

Public Meeting Summary

Meeting name: Idaho Association of Counties, Region V Meeting

Location: Downey, ID

Date: April 20, 2009

Time: 11:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Purpose and introduction: The Environment, Energy and Land Use Committee (EELU) of the Idaho Association of Counties (IAC), led by Commissioner Ken Estep of Power County, invited counties in the IAC Region V (Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Caribou, Franklin, Oneida and Power counties) to discuss the siting and permitting process regarding the Gateway West project.

Notification and attendance: Approximately 23 people attended the meeting including the Region V county commissioners from Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Franklin, Oneida and Power counties. Other attendees represented Cassia County, Idaho State Tax Commission, Idaho Department of Fish and Game and local landowners. In addition, three local television stations attended the meeting.

Format: County commissioners were provided an information packet and a copy of the presentation regarding the NEPA process. In addition to the hand-out packet, large maps of the entire project and southeastern Idaho were available, as were parcel ownership maps for southeastern Idaho. The meeting included:

- Welcome and introductions: Commissioner Ken Estep, Power County
- Energy Gateway and Idaho Power transmission projects: Rod Fisher, Rocky Mountain Power
- Project purpose and need: Rod Fisher, Rocky Mountain Power
- Idaho Power's service territory: Kip Sikes, Idaho Power Company
- NEPA process: Walt George, Bureau of Land Management
- Questions and answers occurred throughout the presentations

Key questions and themes:

- How can individual counties be involved in the NEPA process including the EIS analysis? *The BLM will coordinate with any and all county government and planning offices as required by federal law.*
- Why aren't the transmission lines underground? *It is cost prohibitive to put higher voltage lines, like these, underground. If an underground line is out of service, it takes much longer to bring it back online.*
- Can you expand the term-lengths for county permits? *The Companies will explore a longer-term permitting time frame with the counties, keeping in mind the easement process and the engineering, procurement and construction contracting process.*
- There is a perception that the state utilities commission gives utilities a "carte blanche" in project development. *We will work with the public on opportunities to address this perspective.*
- Preference for the use of public land versus private land for the proposed route.
- Concerns included the socio-economic and visual effects of the project.