Categorical Exclusion for a double circuit upgrade along the existing Empire-ED5 115-kV transmission line, Pinal County, Arizona

RECORD OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

A. Proposed Action: Western proposes to replace structures and upgrade to a double circuit 230-kV transmission line on its Empire-ED5 115-kV transmission line, within Western's existing right-of-way. This will include the rebuild of 9.2 miles of transmission line, replacing the H-frame structures with steel monopole structures with foundations, hardware and insulator replacement and adding a overhead ground-wire over the entire length of the project . Western will access the structure using crew trucks along the existing access roads. This work is necessary to maintain the safety and reliability of the bulk electrical system.

The attached map shows the project area on private land situated within Sections 4, 9, 16, 21, 25, 26, 27 & 28 Township 9 South Range 7 East on the Gila & Salt River Meridian, Pinal County, Arizona. Corresponding U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute topographic is Arizona City, Greene Reservoir and Friendly Corners, Arizona. This work is planned to begin the week of February 7, 2011.

B. Categorical Exclusion Applied: 10 CFR, Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B,B1.3: "Routine maintenance activities and custodial services for buildings, structures, right-of-way, infrastructures (e.g., pathways, roads and railroads), vehicles and equipment, and localized vegetation and pest control, during which operations may be suspended and resumed…Routine maintenance activities, corrective (that is, repair), preventive and predictive are required to maintain and preserve buildings, structures, infrastructures and equipment in a condition suitable for a facility to be used for its designed purpose... "

C. Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):

1. The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to Subpart D.

   a. The proposed action was reviewed for the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act, and all applicable Department of Energy Orders.

   b. The proposed action does not require the siting, construction, or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities.

   c. The proposed action does not disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminates, or CERLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled and unpermitted releases.

d. The proposed action was reviewed and surveyed for impacts to cultural and sensitive biological resources. Cultural and sensitive biological resources have been determined to not be affected. All cultural sites located in the project area will not be adversely effected. Tribes have are being consulted with and invited to participate in cultural monitoring that will ensure site avoidance during construction.

2. There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and

3. The proposal is not "connected" to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

D. <u>Determination:</u> Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession (or attached) concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

