

LETTER #A-18
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Kurt E. Criss
1722 Crestwood Dr. A
Elko, Nevada 89801

September 18, 1992

Bureau of Land Management
US Department of the Interior
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Re: Comments on Draft EIS of the Southwest Intertie Project

Dear Gentlemen and Ladies:

After review of the Draft EIS on the proposed Southwest Intertie Project, I offer a few comments regarding its accuracy. My particular concern is the crosstie project's routing and potential impact to the Great Basin National Park (GBNP) and surrounding area.

A [The agency and utility preferred crosstie routing, the 230kV Corridor Route, will undoubtedly visually impact sensitive existing and proposed viewpoints as it passes immediately north of the GBNP. Quantifying such an impact is difficult. In furnishing readers with information to make such a judgement, an EIS should provide accurate and thorough data for review. It does not appear that this draft EIS provides either.

B [Photo simulations providing a basis for quantifying the project's visual impact to the GBNP when viewed from Highway 50 are taken from a vantage point which conveniently hides a very significant visual resource, Wheeler Peak. Had this photo been taken from a slightly different perspective, Bald Mountain and Buck Mountain would not have obstructed Wheeler Peak. This particular camera angle does not give a reader the true picture by which to judge the visual sensitivity of this resource.

A The SWIP DEIS/DPA adequately addresses the visual impacts to Great Basin National Park. The visual studies showed that from the viewpoints identified by the NPS (located outside the study corridors), impacts would be low and at extended viewing distances from the park viewpoints. The SWIP DEIS/DPA needs only to summarize the significant issues and impacts. A complete description of the visual analysis can be found in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for locations where this technical report can be reviewed).

B The photo simulations provided in the SWIP DEIS/DPA depict the alternative SWIP routes quite accurately. Simulation viewpoints were selected to show typical views. The Highway 6/50 simulation you refer to was selected because it is the approximate location for a proposed interpretive facility in Great Basin National Park's Draft General Management Plan. Additional simulations were prepared to analyze the Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute (refer to Figures 3-13 to 3-19 in Chapter 3 of this document).

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C Further, no photos are included to simulate visual impacts to viewers within the GBNP looking north and northeast to gain an understanding of the basin and range terrain. It is my understanding that officials of the GBNP plan to develop northerly viewpoints and a new tourist center to educate visitors about this distinctive geology. Certainly a simulation or assessment should be included which depicts the impact of a power line that would span a viewers entire peripheral vision.

I must close by pointing out that I am not opposed to projects of this type which benefit both the public and industry; however, I believe routing of the transmission line should not unduly impact a resource as significant as the Great Basin National Park. Selection of the proposed Cutoff Route would mitigate these visual impacts - it is the environmentally preferred routing.

Sincerely,



Kurt E. Criss

RESPONSES

C A simulation looking north or northeast from Great Basin National Park viewpoints was not completed because the towers generated by computer-generated perspectives were too small to be accurately painted into a simulation. Based on the modeling done for the simulation, the 230kV Corridor Route would have been barely perceptible, if seen at all. Concern for visual impacts to views from the park were primarily under specific lighting conditions where towers or conductors may cause sunlight to reflect. This could create visibility conditions greatly exaggerated over that of normal lighting conditions. To mitigate these special lighting effects the use of non-specular conductors has been specified.

LETTER #A-19
COMMENTS

SEP. 5, 1992

Dear Mr. Simonson,

I'm writing with great concern regarding the Southwest Intertie Project. I want you to know that I support "NO ACTION" Alternative to the power line. Already existing right-of-ways are sufficient, I believe, to make unnecessary the designation of new right-of-ways. Considering the large visual impact of (right-of-way) power lines through the valleys indicates the great loss to the beauty of the proposed "Non Built up ~~area~~ valley right-of-ways. Wildlife ~~experts~~ have also suggested the detrimental impact of these lines upon young tortoises (see Pahrumpat wash area, for an example). Further the lines are suspected of having a deleterious effect upon raptor migrations. As a camper/hiker, I shudder at the thought of encroachments upon the natural well-being of Great Basin Nat'l. park.

