

# Cassia County Gateway Transmission Line Task Force Regular Meeting Minutes July 20, 2009

## Opening:

The sixth regular meeting of the Cassia County Gateway Transmission Line Task Force was held at 2:00 P.M., July 20, 2009, in the City Hall Council Chambers, Burley, Idaho. The meeting was recorded in digital format and is available on the county website at [www.cassiacyounty.org](http://www.cassiacyounty.org). Time stamps are included in these abbreviated minutes for reference purposes.

## Present:

(See Attached List)

### A. Call to order/Approval of Minutes/ Overview of Meeting

[2:04:54 PM](#) Brent Stoker called this meeting to order. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Stoker gave a brief overview of the agenda for today's meeting. [2:06:45 PM](#) Cassia County Commissioner Clay Handy briefed the group on the upcoming meeting with the other counties involved with a consolidated corridor. He also updated the group on letters from the county commissioners to the BLM. Handy noted the county's appreciation of the Task Force. He noted that after the Almo meeting, they feel that there is a viable alternative with minimal impacts. [2:10:23 PM](#) Von Gibby asked if we have heard back from Nevada and Box Elder County, if they would be attending the meeting on Thursday. Handy responded. [2:11:15 PM](#) Stoker noted that it was brought to his attention that a word was omitted in the previous meeting minutes. The word "no" should be added in front of the word "harm". A motion was made and seconded to make this correction as noted, with voting on the matter unanimous in the affirmative.

### B. Review of proposed Alternate Stateline Route

[2:14:23 PM](#) Walt Vering, TetraTech, conducted a review of the proposed Alternate Stateline Route, taking questions from the group. Stoker noted to those present from the Almo area, that this was an opportunity for them to comment or question. Vering began a review of the route, noting nest area constraints. [2:27:59 PM](#) Stoker questioned if there was a better way to track houses other than the naked eye. Vering replied that they have attempted to identify all the structures along the route through imagery. [2:28:13 PM](#) Steve Ward asked how far south the route is from the road. [2:30:39 PM](#) Stoker asked a question regarding the ownership layer color coding, on the map. [2:35:24 PM](#) Scott Bedke asked a question as to how far in Nevada the line would need to go. Measurement indicated about five miles. [2:38:47 PM](#) Lynn Steadman asked a question regarding two other places where it was talked about going south of Roadless Areas with a potential of going through these areas where there are existing roads. [2:39:58 PM](#) Review of route continued. [2:42:08 PM](#) Joe Tugaw requested that the substation (Cedar Hill) start being referred to as the potential Hollister substation, for clarification. [2:43:27 PM](#) Todd Adams, Idaho power, discussed 345 KV ties to plants in Nevada.

### C. CAFO Siting Considerations

[2:44:42 PM](#) Stoker requested from Idaho Power what process took place for siting CAFO's along the proposed red line. [2:45:26 PM](#) Vering responded that originally in the process it was visual identification, but later a person was sent to Cassia and Power Counties to make a formal request of a list of permits issued in the counties, which was then converted to digital format to be designated on the route. [2:47:21 PM](#) Kent Searle asked to review of existing and permitted CAFO site designations along the routes. [2:48:58 PM](#) Stoker commented that although data had been updated to reflect non-existing CAFO's, he noted for the record that originally, back in April, only the permitted existing CAFOs were identified, but not the non-existing permitted CAFO's. Vering acknowledged that originally only visual identifications of existing CAFO's were noted, and that they tried to avoid those areas as well as homes. [2:50:06 PM](#) Kent Searle asked a question as to when a new or permitted CAFO was discovered in the proposed route, how was it handled. Vering responded that the proposed route was not changed at all based on the new set of

information. [2:51:20 PM](#) Clay Moline, asked a question regarding the route going through Granite Pass route and up to Cedar Hill [2:53:03 PM](#) Review continued of the proposed route up to cedar hill & Hollister substation comparisons. [2:54:15 PM](#) Pat McCammon asked a question regarding sage grouse lek studies, asking if it was just from Fish and Game data. Vering responded that data was gathered from both Idaho Fish and Game and BLM databases and records, including active, inactive, historic and unknown leks. He noted that if a lek was proven to be inactive, it might be able to be taken off the map. [2:57:43 PM](#) McCammon asked if it also related to raptors. Moline asked how much of the data is available to the public. The Gateway West project website was noted to access information. [2:59:05 PM](#) Kent Searle asked for another review the CAFO's indicated on the map, from Bill Poulton's CAFO, then identified a permitted but non-existing CAFO as indicated on the map. Vering commented that this was an example of what had appeared to be a clean route at the time, and now shows a proposed facility. Searle noted for the record that this particular site was permitted about four or five years ago and has been a county public record that entire time. Vering acknowledged that they had not obtained that data until recently.

