

Cassia County Gateway Transmission Line Task Force

Meeting Minutes
June 15, 2009

Opening:

The first regular meeting of the Cassia County Gateway Transmission Line Task Force was called to order at 2:00 on June 15, 2009, in the City Hall Council Chambers, Burley, Idaho, by Brent Stoker.

Present:

(See Attached List)

A. Welcome/Introductions

Brent Stoker welcomed those in attendance to this meeting. Recognition of current members of the Task Force, as well as introductions of others in attendance then occurred.

B. Idaho Power Presentation

Todd Adams of Idaho Power, introduced representatives of Idaho Power to be presenting information at this meeting. Dave Angell presented information regarding Idaho Power Regulatory Structure, Reliability Assessment, Required Electrical Performance, Line Outages, Contingency Planning, and Consequences. Mark Webb asked a question regarding where Idaho Power came up with ideas that there would be more potential problems with the North Corridor (proposed) route than other routes. Mr. Angell replied that it was not his intention to imply that there would be any more or less problems, but that their design of this system was to keep separation between the two 500 lines that were built. Angell discussed major problems they were experiencing over non-irrigated lands including grassland fires, stating that if the lines were over irrigated lands, fires would be less likely to occur. Lynn Steadman asked questions regarding potential events occurring over irrigated grounds, including smoke issues when using burning methods/stubble control, and what could be done during construction of lines to help minimize effects of potential events, such as insulation of wires, and burying of lines. Angell responded that he was unaware of any products being offered to provide appropriate insulation of 500 kv wire volume. He noted that burying of kv lines would be extremely expensive and they would have to look at who would bear those costs. He noted that their first position would be to keep the lines away from each other as much as possible, and then look at mitigation issues for areas where they can't keep them away from each other. Kent Searle asked questions regarding de-energizing the lines during a grassland fire, and how the foliage is managed. Angell responded that the lines are de-energized to avoid danger for fire-fighters out during a short-circuit occurrence and that Idaho Power is allowed by BLM to manage foliage around the wooden and metal structures for a small distance. Mr. Searle suggested a study be done to look at management of foliage to greatly reduce the chance of a hot burning grassland fire. Mr. Searle further asked what, other than grassland fires, within the last 10 years has caused

an outage in this area. Mr. Angell responded that recent (February 2009) micro bursts have occurred in the Blackfoot area. Specifically in the Midway area, Angell was unaware of any outages. Mr. Searle then asked what the general flow of current is between the Pacific Northwest and Wyoming area. Angell responded that the flow patterns change dependent upon seasonal exchange, typically from the Pacific Northwest into Idaho in the summer and out of Wyoming/ Idaho into the Pacific Northwest in the spring and fall conditions. Searle asked additional questions regarding peak loads/demands and generating facilities planning. Doug Pickett asked for an Idaho Power definition of “significant” regarding the two 500 lines together. Angell responded by noting that transmission lines that are in close proximity for more than a mile, would be where the studies would need to be run to demonstrate performance. Pickett then asked if Idaho Power’s definition of “a significant portion” is the same as the regulatory commissions’ definition. Angell responded by defending reasons why he came up with ‘a mile’, for the evaluation process for credible multiple line outages. Pickett’s final question was regarding the flash-over and smoke causes of short circuits in regards to ratings. Angell responded that power can usually be restored once the smoke clears and without having to go out. Joe Tugaw, Jr., asked questions of how wide the northern corridor is. Tugaw additionally asked if Idaho Power has any statistics based on historical data indicating the risk factors of multiple transmission lines going through a single corridor. Angell replied that they don’t currently have requested statistics, but that data could be generated over time. Discussion then occurred regarding Idaho Powers planning horizon.

Mike Bracke of Idaho Power then presented information regarding the feasibility of relocating the existing and future expansion of Borah substation. Bracke presented diagrams of the existing substation, providing an estimated cost of 82 million to relocate the Borah substation. Doug Balfour asked a clarification question that the estimated cost was only for relocating the existing substation, not the proposed expansion. Bracke concurred. Balfour then asked why the proposed expansion couldn’t be built elsewhere. Angell responded with reasons that based on studies, it would be the most economical structure they could build. Mark Webb asked question of what the cost would be to place it somewhere else. Angell replied with an estimate cost of between 10 and 20 million, but that an exact cost would require a funded study be done. Senator Denton Darrington asked a clarification question regarding NERC, of is it a regulatory agency or advisory agency, and how it fits with what Idaho Power is allowed to do. Angell responded that NERC develops the standards but that FERC implements the standards.

An investigation of other ideas of the narrow area /northern route was then examined by the group, with Brent Stoker conveying to Idaho Power the concept of looking into other public grounds that might have possibilities for Idaho Power, to be considered, including the area north of Crater’s of the Moon National Monument, and an area following the highway, through Carey, and what if any potential this proposed area may have. Idaho power responded that a fair amount of irrigated ground exists here and that this area was previously looked at by Mountain States Intertie (MSTI) and met with opposition. Discussion then occurred regarding this proposed alternate “boxed” route through Power, Blaine, and Minidoka Counties. Vicki Meadows with Power County, discussed issues they were trying to avoid with proposed route, such as it traversing over their best dry

and irrigated grounds, and most expensive development grounds within their county, and the additional concern of the Borah station being overloaded. The surrounding industrial, and residential areas would be greatly affected by the proposed path, and suggested alternative routes be considered. Tom Bowman, Blaine County Commissioner, provided comment indicating that the proposed northern route would be problematic through Carey Valley private lands, as previously experienced by the MSTI project.

C. Open Issues

Brent Stoker stated that this northern alternative is the preferable priority option of the Task Force, and recognized that in the event this route is not feasible, the task force will have to look at the options available going through Cassia County, and then (with assistance of Jeff Steele/BLM provided a brief overview of the two southern Cassia County routes, which will be the topic of the next meeting. Stoker requested that Idaho Power note and be prepared to respond to the follow questions and requests:

- 1) If the BLM allowed an adequate corridor for foliage management, could this be effective in the reduction or prevention of grassland fires along the transmission line corridors?
- 2) Provide documentation of all micro-bursts and/or ice storms that have caused outages in the areas from the choke hold to Midway portion of the lines within the past ten (10) years.
- 3) Provide statistics based upon historical data indicating the risk factors of multiple transmission lines going through a single corridor.
- 4) Provide information on the feasibility of exploring other options, such as line insulation and burying of lines, to keep from being de-rated through the choke hold.
- 5) Provide information on the feasibility of going North or West of the Borah Substation, rather than expanding the Borah Substation, including an estimated cost.
- 6) Provide information on the feasibility (cost estimate and mileage) of going North of Crater's of the Moon National Monument and through the Carey Valley (Northern Route), through Blaine, Power, and Minidoka Counties.

D. Agenda for Next Meeting

Review possible southern routes through Cassia County.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 3:56 P.M. by Brent Stoker. The next Cassia County Gateway Transmission Line Task Force meeting will be at 2:00 P.M. on Monday, June 22, 2009, at the Burley City Hall Council Chambers, Burley, Idaho.

Minutes submitted by: Susan M. Keck, Deputy Clerk, Cassia County

Approved by: Task Force 06/22/2009