Df As an archaeologist, I KNOW that

RESPONSES

A The SWIP would require a new right-of-way specific for a 500kV transmission line. It is not possible to utilize existing rights-of-way that were granted for other uses. These existing or designated corridors have other utilities in them and may be considered "already built upon rights-of way". The SWIP routing alternatives utilized designated or planning corridors whenever feasible in meeting the project needs (refer to Chapter 1 of this document).

There would be visual impacts to the open valleys that the SWIP may cross. These impacts are disclosed and documented in the SWIP DEIS/DPA on pages 4-35 through 4-45.

B The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is evolving. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure, and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers or raven predation. We believe it is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

C The potential deleterious effect of electrical transmission lines on raptor migration, suspected or otherwise, has never been documented in the scientific literature to the BLM's knowledge. There is no question that raptors occasionally collide with transmission lines. The reasoned opinions, however, suggest that raptors, as a group, are possessed of such keen eyesight and finely-tuned flying skills, that such collisions usually occur during the pursuit of aerial prey or in defense of territory. Collisions with man-made structures are a very minor aspect of raptor population mortality. Refer to Avian Collision Hazards on page 3-89 of this document.

Raptors do not migrate at night (as do most songbirds), nor do they migrate in flocks (as do most shorebirds and waterfowl). Consequently, the BLM has difficulty envisioning a situation in which a large, highly visible electrical transmission system, occupying a very, very, small percentage of the total landscape could interfere with migration patterns of raptors.

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RESPONSES

D The SWIP DEIS/DPA acknowledges that a number of cultural resources are likely to be adversely affected by construction of the SWIP, but also documents that planning studies have considered and avoided the most significant known cultural resources in the region. A programmatic agreement (refer to Appendix CR-12 in the Volume IV - Cultural Environment Technical Report) has been executed to ensure that continued data collection and regulatory review result in appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures if the project is approved and detailed design work is undertaken. For example, after the centerline is surveyed, a cultural resource inventory along the right-of-way would be made and appropriate mitigation made prior to any ground disturbing activities. These procedures will minimize impacts and ensure that important archaeological data are retrieved prior to construction.

D Construction of the lines could permanently destroy a significant number of archaeological sites. These are losses which could never be reversed!

It is my belief that the role of the BLM should be that of conservator of our nation's natural heritage. As such, I urge you to do all that is in your power to halt (support "no action") on the proposed line. I would appreciate receiving information as to the position which your office is advocating on this matter.
Thank you. Sincerely,

Brandon Fi

Brandon Fine
1050 880 Carolina Street
San Francisco, CA 94107

LETTER #A-20
COMMENTS

P.O. Bx 140
Baker, NV 89311
September 17, 1992

Karl Simonson, District Mgr.
Burley District Office, BLM
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

Re: Crosstie Route, SW Intertie Project

Dear Mr. Simonson,

I'm from Baker, Nevada. You don't have to be a prophet to know I'm going to object to your choice of the 230kV Corridor Route.

But I won't waste your time recapping the arguments against your route choice. You've probably heard them all. I'd just like to ask you a couple of questions.

Have you ever had to make decisions regarding the welfare of your kids or grandkids? Did you make a different decision than you might for yourself or another adult?

I suggest that's what we have here, and it's the only important reason for the Cutoff Route being a better choice than the Corridor Route. Expedient decisions work fine when you're thinking a year or two, not so fine when you're thinking a generation or two.

Hundreds of thousands of visitors over the next half dozen decades will see our Great Basin valley dissected by something that from the Snake Range will look like surgery staples, marching across the belly of the valley. Unlike surgery staples, these staples won't be coming out.

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

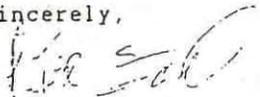
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RESPONSES

Then there will be the kids that will live under this 500 kV line. There will be several hundred of them over the life of this line. Will these kids suffer biological ramifications? The jury's out, I know. I also know there would be no "jury" unless some fine professional scientists believed that the initial evidence indicates cause for alarm. Yet you are apparently willing to mortgage these kids future to save yourself some hassle.

My point is made, Mr. Simonson: you're choosing today at the expense of tomorrow. Detroit did that, as did the S & L's. Maybe you'll be luckier.

