



Montana Department of ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Brian Schweitzer, Governor

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July 24, 2008

Dear Interested Party:

On June 20, 2008 the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) issued for public comment the document Draft Conclusions and Determination of Substantive Compliance with the Montana Major Facility Siting Act for the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Proposed Rebuild of the Libby (Flathead Electric Cooperative) to Troy Section of the Libby to Bonners Ferry 115-kilovolt Transmission Line. With this letter, DEQ issues its Final Conclusions and Determination for the proposed project.

BPA is proposing to rebuild a 17-mile segment of this line between a Flathead Electric Cooperative substation at Libby, Montana and a BPA substation near Troy, Montana. The proposed rebuild of this aging line would provide stable and reliable transmission service to northwestern Montana. BPA issued the Final Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0379) for the proposed project in May 2008, and plans to issue its Record of Decision in July 2008. The US Forest Service is a cooperating agency for this project. Their timeline for issuing a Record of Decision on the proposed project is also July 2008.

DEQ received and reviewed numerous comments on the Draft Conclusions and Determination. DEQ recognizes the many concerns of local residents along the existing line for potential health and safety effects. DEQ also recognizes the substantial resource considerations for public lands in the project area. The difficult decision on where to site the proposed rebuild required careful weighing and balancing of these often conflicting interests, while also considering the importance of expeditiously moving forward on replacement of the aging line.

Based on full consideration of the above information, DEQ has determined that a rebuild in the existing right-of-way, together with the Kootenai River Crossing realignment, best meets substantive requirements of the Major Facility Siting Act (75-20-101, et seq., MCA). More detail is provided in the enclosed Final Conclusions and Determination, and the enclosed Responses to Comments.

These documents are also available on the DEQ website at <http://deq.mt.gov/MFS/index.asp>. DEQ Environmental Specifications for the Libby-Troy Transmission Line Rebuild can also be viewed here. If you have further questions regarding DEQ's Final Conclusions and Determination, contact Nancy Johnson at (406)444-6797 or Tom Ring at (406)444-6785.

Sincerely,

Warren D. McCullough

Warren D. McCullough, Bureau Chief
Environmental Management Bureau
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Enclosures