#### **D. BLM/NEPA Process**

[3:01:35 PM](#) Jeff Steele, BLM, provided an overview of the NEPA process sequence, and distributed a handout indicating NEPA time spans for major projects. [3:11:52 PM](#) Scott Bedke noted that this current process is between the two six months processes, at this point, and asked Steele if the restart of the NEPA process was triggered over the Stateline route swinging south into Nevada and Utah, would the eight months be lost, or could they still use some of the data. Steele responded that those are probably the softer numbers of the scoping process, and that since it was a fairly short segment, it shouldn't take that much time to scope it out. Bedke asked if Steele thought, in his opinion, if the process would need to be started over with the proposed alternate routes. Steele responded that with the current proposed route there would be overlapping and redundancy and that it is still in the scoping process right now, with extension of comment period. Bedke asked whose approval it would need to for the alternative routes to be considered as equal footing as the proposed route in the current process, requesting from BLM what procedural obstacles would need to be addressed so that IP can't just reject out of hand other proposed routes. Steele responded that BLM did not look at this point in time at the alternative route as being a major deal breaker, as the comment period is extended, and he stated that he would follow up for the group on that question. Bedke then asked if with the swing into Utah would private land constraints in Box Elder County be found. Steele noted that even on private land, they still have to look at cultural wetlands and species, but it certainly wouldn't constitute the same intensity on private land as on BLM or public ground.

#### **E. Current Legislation being considered**

[3:19:35 PM](#) Stoker then briefed the task force on current legislation being considered that would affect the group's efforts regarding the transmission line, including the bill on the Senate Floor regarding FERC authority. Stoker reiterated the importance for this group to succeed, regarding both regionally and nationally implications. [3:24:09 PM](#) Mike Matthews, Senator Jim Risch's office, encouraged the group to submit comments regarding the proposed legislation to his regional offices. [3:25:51 PM](#) AJ Church, Senator Mike Crapo's office, also encouraged local citizens to contact Senator Crapo's office with comments. [3:27:00 PM](#) Joe Tugaw provided background for the group on the bill HR 2454. [3:30:57 PM](#) Pat McCammon asked a question regarding lawsuits being filed in eleven (11) Western states from environmental organizations against transmission corridor. [3:31:26 PM](#) Joe Tugaw responded that the lawsuit was filed in the last fifteen (15) days. [3:34:07 PM](#) Matthews and Church requested that the group contact their offices when a preferred alternate route is determined by the group, to request assistance from the Senators. [3:35:48 PM](#) Representative Steve Hartgen provided comment to the group, displaying a bigger map showing a larger overview of the transmission line. He provided comment and noted concerns of the portions of the route through Owyhee County. He commented on the merit of the counties trying to work together if they possibly can. [3:41:03 PM](#) Representative Fred Wood thanked everyone for their hard work on this project. He noted the importance of the upcoming commissioner meeting, being dependent upon how to proceed from here, and indicating the need to locally designate a corridor to make the least number of people unhappy and the most people satisfied, and to address the energy needs for the future. [3:43:25 PM](#) Scott Bedke emphasized the meeting on Thursday with area counties, to form a coalition. Bedke stated that he has requested that Idaho Power provide a list of obstacles to be overcome regarding

the Alternate Stateline Route. Bedke also thanked the group for their efforts. [3:47:55 PM](#) Ina DiGrazia, Albion, provided comment regarding Idaho Power's reluctance to the alternative routes expressed at last week's meeting. [3:50:53 PM](#) Gaylen Smyer, Declo, noted to Representative Hartgen that the task force is looking more favorable to the Stateline route than the Alt-7R route, taking into consideration the desire to put the project on as much public land as possible. [3:55:35 PM](#) Matthews and Church reported back to the group that both Senators are opposed to the Cap & Trade Bill, and to the provision to allow FERC to take control of siting matters. [3:58:04 PM](#) Joe Tugaw provided other data points regarding current legislation, and noted that the National Security Agency has just announced that they are building a two billion dollar facility in the south end of the Salt Lake City valley, indicating that it is an electronic facility that would be a huge consumer of electricity. Stoker commented to the task force regarding the HD Supply and Materials quote of a competing bid regarding the pinch point area around Crater's of the Moon, comparing it to the Idaho Power estimate from the first meeting. Stoker pointed out that in comparison, it would involve significant additional cost either way, to accomplish routes around the main part of our county, and other counties.

#### **F. Conclusion**

[4:03:39 PM](#) Todd Adams, commented that Idaho Power would rather work with their customers and constituents than with the FERC siting of lines to come up with a route that works with everyone. He stated that it was in their mutual best interest to continue to work through the NEPA process with the BLM as the lead agency. He also thanked the group for their time.

Stoker then noted that communication will take place regarding any future task force meetings, dependent upon the outcome of Thursday's meeting of county commissioners, in accordance to proper Open Meeting law protocol. Notice will be posted of any further meetings.

#### **Adjournment:**

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:06P.M.

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

**Approved by:** Gateway Task Force