E. <u>Special Conditions:</u> NONE

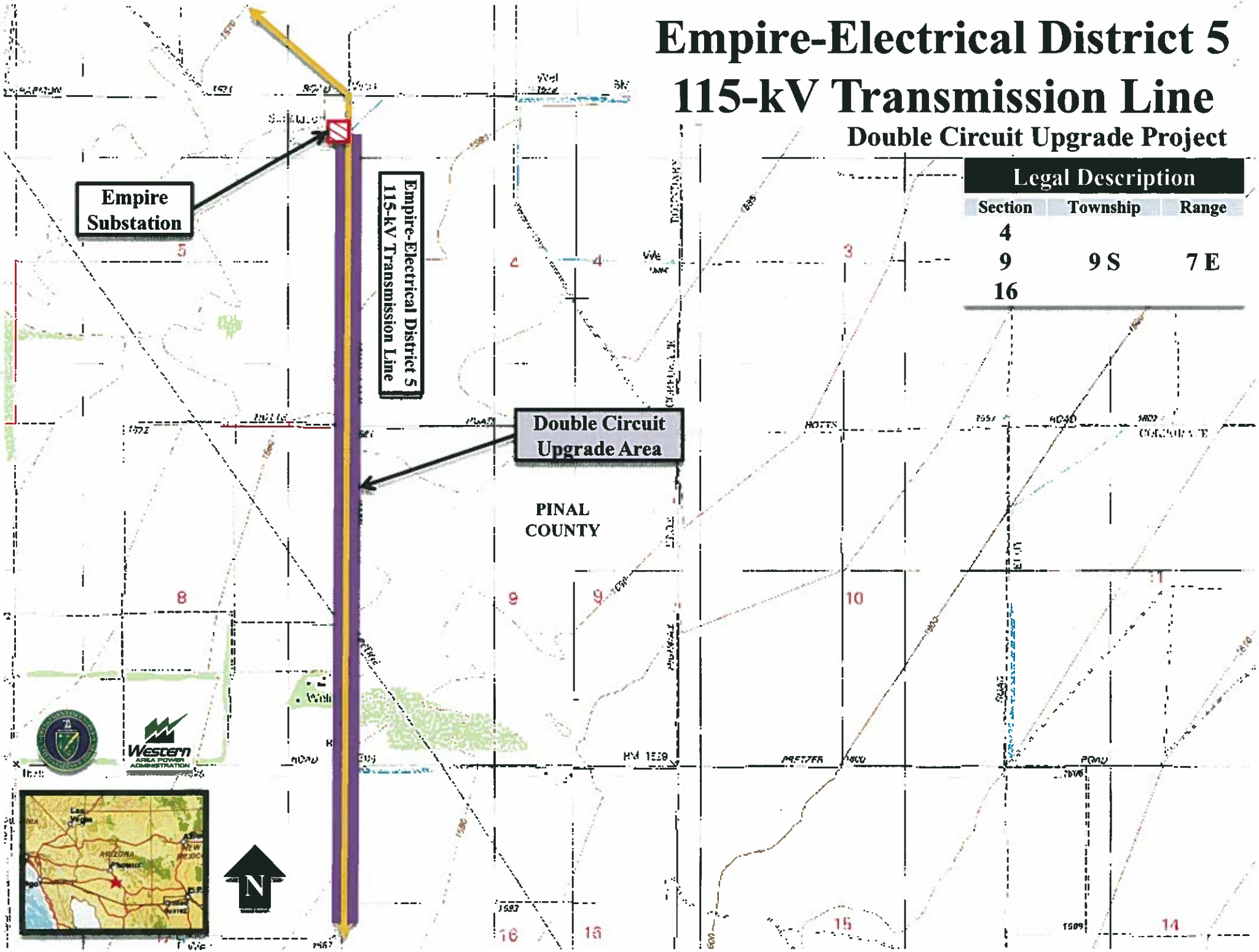
John R. Holt

John R. Holt
NEPA Compliance Officer

3/8/11
Date

Empire-Electrical District 5 115-kV Transmission Line

Double Circuit Upgrade Project



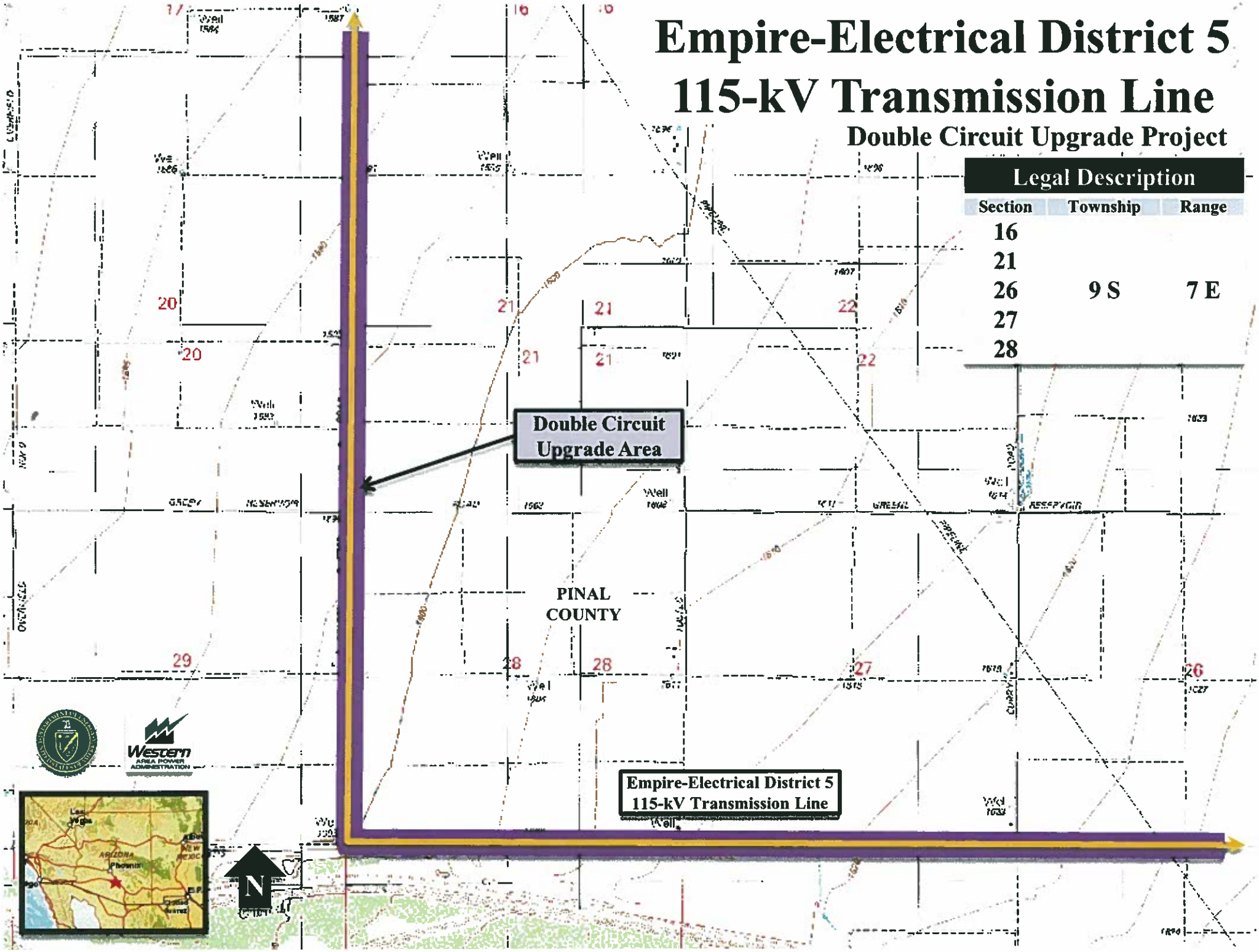
Legal Description

Section	Township	Range
4 9 16	9 S	7 E

