



**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AND GATEWAY WEST TRANSMISSION LINE TASK FORCE
June 24, 2011**

The Cassia County Board of Commissioners met this day in a Special Meeting with the Gateway West Transmission Line Task Force. Chairman Dennis Crane, Paul Christensen and Bob Kunau, Board Members; Joseph W. Larsen, Clerk of the Board, and Kerry D. McMurray, County Administrator, were present.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was held at the Council Chambers of the City of Burley. Gateway West Transmission Line Task Force Chairman, Brent Stoker called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. Stoker introduced those present acknowledging representatives from both Cassia and Power Counties. He also introduced attorney, Doug Balfour, who was to present information for recommendations of requesting information on behalf of the Task Force through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

PRESENTATION OF PROSPOSAL UNDER FOIA – DOUG BALFOUR

Balfour referred to a draft Environment Impact Statement to be prepared by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) that is to be released to the public sometime this fall. Following that release, there will be a ninety (90) day comment period regarding the proposed and alternate routes for the power transmission lines. He presented the Idaho Power proposed route which more directly effects private land and alternate routes proposed by the Task Force that impacts more public land. The alternate routes through public land also present a potential impact on sage grouse. He suggested that the Task Force needs to come up with mitigation strategies to address that impact during the comment period. Finding out information that the BLM has that they are considering as a potential threat to endangered species would be advisable in addressing reasons favorable to the proposed alternative routes. The BLM has a study group that meets regularly to determine how to handle sage grouse and transmission lines. A suggested way to acquire information from that study is to request that under the FOIA in defending the alternative corridor as being reasonable. Balfour drafted such a request for acquiring all study group environmental impact information about sage grouse analysis for the Board and Task Force to consider. Balfour also requested a fee waiver by virtue of Cassia and Power Counties having no commercial interest and as cooperating agencies in these projects. A biologist hired to study a sample of private land to provide viability for mitigation purposes would make sense for a proposed alternative route.

Balfour entertained question of the group regarding this suggestion for request. A general discussion ensued regarding bald and golden eagles, the Ruby Pipeline natural gas trust settlement, Secretary Salazar's initiative for update of visual resource inventories that may impact private and public lands, and the western watersheds environmental group requests.

RECOMMENDATION AND MOTION

Chairman Stoker indicated this is the best opportunity for negotiating for the alternative route and that Gateway West was prepared for their Task Force to make a recommendation to the Board by motion for a FOIA request as presented and amended as needed. Task Force member Doug Pickett made such motion, seconded by Pat McCammon, followed by a unanimous yea vote.

County Administrator Kerry D. McMurray presented that it was appropriate that the Board take action in this Special Meeting. Commissioner Christensen made a motion that the Board act on the recommendation of the Task Force for a FOIA request of the BLM as presented, seconded by Commissioner Kunau, and followed by a unanimous yea vote. The FOIA request will be signed by the Board to be provided to the Power County Commissioners to act on in their meeting on Monday, June 27, 2011.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Task Force Chairman Stoker recommended that Task Force members reserve comments personally and officially to the media and allow Cassia and Power County Commissioners to make all official statements.

RECESS

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 2.47 p.m.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE AT TODAY'S MEETING

Gateway West Transmission Task Force: Brent Stoker, Chairman; Kent Searle, Pat McCammon, Mark Streeter, and Ivan Permann; members; Vicki Meadows, Power County Commissioner; Scott Bedke, Idaho House of Representatives; and Laurie Welch, The Times News.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

/s/ _____
Joseph W. Larsen, Clerk

/s/ _____
Dennis Crane, Chairman