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BARREN RIDGE RENEWABLE TRANSMISSION PROJECT

Public Involvement Updates

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1 Introduction

The City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is proposing the Barren Ridge Renewable Transmission Project (BR RTP) to access clean, renewable resources in the Tehachapi Mountain and Mojave Desert areas, and improve reliability and upgrade transmission capacity. Work consists of:

- (1) Construction of a 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the existing Barren Ridge Switching Station to Haskell Canyon on double circuit structures;
- (2) Addition of a 230 kV circuit on existing double-circuit structures from Haskell Canyon to the Castaic Power Plant;
- (3) Upgrade of the existing Owen Gorge-Rinaldi (OG-RIN) 230 kV Transmission Line with larger capacity conductors between the Barren Ridge Switching Station and Rinaldi Substation; and
- (4) Construction of a new electrical switching station within Haskell Canyon near the southern boundary of the Angeles National Forest.

The Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and LADWP will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the BR RTP in compliance with both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The Forest Service and BLM will serve as the NEPA co-lead agencies in preparation of the EIS. LADWP is the lead agency for compliance with CEQA and preparation of the EIR.

2 Public Involvement

Public involvement plays an integral role in the environmental process. To foster a cooperative spirit among all involved, LADWP, Forest Service, and BLM have been committed to maintaining open lines of communication. After the public scoping period (April to May 2008), a Scoping Report was published on the BR RTP website (www.ladwp.com/barrenridge) that summarized the public scoping activities and comments received through June 2008. To provide additional opportunities for notification, involvement, and public participation prior to finalizing the Draft EIS/EIR, newsletters were distributed and informational meetings held to update the public about the progress of the environmental studies and alternatives.

2.1 Informational Public Meetings

LADWP conducted five informational public meetings from February 17 through 26, 2009 to update the public on scoping results, study results, and the evaluation of alternative transmission line routes. See Table 1 for dates, locations, attendance, and number of comments received. Please refer to the public outreach section below for details about the announcement of the meetings.

All meetings were conducted in an “open house” format to allow participants to attend any time between 5:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. A brief video presentation was shown by the project team at 7 p.m. and followed by a general question and answer session.

TABLE 1. INFORMATIONAL PUBLIC MEETING LOCATIONS

DATE	LOCATION	# OF PEOPLE SIGNED-IN	# OF COMMENTS	
			WRITTEN	ORAL
Feb. 17, 2009	Hughes-Elizabeth Lakes Union School 16633 Elizabeth Lake Road Lake Hughes, CA	28	5	11
Feb. 18, 2009	Mojave Veterans Building 15580 “O” Street Mojave, CA	8	7	1
Feb. 24, 2009	Agua Dulce Elementary School 11311 W. Frascati Street Agua Dulce, CA	20	4	27
Feb. 25, 2009	Mountainview School 22201 W. Cypress Place Saugus, CA	8	6	12
Feb. 27, 2009	Leona Valley Community Center 8367 Elizabeth Lake Road Leona Valley, CA	53	12	31
TOTAL		117	34	82

Meeting Materials

Factsheets were distributed to all attendees at the informational public meetings. The factsheets contained information regarding the project description, purpose and need, scoping summary, environmental technical studies, screening of routing alternatives, project alternatives, project timeline, and project contacts (see Appendix A or project website at www.ladwp.com/barrenridge).

During the public meetings, the following informational boards were situated throughout the room:

- Project Map
- Project Description
- Typical Structures Board
- Construction Sequence
- Project Propose and Need
- Environmental Benefits
- Renewable Resources
- Project Timeline
- Public Scoping Summary
- Significant Issues
- Project Modifications
- Recommended for Elimination
- Alternative Routes
- Photo Simulations
- Resource Maps

Please refer to Appendix B-1 or the project website (www.ladwp.com/barrenridge) for copies of the informational boards.

A 16-minute video presentation was shown during the informational public meetings that covered the same content as the factsheets and is available on the project website (www.ladwp.com/barrenridge).

Notes taken at during the question and answer sessions of the informational public meetings are attached in Appendix B-2.

2.2 Public Outreach

Forest Service, BLM and LADWP have provided many different modes to announce the public meetings and for the public and agencies to ask questions and leave comments regarding the BRRTTP. A toll-free hotline, e-mail address and website were established at the beginning of the BRRTTP's scoping period and will be maintained throughout the environmental review process.

