your comments by December 10, 2004, to be considered in the draft Environmental Assessment (EA). However, you will be encouraged to comment to either, the Energy Commission, Western or BLM throughout the entire permitting and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Comments on the draft EA once published will be considered in preparing the final EA. A notice for those comments and a EA workshop will be published at a later date.

## Where can I get more information?

Feel free to contact Western, BLM or the Energy Commission personnel familiar with the project (see Key Contact Information below), or visit the Energy Commission's website at:

[www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/blytheline](http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/blytheline)

### Key Contact Information

#### At Western contact:

Mark J. Wieringa  
Western Area Power Administration  
Office of Environment  
12155 West Alameda Parkway  
Lakewood,  
CO 80228-8213  
(720)962-7448  
(720)962-7263(fax)  
E-mail:wieringa@wapa.gov

#### At BLM contact:

Claude Kirby  
Realty Specialist  
Bureau of Land Management  
Palm Springs/South Coast Field Office  
P.O. Box 581260  
North Palm Springs, CA 92258  
(760) 251-4850  
(760) 251-4899(fax)

#### At the Energy Commission,

contact: Jack W. Caswell  
California Energy Commission  
Energy Facilities Siting and Environmental Protection Division  
1526 Ninth Street, MS-15  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916)653-0062  
(916)654-3882 (fax)  
E-mail:jcaswell@energy.state.ca.us

## **Why is Western involved in the Blythe Energy Transmission Line Project?**

Western is a Federal power marketing agency under the U. S. Department of Energy that operates and maintains about 17,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines and associated facilities in the West, including the Buck Substation. Our mission is to market power from Federal hydroelectric plants operated by the Bureau of Reclamation such as those at Boulder, Davis and Parker dams. Federal law requires us to provide utilities and merchant power plants open access to transmission services so that they can move power to load areas. We provide these services through an interconnection if there is available capacity on the Federal transmission system. Any entity requesting transmission services must abide by our Open Access Transmission Service Tariff and our General Requirements for Interconnection. (More information about these requirements is available on our web site at [www.wapa.gov/interconn/intabout](http://www.wapa.gov/interconn/intabout).) Requests for interconnection have been filed with Western for interconnection of the proposed transmission lines at the Buck Substation. Western proposes to make modifications at its Buck Substation to accommodate the interconnection of the proposed transmission lines. Because the proposed Blythe Energy transmission line project would interconnect to Western's power system, the interconnection request triggers a Federal NEPA review process in addition to the State permitting process.

## **Why is BLM involved in the Blythe Energy Transmission Line Project?**

Portions of these proposed transmission lines would be constructed on BLM administered public lands. The project proponent would have to secure a right-of-way grant from the BLM prior to constructing these facilities on BLM lands. This grant would allow the grant holder to construct, use, and maintain an electrical transmission facility on BLM lands under terms and conditions specified in the grant. The BLM decision in this process would be to either approve issuance of the grant on the proposed or other alternative alignment considered in the EA or deny issuance of any right-of-way grant for the entire project.

## **Western and BLM need your help to consider environmental impacts**

Before Western and BLM can agree to the interconnection and construction of the proposed project, the Federal agencies must consider the project's potential environmental impacts in a NEPA process. One of the first steps in the NEPA process is to ask the public to help identify the scope of, and alternatives to, the proposed action. Western and BLM are asking the public to identify any issues of concern to inform the agencies about potential environmental impacts. Western and BLM want the public to comment on the proposal, offer suggestions to improve the proposal, and even suggest alternative actions. You can provide input into this process by attending a joint Energy Commission/ Western/BLM scoping meeting on November 10, 2004, or by e-mailing, delivering, or sending by mail or fax your comments to the contacts named in this newsletter. This newsletter also serves as Western's and BLM's notification of plans to prepare an environmental assessment (EA). An EA provides the agencies a framework to analyze and judge the magnitude of environmental impacts. If the agencies find that there are no significant environmental impacts, we can issue a "finding of no significant impacts" and move forward with the project. If the EA process identifies likely unmitigated significant impacts, an environmental impact statement process will be initiated to take a more detailed look at the impacts and alternative approaches to the project. The accompanying flow diagram shows the NEPA process for the Blythe Energy Transmission Project. Details on the transmission line project proposal can be found at the Energy Commission's web site at [www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/blytheline](http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/blytheline).

## **Western, BLM and the Energy Commission are working together**

For the proposed Blythe Energy Transmission Line Project, our NEPA process will be meshed with the Energy Commission's post certification amendment process to streamline the environmental review and make it easier for the public to follow one process instead of two . The Energy Commission is responsible for reviewing the environmental impacts of the project in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and ensuring that the project complies with all local, state, and Federal laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards. In addition, the Energy Commission issues any state or local permits necessary for the construction of the power plant. Public meetings and environmental documents will be prepared jointly. The first document will be a joint final staff assessment (Energy Commission) / draft EA (Western/BLM). This joint document will be available to the public and will be circulated to state agencies and Indian tribes for comment.

# WESTERN/BLM NEPA PROCESS