Sincerely,



Peter Ford

LETTER #A-21
COMMENTS

Ruth M. Fricker
905 West Middlefield #944
Mountain View, CA 94043

September 7, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson,

As a member of Desert Survivors I have been informed of the proposed construction of a 500 Volt powerline from Idaho to Las Vegas. Our group has reviewed the Environmental Impact Statement and was astounded at the HUGE impact. It appears to be unclear whether there is any real economic justification for this powerline. Issues that concern me are listed below:

- A [-Please support the NO ACTION Alternative. I understand there is already a Utah to Las Vegas powerline that would be redundant to this proposed line.
- B [-Support the use of existing already built-upon right-of-ways rather than any new right-of-ways. The impact is upon a new area is far greater than the impact created by expanding upon an already existing right-of-way.
- B [-There would be an incredible visual impact to now open valleys. The BLM should be defending the open public lands against new encroachments, not assisting their destruction.
- C [-There would be a significant desert tortoise impact where power lines and highways compete for space with wildlife. Powerlines allow predators to perch and find young tortoises as prey.
- D [-There would be a significant hawk and raptor impact where power lines run along the migration route. Every year many raptors are killed by high voltage power.

RESPONSES

A Page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA discusses the reason that the SWIP was expanded south of the Ely area to the Las Vegas area. It states that in early 1990, it was determined that the UNTP was fully subscribed and would not have the capacity to allow access to marketplace (the Las Vegas area) for the SWIP. In June 1990 the SWIP was expanded from the Ely area to Dry Lake.

The SWIP is not redundant to any other project. The existing line between Utah and Las Vegas, Sigurd to Harry Allen 345kV line, is limited to a maximum of 300 MW, significantly below the 1200 MW capability of SWIP.

B The SWIP will require a new right-of-way specific for a 500kV transmission line. It is not possible to utilize existing rights-of-way that were granted for other uses. These existing or designated corridors have other utilities in them and may be considered "already built upon rights-of way". The SWIP routing alternatives used designated or planning corridors whenever feasible in meeting the project needs.

The BLM agrees there would be significant visual impacts to some of the scenic areas of public lands.

C The BLM agrees that there would be impacts to desert tortoise, although mitigation measures taken during construction should be very effective in reducing or eliminating these adverse effects. The question of transmission line impacts on hatchling tortoises is a subject of ongoing study. Raven predation on hatchlings in some portions of the Mojave Desert may be having a deleterious effect on tortoise population structure, and the presence of transmission lines (providing nesting sites and hunting perches for ravens) may be contributory. The phenomenon appears to be localized, however, and generalizations cannot be made at this time. Further, given the presence of an existing transmission line, it is not obvious that increased perch sites will result in increased raven numbers, or raven predation. The BLM believes it is unlikely that perch site availability is currently limiting the potential for raven predation in the project area.

D Given the structural configuration of 500kV electrical transmission lines, the BLM feels that the potential electrocution hazard to birds of prey is relatively minor. The 500kV transmission systems proposed for the SWIP will utilize tubular steel H-frame and/or steel lattice towers. Spacing of conductors on such structures is sufficient to prevent phase-to-phase or phase-to-ground

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- EC -There would be an impact on the Great Basin National Park.
F -There are an estimated 200 to 400 archaeological and historical resource sites in the direct route of the powerlines.

As we humans over-populate the earth, let's try to leave some room for the other creatures.

Sincerely,



RESPONSES

contact. In order to achieve this safety measure, conductors are hung on the supporting structure in such a manner that they are 23 to 32 feet apart. Moreover, conductors are hung on insulating systems that will be 14 to 20 feet in length depending on tower design (See SWIP DEIS/DPA pp. 2-12 through 2-14). Because of the distance of conductors from the support structure, other conductor bundles, static lines, and the ground, it is virtually impossible for even the largest species of raptor to be electrocuted as a result of alighting on conductors or the supporting tower.

The BLM acknowledges that numbers of raptors are killed each year in the United States as a result of electrocution. Most of these incidents occur, however, on lower voltage distribution lines.

Refer to Avian Collision Hazard in the Biological Resources section of Chapter 3 of this document.