Website

Information regarding the BRRTTP is available at www.ladwp.com/barrenridge. Newsletters, Scoping Report, public review materials, contact information, and project timeline are available on the website and will be updated throughout the environmental review period as information is made available.

Email Address

An e-mail address was established for the BRRTTP (BRRTTP@powereng.com) to provide another mode of receiving comments. All comments received via e-mail were added to the project record and sent an automatic reply acknowledging receipt of the e-mail.

Toll-Free Hotline

A toll-free Project Hotline, (877) 440-3592, was provided as another means for leaving comments and receiving more information on the project. A call tree was established that gave callers the following options: 1) receive project information, 2) meeting and event updates, 3) project schedule, and 4) add callers to the mailing list or leave a question or comment. All messages will be added to the project record.

Press Release

On February 17, 2009 LADWP provided a press release announcing the public informational meetings for the BR RTP (see Appendix C).

Newsletters

In December 2008, approximately 6,300 newsletters (Newsletter #2) were distributed to agency representatives, elected officials, Native American Tribes, interested parties and organizations, and property owners within 500 feet of both sides of the proposed project and preliminary alternatives in Los Angeles and Kern Counties. Newsletter #2 provided a summary about the Scoping Process, environmental studies being conducted, and upcoming public involvement opportunities (see Appendix D-1).

In February 2008, Newsletter #3 (postcard) announced the informational public meetings (See Appendix D-2). Over 6,300 postcards and 600 electronic copies were mailed to agency representatives, elected officials, Native American Tribes, interested parties and organizations, and property owners within 500 feet of both sides of the proposed project and preliminary alternatives in Los Angeles and Kern Counties.

Newspaper Advertisements

In addition to Newsletter #3, the informational public meetings were also announced in thirteen local newspapers. The advertisements provided a brief project description and meeting locations, times and dates, and encouraged the public to attend the meetings. Please refer to Table 2 for the list of newspapers and publication dates (refer to Appendix E-1 for a copy of the advertisement.). A Spanish translation of the advertisement was published in *La Opinion* newspaper (see E-2 for the Spanish version).

TABLE 2. NEWSPAPERS UTILIZED FOR ADVERTISEMENT OF THE INFORMATIONAL PUBLIC MEETINGS.

NEWSPAPER	AREA COVERED	PUBLICATION DATE
Los Angeles Times	Los Angeles communities	Feb. 2, 2009
Antelope Valley Press	Antelope Valley	Feb. 2, 2009
The Signal	Santa Clarita	Feb. 2, 2009
Agua Dulce/Acton Country Journal	Agua Dulce/Acton	Jan. 31, 2009 Feb. 7, 2009
Mojave Desert News	California City	Jan. 29, 2009 Feb. 5, 2009
Ridgecrest Daily Independent	Mojave to Olancho	Feb. 3 & 10, 2009
News Review	Ridgecrest, China Lake and Inyokern	Feb. 4, 2009
La Opinion (Spanish)	Los Angeles communities	Feb. 2, 2009
Mountain Yodeler	Elizabeth Lakes, Green Valley, Leona Valley	Feb 2009
Cherry Chapters: the Leona Valley Newsletter	Leona Valley	Feb 2009
Acton/Agua Dulce News	Acton/Agua Dulce area	Feb. 9, 2009
Rosamond News	Rosamond/Kern County Area	Feb. 9, 2009
Lake Los Angeles News	Lake Los Angeles Area	Feb. 9, 2009

3 Summary of Comments Received After Scoping

This section summarizes the comments received after the public scoping period (from July 2008 to March 2009). One hundred fifty-nine comments were received in a number of ways—during the informational public meetings and via project hotline, e-mail, and mail. Table 3 shows the breakdown of the comments. Below is a summary of the issues and comments that were raised by the public and agencies and that will be added to the project record.