Empire-Electrical District 5 115-kV Transmission Line

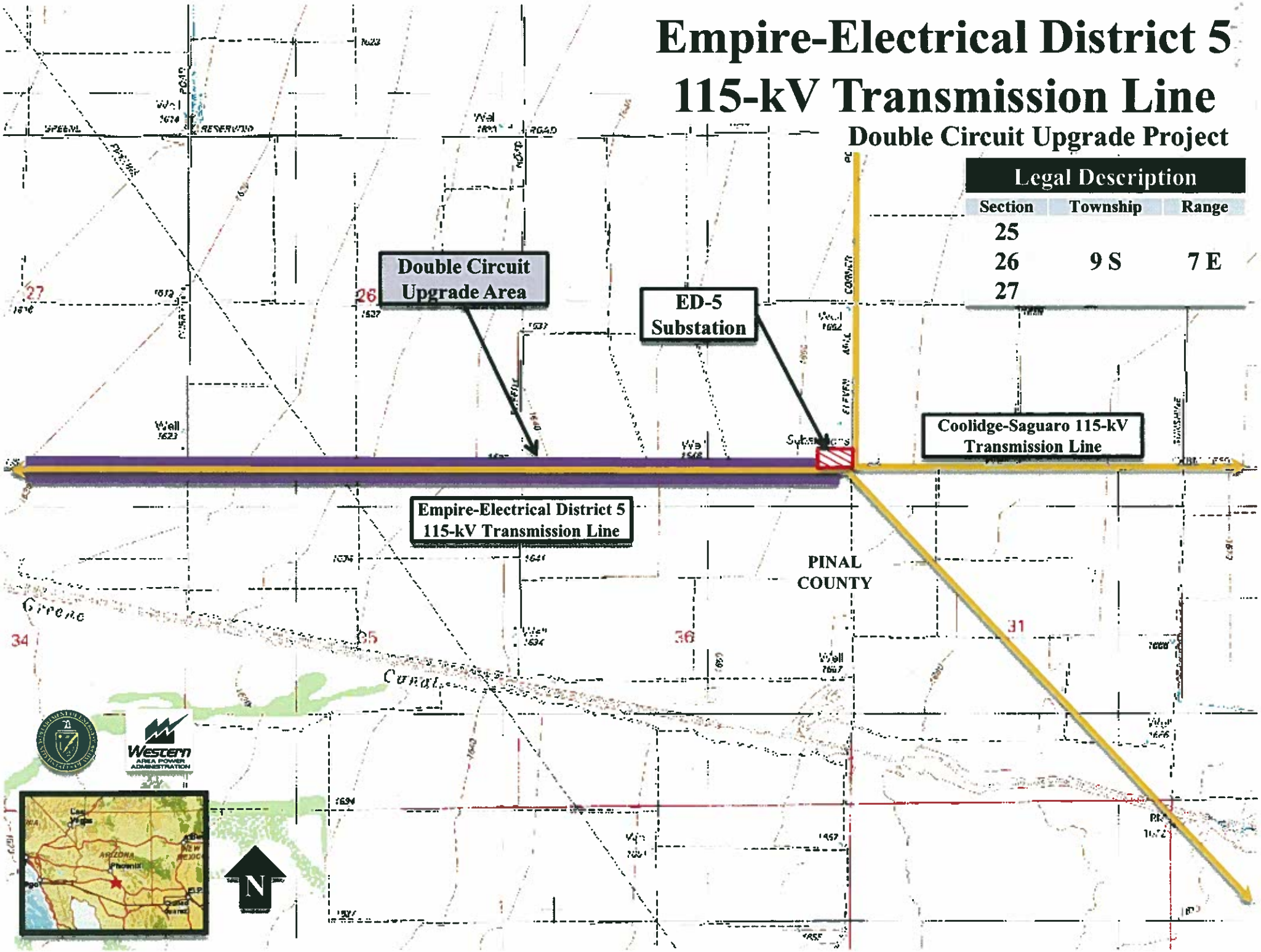
Double Circuit Upgrade Project

Legal Description		
Section	Township	Range
16		
21		
26	9 S	7 E
27		
28		



Empire-Electrical District 5 115-kV Transmission Line

Double Circuit Upgrade Project



Legal Description

Section	Township	Range
25		
26	9 S	7 E
27		