- E The BLM agrees that there would be visual impacts to the routes leading to Great Basin National Park and to a lesser degree from some of the park's viewpoints. However, because of the distance of all of the alternative routes from the park and the commitment to utilize non-specular materials in the construction, visual impacts would not be significant.
- F If one of the routes is approved by the BLM, there will be a cultural survey completed for any potentially disturbed areas (e.g., rights-of-way, access routes, assembly yards). Cultural resource impacts will be mitigated.

LETTER #A-22
COMMENTS

Karl Simonson
BLM, Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

September 3, 1992

Re: Comments on DEIS for SWIP

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Congratulations on a well-designed, readable and thorough Draft EIS on the Southwest Intertie Project.

In the matter of the Crosstie route, unfortunately, the document is seriously flawed. The choice by your agency and by LADWP of the 230kV Corridor Route, rather than the environmentally preferred Cutoff Route, is hard to understand and certainly unconscionable.

The overriding rationale cited for this choice is the FLPMA policy of consolidating corridors where possible. That is of course a correct policy, but the "where possible" provision surely is included for precisely the situation at hand. Surely any general policy must be applied only when it makes sense.

In this case consolidation of corridors does not compute. The environmental havoc created by a 500kV line is of an entirely different order of magnitude than the damage associated with the present 230kV installation.

The 230kV lines were subject to a far less careful environmental scrutiny, and were built before the establishment of Great Basin National Park. The wooden poles are relatively inconspicuous, and from a great distance blend with the terrain in a way that would be totally impossible for the proposed steel towers.

In 1986, largely because of the relatively pristine nature of the Snake Range and its adjacent valleys, the decades-long effort to establish a national park in the Great Basin culminated in the choice of this site. The federal legislation establishing the Park specifies that both basin and range be embraced by the Park's interpretive and educational efforts.

The viewshed from the Park is oriented to Snake Valley, and an integral part of the unique beauty of this place is just that prospect: a fifty-mile view to the east across the unspoiled basin to the mountain ranges beyond, and to the north from the valley depths to the 12,000' heights of Mt. Moriah.

RESPONSES

A The BLM believes that it does make sense to construct the SWIP within the existing corridor. The surface disturbance and potential environmental impacts of constructing and operating a 500kV transmission line are not significantly different from a 230kV system, with the exception of greater visual impacts.

The 230kV lines likely did undergo less public and agency scrutiny when they were permitted and constructed than they would if they were proposed today. However, given the connection points and purpose and need for the 230kV lines, their siting was proper. The 230kV system would likely have been permitted where it is even if the Great Basin National Park had existed at that time because the visual impacts to viewpoints within Great Basin National Park from these lines are almost imperceptible.

Generally, wood-pole structures tend to be more acceptable visually in the landscape, especially in near (foreground) views. However, steel lattice towers tend to blend in better at a distance, whereas, wood towers tend to be more visible from a greater distance.

B Because of the distance of the proposed transmission lines from the viewpoints in Great Basin National Park, the Ely to Delta segment built on the 230kV Corridor Route would not have significant visual impacts on views. There would, however, be visual impacts to traveler's views from the U.S. Highway 6/50 approaching the park. Several alternative crossings of U.S. Highway 6/50 have been evaluated to minimize visual impacts to highway travelers and to avoid private lands (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute on page 3-39 of this document).

There would also be visual impacts to views from dispersed areas within the Marble Canyon WSA and Mt. Moriah Wilderness area if the Cutoff Route is selected.

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COMMENTS

B The steel towers of the proposed 500kV line would be clearly visible to every one of the 70,000 annual visitors, both from the Park and from their approach on highway 50 through the exquisite Sacramento Pass. The quality of the present experience would be fundamentally changed.

This concern would seem to be legitimated by the agency's own admission on page 2-48 relating to Marble Canyon and Mt. Moriah Wilderness areas: "BLM is concerned about the visual effects (of the Cutoff Route) from dispersed areas within both of these areas."

C Furthermore, in Snake Valley the 230kV lines cross very near to several ranch homes where small children live, and each of these families wishes daily that the power lines were not so close. This is because of the physical discomfort experienced at close range, together with the unsettling scientific reports of biological damage possibly caused by high voltage installations (as well as the considerable inconvenience of farming around the poles).

As you undoubtedly know, people in Nevada and Utah are not readily mollified by government and industry assurances that possible health risks from technology are "unproven". As your Draft EIS itself suggests, the jury is still out on this one.