TABLE 3. BREAKDOWN OF COMMENTS RECEIVED AFTER SCOPING

# of Comments	
116	Scoping Meeting Comments (oral and written)
37	Public
1	Agencies
1	Native American Tribes
2	Town Councils
2	Media

3.1 Alternatives

The following alternatives to the proposed project were recommended:

- Consideration of in-basin generation of renewable resources and sharing of transmission lines and renewable resources with other utility companies.
- Consideration of using a 500 kV transmission line system instead of the proposed 230 kV transmission line.
- Residents in Green Valley and Lake Elizabeth recommended the use of multi-circuit towers instead of numerous double- or single-circuit towers.
- The use of tubular steel poles (also known as monopoles) were recommended in Antelope Valley.
- Undergrounding was suggested along Segments B, C, E, Elizabeth Lakes, Green Valley, Leona Valley, and Antelope Valley.
- Consideration of moving the 110th Street Modification to 115th Street so that it follows the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project’s proposed alignments through the area.
- Reconsideration of Segment D for further study in the Draft EIS/EIR (especially residents in the communities of Green Valley, Elizabeth Lakes, Leona Valley and Agua Dulce.)
- Utilize existing transmission line corridors instead of impacting undisturbed areas.

3.2 Human Environment Issues

Fire Safety

Many residents in and adjacent to the Angeles National Forest expressed concern for fire suppression operations, both on the ground and in the air, and the project’s possible impact on fire suppression flight paths, staging areas, and the Bouquet Canyon Reservoir. The County of Los Angeles Fire Department requested that potential impacts to fuel modification for Fire Zone 4 be addressed in the EIS/EIR.

Land Use/Recreation and Wilderness

A majority of the commentors raised questions regarding the acquisition of private property, eminent domain and the expansion of transmission line rights-of-way and easements. Residents were concerned about impacts to residences, agricultural farms, communities and rural areas being traversed by transmission lines. Comments also addressed the potential impacts of the proposed project on current and future projects and developments in the project area.

Property Values

Property owners inquired about the affect additional transmission lines may have on property values.

Public Services, Health and Safety

Residents are inquired about the adequacy of police and fire services and the potential for an increased risk of cancer along transmission lines and requested that these issues be evaluated in the environmental analysis.

Socioeconomics

Residents inquired if the project would increase jobs and future development in Kern County and in the project area

Traffic

Residents in the project area inquired about the potential for increased traffic along Agua Dulce Road and Sierra Highway and private service roads in Haskell Canyon and requested that the issue be analyzed in the EIS/EIR.

Visual Resources

Many communities, such as Elizabeth Lakes, Green Valley, Leona Valley, Agua Dulce, and holiday Valley Estates, were concerned about visual impacts to their homes, communities, and businesses. They inquired about impacts to Johnson Hill, San Francisquito Creek and Mt. Pinos.

3.3 Natural Environment Issues

Biological Resources

The public inquired about the potential avian risk of electrocution from towers and impacts to migratory birds, wildlife, and raptor nests and owls. Some areas of concern were Lake Elizabeth, riparian areas along San Francisquito Creek, and Leona Valley.

Cultural Resources

The public wanted possible impacts to La Casa de Miguel Ortiz (an adobe home built in the late 1800s that was once part of Edward Beale's Rancho La Liebre) and Native Chumash resources in the project area to be considered.

Hydrology and Water Quality

A property owner was concerned about possible impacts to an existing well in close proximity to the existing transmission lines. Residents in the project area requested that impacts to watershed and marshes, San Francisquito Creek, and Lake Elizabeth and environs be considered.

Cumulative Impacts

Residents inquired about cumulative impacts from transmission lines and renewable resource developments in the project area and segmentation of transmission line projects. Residents questioned if LADWP would be proposing additional transmission lines in the near future.

Other Comments

It was suggested that the public notices be advertised in adjudicated newspapers in the project area, such as the Acton and Agua Dulce News, and Vanguard News. As mitigation for the proposed project, it was suggested that LADWP purchase an environmental mitigation bank in the project area.

4 Next Steps in EIS/EIR Process

Although the public scoping period has ended (May 8, 2008), the Forest Service, BLM, and LADWP have welcomed comments throughout the environmental review process. All comments received were added to the project record. Technical studies are currently being conducted. The anticipated completion of the Draft EIS/EIR is expected in fall 2009.

The public review of the Draft EIS/EIR is expected to commence in winter 2009 (45-day minimum). The Final EIS/EIR is expected in summer 2010. The Forest Service and BLM are expected to issue a Record of Decision, and LADWP to issue a Notice of Determination, in Fall 2010.