

Record of Decision for the Coyote Business Park Project

DECISION

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) has decided to implement its portion of the Proposed Action (Alternative E) identified in the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs' (BIA) Coyote Business Park Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (DOE/EIS-0371, September 2006). BPA will remove some existing wood structures and replace them with fewer, taller steel poles to raise the height of the conductors on a portion of its 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line that crosses the business park site.

The BIA was the lead agency for the EIS for this project. BPA was a cooperating agency for the EIS. This Record of Decision (ROD) only covers the BPA portion of the Proposed Action related to its specific responsibilities. The BIA has issued its own ROD (February 16, 2007) documenting its decision to implement the Proposed Action (Alternative E) and approve leases between the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and prospective businesses wishing to locate within the proposed development.

BACKGROUND

The CTUIR will develop, build, and manage a light industrial and commercial business park known as the Coyote Business Park. The Coyote Business Park will be on a 520 (+/-) acre site south of Interstate 84 at Exit 216 and west of South Market Road about 7 miles east of Pendleton, Oregon, on the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The land is held in trust by the United States for the CTUIR, the beneficial owners.

The first phase of the proposed business park development will be construction of infrastructure, including extension of the municipal water and sanitary sewer systems and utilities and construction of stormwater drainage facilities and roads to the proposed lots.

The second phase of the proposed development will be to construct and operate business facilities on the lots. The second phase will likely be constructed and financed by individual business owners although the CTUIR could also construct the business facilities and lease them to private operators. Anticipated light industrial operations could include warehouses and distribution facilities as well as shops for the assembly of previously manufactured components.

BPA is a federal agency that owns and operates the majority of the high-voltage electric transmission system in the Pacific Northwest. This system is known as the Federal Columbia River Transmission System (FCRTS). BPA owns and operates the 230-kV Roundup-LaGrande transmission line that crosses the business park site. The CTUIR has requested that BPA replace the existing structures with taller structures to increase the clearance between the ground and the

conductors and reduce the footprint of the line, thus expanding CTUIR's options for future parking and transportation needs.

DESCRIPTION OF BPA'S PROPOSED ACTION

During the first phase of the project, BPA will replace 10-12 wooden "H-frame" structures, each about 60 feet tall, on the portion of its Roundup-LaGrande transmission line that crosses the site. BPA will replace these structures with 7 to 9 steel poles each about 110 feet tall. BPA will use its existing access road system to remove the old structures and install the new steel poles.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The EIS includes an analysis of the No Action Alternative (Alternative A), the Proposed Action and Preferred Alternative (Alternative E), and three additional action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, and D). All of the action alternatives are located in the same general area. They differ primarily in the size of the proposed business park (21-142 acres), whether domestic water would be provided through the drilling of a new well or extension of an existing community water system, and whether sanitary sewer service would be provided by installation of septic tanks and drain fields or connection to an existing municipal sewer system. In Alternatives A and B, BPA would not rebuild the portion of the Roundup-LaGrande line that crosses the business park site. In Alternatives C, D, and E, BPA would rebuild this portion of its Roundup-LaGrande transmission line.

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

The No Action Alternative is the environmentally preferable alternative because it would have the fewest impacts to the natural environment. No construction would occur under this alternative.

PUBLIC COMMENT

BIA filed a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register (FR) on January 9, 2002 (66 FR 1191). A public scoping meeting was held in Pendleton, Oregon, on January 23, 2003, to solicit comments. On November 6, 2003, an open house was held in Pendleton, Oregon to update the public on the environmental process for the proposed project. A Notice of Availability for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was filed in the Federal Register on December 16, 2005 (70 FR 74844). Public hearings on the Draft EIS were held in Pendleton, Oregon, on January 19, and January 30, 2006. No comments were received concerning the BPA transmission line or replacement of the structures.

A Notice of Availability for the Final Environmental Impact Statement was filed in the Federal Register on November 24, 2006 (71 FR 67895). The Final EIS addressed issues and concerns raised during the public comment period. Appendix G of the Final EIS contains all comments made on the Draft EIS and includes responses to those comments.

The BIA received a formal written comment on the Final EIS from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA stated the changes made between the Draft EIS and the Final EIS addressed their concerns regarding potential impacts to surface and ground water quality. In particular, the Final EIS includes information showing the proposed project would not contribute to water quality degradation due to the low impact development strategies integral to the project proposal. The EPA also appreciated the commitment to monitor water quality.

RATIONALE FOR DECISION

In making the decision whether to implement BPA's portion of the Proposed Action identified in the EIS, BPA considered how well the various alternatives would meet the project purposes. By allowing for greater flexibility in site development, BPA's action helps fulfill the purposes of the Proposed Action identified in the EIS. More specifically, BPA's action assists in ensuring that the proposed business park site is a suitable location for business operations that would diversify the CTUIR Reservation economy.

In addition, the United States Government has a trust responsibility to Indian tribes. Implementation of the BPA portion of the Proposed Action would aid the United States Government in fulfilling its statutory mission and responsibilities.

BPA has reviewed the alternatives, their potential economic and environmental impacts, and comments received from the public and other federal, state, and local agencies. Although BPA's portion of the Proposed Action would create impacts, these impacts would primarily be minimal, short-term, and temporary impacts that would occur only during construction. Operational impacts would be limited to a relatively minor visual impact from raising the height of an already-existing transmission line by rebuilding this line with taller support structures in a commercial/industrial setting rather than an agricultural setting. Even with these impacts, the Proposed Action is preferable to the No Action Alternative because it will allow the CTUIR the ability to provide economic development for its members.

MITIGATION

Construction impacts will be minimal, short-term and temporary. The BPA steel poles will be a visible element in the landscape of the business park. The new poles will be taller than the existing structures, but will be in a commercial/industrial setting rather than an agricultural setting. To avoid environmental harm, work will take place within the existing disturbed area of the transmission line right-of-way. BPA would also work with CTUIR and BIA to make sure that any sensitive areas that may be identified along the transmission line right-of-way will be avoided. In addition, vegetation maintenance along the transmission line right-of-way will be conducted in accordance with the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program (DOE/EIS-0285) and ROD (August 23, 2000).

PUBLIC AVAILABILITY

This ROD will be available to all interested parties and affected persons and agencies. It is being sent to all stakeholders who requested a copy. Copies of the Coyote Business Park Draft and Final EISs and additional copies of this ROD are available from BPA's Public Information Center, P.O. Box 3621, Portland, Oregon, 97208-3621. Copies of these documents may also be obtained by using BPA's nationwide toll-free document request line: 1-800-622-4520, or by accessing BPA's project Web site:

http://www.efw.bpa.gov/environmental_services/Document_Library/Coyote_Business_Park/.

CONCLUSION

I have decided it is in the best interest of BPA to replace the existing structures that cross the proposed Coyote Business Park with steel poles for the reasons given above.

Issued in Portland, Oregon.

/s/ Stephen J. Wright
Stephen J. Wright
Administrator and
Chief Executive Officer

March 5, 2007
Date