Needless to say, the families already severely impacted by the present 230kV installation are unalterably opposed to the imposition of the proposed 500kV project. They take no comfort in an unintelligent adherence to FLPMA policy, which would disregard their rights on the basis that their homes are already somewhat spoiled.

Fortunately, in response to some of these considerations which were voiced during the scoping process, an alternative route for the Crosstie was worked out, and designated as the environmentally preferred Crosstie route. Not only does the Cutoff Route avoid major visual damage to the National Park; it is preferable for most other human and environmental reasons, too.

RESPONSES

C EMF is an especially difficult issue for which there may be no conclusive results for many years. Please refer to the EMF discussions in Chapters 3 and 4 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and to Recent EMF Research in Chapter 3 of this document for more information.

It is true that the Ely to Delta segment would cause visual and land use impacts from its construction and operation. However, impacts to the agricultural lands along the existing 230kV lines in this area would be avoided by the 230kV Corridor Route (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute in Chapter 3 of this document).

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In this regard specifically, the Draft EIS is self-contradictory:

- D [1) The statement on page 2-56 that the LADWP preference for the 230kV Corridor Route "reflects LADWP's commitment to minimize environmental impacts whenever possible even at reasonable increased project costs" is pure doublespeak.
- E [2) So also is the agency assertion on page 2-58 that the "230kV Corridor Route and the Cutoff Route have similar environmental impacts." The latter route affects neither the private landholders referred to above, nor the 70,000 National Park visitors.

Thanks again for a mostly admirable Draft EIS. I trust that the Final EIS will be amended to favor either the Cutoff Route or better yet, since no need for the Crosstie is demonstrated, no action at all. Obviously, any environmental degradation around Great Basin National Park can have real economic consequences for this whole geographic area.

Yours truly,

Jo Anne Garrett
Jo Anne Garrett

Post Office Box 130
Baker, Nevada 89311

RESPONSES

- D The LADWP's preference for the 230kV Corridor Route is largely because of their preference to interconnect at the Robinson Summit substation site and in response to FLPMA's mandate to consolidate utilities "In order to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate rights-of-way..." Although, other routes (e.g., the Direct Route) are shorter and would be less costly, the LADWP would use the longer 230kV Corridor Route to avoid public environmental concerns (e.g., not impacting undisturbed valleys). Further, the 230kV Corridor Route would result in the least cumulative effects for connecting to the Robinson Summit substation site (refer to Scenario 3 on page 3-13 of Chapter 3 of this document).
- E Although the specific impacts between the Cutoff Route and the 230kV Corridor Route are different, the impact comparisons and tradeoffs make these two alternative routes difficult to distinguish. In any environmental comparison it is necessary to compare impacts that are dissimilar. The BLM has provided an additional discussion of environmental preference under Cumulative Effects in Chapter 3 of this document. The future foreseeable utility "buildout" (i.e., cumulative effects) in the Ely area has helped distinguish an environmental preference between these two alternative routes.

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COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Damun Gracenin, Ph.D.

508 Clayton Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process. Refer to the expanded Purpose and Need section in Chapter 3 of this document.

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

September 14, 1992

re: Southwest Intertie Project EIS

Dear Sir:

Just say no to the powerline they want to route across some of my favorite parts of this earth. Please expand existing right-of-ways to carry power from Idaho to Las Vegas.

The new proposed corridor would uglify some very pretty country. You folks should be defending unspoiled land rather than assisting in its destruction.

Maybe you don't care about setting the young Desert Tortoise up for Ravens who like to perch on power lines, or about impeding the migration of large birds of prey. Perhaps it means little to you that the proposed power-line corridor will have a bad impact on 200 to 400 archeological and historical resource sites, or that it will disfigure Great Basin National Park. Maybe all you care about is money. There is no

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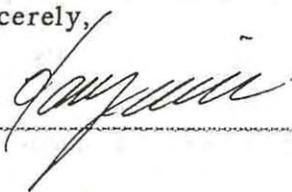
RESPONSES

economic justification for the powerline. Las Vegas does not, and will not, need that kind of extra power capacity in spite of rapid growth out towards its radio-active boundaries to the north and into the urban decay at its center.

I support the "No Action" alternative.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "D. J. ...", is written over a horizontal dashed line.

Educational Consultant
415-431-2109

LETTER #A-24
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

253 Manzanita Dr. A
Orinda Ca. 94563

Sept 8, 1992

B.L.M.

Burley District Office

Burley Idaho 83318.

The primary need for the SWIP is to postpone construction of additional generation facilities within the WSCC region by providing the capability to take advantage of seasonal diversity between regions and regional economy power sales. Please refer to the Purpose and Need for the SWIP in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and an expanded Purpose and Need section in Chapter 3 of this document.

Dear Mr. Simonson;

I am writing to comment on the proposed powerline across eastern Nevada. I realize I am considered an interfering Californian, but open BLM lands belong to us all, and this area across the mountain ranges and open valleys of Nevada that I love and consider as a precious last open unspoiled area of this vast country belongs to me as well as Nevada.

I have not heard any reasoned arguments why this powerline is justified. Why is it needed? Are we really running out of power, or or we

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A | planning for some future population
| explosions in these areas (Las Vegas?)?

| If there is a need, then I strongly
| support the routing of the lines over
| existing right of ways or built-already
| areas. Let it be added to existing routes. Do
| not damage a pristine valley. These
| areas are homes and migration routes
| for many birds and tortoises and
| any disturbance to these fragile habitats
| can endanger their survival, as we
| are recently learning throughout the
| world.

B | No lines should purposely be
| placed within the scenic outer regions
| of Great Basin National Park. Just
| because it's outside the Park boundary
| doesn't make it okay. Visually, it
| is an "eyesore" inside the park as
| well.

RESPONSES

B The visual impacts to Great Basin National Park viewpoints, to the highway approaches to the park, and to proposed interpretive facilities outside the park boundaries are documented on page 4-45 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in the Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where these technical reports can be reviewed).

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RESPONSES

Please justify the need, firstly, especially
by such a suspicious and notorious
agency as the Los Angeles Dept. of Water
and Power, for this huge and damaging
project.

Sincerely,

Susan F. Graf

LETTER #A-25
COMMENTS

Jeanette Guerin
953 Celebration Dr.
Las Vegas, NV 89123

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 5, 1992

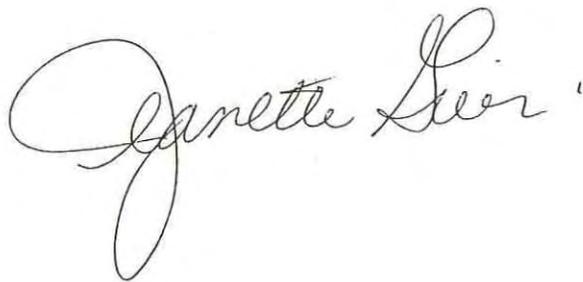
Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

Re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,



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LETTER #A-26
COMMENTS

2043 Berryman Street
Berkeley, CA 94709
September 12, 1992

RESPONSES

Mr. Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

I have reviewed the draft EIS for the proposed Southwest Intertie Project, and while I generally support the project, I am strongly opposed to the proposed route..

No powerlines should be routed down our fast-disappearing natural valleys. Instead, existing built-upon power and road right-of-ways should be used. The visual and environmental impact on a new area is FAR greater in a new area than in an area that is

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A [already built-upon. The existing criteria for judging visual impact is skewed against preserving non-built upon areas. It is my opinion that the BLM should be defending public land against new encroachments, not assisting in their visual and environmental degradation.

Thank you for considering my views —

Sincerely,
David W. Halligan

RESPONSES

A Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys in Nevada and Utah possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to much of the project study area.

The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in its decision process. The BLM uses the VRM System to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model, refer to the Methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where these technical reports can be reviewed).

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COMMENTS

Karl Simonson
B&E, Burley District Office
P.O. Box 3
Burley, Idaho 83318

Ely Sept 15 1992

RESPONSES

- A In response to your and other comments about impacts to private lands in the area, several minor reroute alternatives were evaluated (refer to Sacramento Pass Mitigation Reroute in Chapter 3 of this document).

"Comments on DEIS for SWIP"

Dear Mr. Simonson:

*After reading the draft EIS on the Southwest
Inter-tie Project, I would like to make a few comments.
First, the choice by your agency and by LADWP of
the 230KV Corridor Route rather than the environ-
mentally preferred Cutoff Route is hard to understand
and certainly without much concern for the people
living near this line.*

*I have stated to you before, that if you would bring
this line across my property it would be total ruin
for something that we have tried to build up for the past*

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RESPONSES

20 years. There are now 2 major 230KV lines already on this 160 acre property and certainly a 500KV with Steel Towers is unthinkable going through also. Since my son is raising his children on this farm and already has to work directly under the powerlines a another line crossing over the field, will make it that much more hazardous and undesirable.

Do you love your Children and Grandchildren?
We had hoped to put a "Point" Irrigation system in to be more efficient and save man power, but the already in Place 230 lines are making that task almost impossible, and a 500 KV line with Steel towers would make it totally impossible.

Also the cutoff Point would have much less effect on private landowners and would minimize possible environmental impacts.

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COMMENTS

RESPONSES

In case it is not clear where this property is located it is on the Nevada, Utah Border located in Millard County. Thank you for letting me make these comments and I trust you'll make the right choice.

Sincerely

Mrs. Gene D. Harkithorn

Herkethorn
HC 33 Box 33 405
Ely NV 89301

LETTER #A-28
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Don Hendricks
609 N. Crestline Dr
Las Vegas, NV 89107

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Donald W Hendricks

LETTER #A-29
COMMENTS

1730 So Labrador
Las Vegas
Nevada
702-431-0052

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,

Alex Hewitt
Alex Hewitt

LETTER A-29

LETTER #A-30
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

Diana Hewitt
530 Delfern Lane
Las Vegas
Nevada 89109
702-731-4191

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,



LETTER A-30

LETTER #A-31
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

*1730 LABRADOR
LAS VEGAS, NEVADA
89122*

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,



JOSEPH B HEWITT IV

LETTER A-31

LETTER #A-32
COMMENTS

MARK HUG
2120 GREENHOUSE CT
LV NEV 89134
ph 256-3151

RESPONSES

- A Your comments are noted and will be considered in the BLM's decision process.

September 3, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson:

re: Southwest Intertie Project

With regard to the Southwest Intertie Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Plan amendment, I would like to state that I am in favor of using a route away from Arrow Canyon. Arrow Canyon should be fully preserved for not only future generations but our generation as well.

Sincerely,



LETTER A-32

LETTER #A-33
COMMENTS

September 7, 1992

Karl Simonson
Bureau of Land Management
Burley District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burley, Idaho 83318

Dear Mr. Simonson,

A [I am writing to express my concern regarding the proposed Southwest Intertie Project. This project appears to be only marginally (if at all) necessary and would greatly disrupt the character of the landscape in its path and surrounding areas. In fact, there is already a powerline running from Utah to Las Vegas making the proposed project at least somewhat redundant. B

B [Of primary concern is the disruption and negative visual impact to now remote and natural valleys which are PUBLIC LAND. These areas can be seen and experienced by individuals as they were a century ago but if disrupted can never be replaced. There are numerous archaeological and historical sites in the path of this powerline C [which would be greatly and permanently impacted. Further, bird migration and tortoise habitats would be disrupted by the construction of this proposed powerline.

D [I am opposed to the construction of this powerline particularly over new right-of-ways. Even over existing right-of-ways, the economic justification for this project seems marginal at best given the lack of real need for the transfer of power and the significant cost associated with the construction.

Sincerely,


George Huxtable
158 Kellogg Way
Santa Clara, Ca. 95051

LETTER A-33

RESPONSES

A Please refer to the Purpose and Need section in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in the expanded section in Chapter 3 of this document. Also refer to page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of how in early 1990 the IPCo discovered that the UNTP would be fully subscribed and would not have the capacity to fulfill the purpose and need for the SWIP. It was in July 1990 that the IPCo decided to expand the project south from the Ely area to Dry Lake. The two major existing transmission lines between Utah and the Las Vegas area are the Sigurd-Allen 345kV and the IPP-McCulloch 500kV DC transmission lines. There is no available capacity on either of these lines.

B It is true that there could be visual impacts to valleys that are remote and largely undisturbed. Impacts in undisturbed landscapes that are not seen from sensitive viewpoints are documented as impacts to scenic quality in the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report.

Visual impacts were assessed using a model based on the criteria of the BLM's Visual Resource Management (VRM) System. The VRM System tends to focus on impacts to sensitive viewpoints. Although the undisturbed natural landscapes of open desert valleys possess inherent scenic value, the scenic quality of these areas is considered "minimal" to "common" based on the definitions of scenic quality used in the VRM System. Scenic quality classes are determined in context with the regional landscape character. Open desert valley landscapes are characteristic and common to the project study area. The BLM will consider public concerns for scenic quality in its decision process. The BLM uses the VRM System to manage the visual resources of public lands. For a detailed explanation of the VRM System and the visual impact assessment model refer to the methods section under Visual Resources in Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where these technical reports can be reviewed).

C For most species of birds, migration occurs at night at altitudes well above the maximum height of the SWIP transmission line. For species that migrate during the daylight hours, most are characterized by keen eyesight, (e.g., swallows, swifts, and raptors) and are very unlikely to be deterred by the presence of an electrical transmission line. It is unlikely that the SWIP would have any effect on local or regional bird migration patterns.

LETTER #A-33
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

Construction of the SWIP north of Las Vegas, Nevada will have some impact on desert tortoise habitat. However, judicious planning and careful monitoring during the pre-construction and construction phases of this project are expected to reduce potential impacts to desert tortoise to indiscernible levels. Soil disturbances resulting from activities at tower sites and other construction areas may enhance growth of spring annuals and actually increase the forage base for desert tortoise in the area of construction.

D The SWIP will require a new right-of-way specific for a 500kV transmission line. It is not possible to utilize existing rights-of-way that were granted for other uses. These existing or designated corridors have other utilities in them and may be considered "already built upon rights-of way". The SWIP routing alternatives utilized designated or planning corridors whenever feasible in meeting the project needs (also refer to Chapter 1 of this document).

LETTER #A-34
COMMENTS

KARL SIMMONSON
Bureau of Land Management
Burling District Office
Route 3 Box 1
Burling, Idaho 83318.

RESPONSES

Jeremy Kamal
2810 Furthest Dr.
LA, CA 90064

Memo. No
S.W. Interthe
Please,
- Ugly, Unnecessary
Intrusive & ecologically
Theatering

Dear Mr. Simonson,
I know that it is your job at
the Bureau to oversee the use of
public lands & make sure that
they are being used wisely. The Southwest
Interthe Project should look as bad to
you as it does to me & many of my
close friends & colleagues. It is shameful
me to know that the Bureau is even
considering such a project that would
squander the beauty of untouched mountain
ranges in ~~the~~ eastern Nevada ~~between~~
200-400 archaeological sites ~~with~~ the
integrity of the Great Basin National Park
the lives of poor hawks & eagles
that land innocently on the powerlines
Only to have their lives extinguished by

LETTER #A-34
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

A 500 volts of unnecessary power, & this project doesn't need to be there. This is a redundant line, there is already one from Utah to Las Vegas & it is nowhere near capacity. When more capacity is needed let it run upon right of ways where such ecological threats aren't present by its construction. The Utah alternative would work since the Thousand Springs was discontinued. This would look ugly in the open valley. ^{come in} ^{quit} ^{power} ^{lines} ^{no} ^{just} ^{kill} Please use the land wisely, don't let

A Please refer to the Purpose and Need section in Chapter 1 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and in the expanded section in Chapter 3 of this document. Also refer to page 2-31 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a discussion of how in early 1990 the IPCo discovered that the UNTP would be fully subscribed and would not have the capacity to fulfill the purpose and need for the SWIP. It was in July 1990 that the IPCo decided to expand the project south from the Ely area to Dry Lake. The two major existing transmission lines between Utah and the Las Vegas area are the Sigurd-Allen 345kV and the IPP-McCulloch 500kV DC transmission lines. There is no available capacity on either of these lines.

LETTER #A-35
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

— Accuracy
Agency
Endangered Species.
Resources at Risk

Alfred King

Oasis is the only commercial development along I-80 between Wells and Wendover. It is also the only residential development in this area directly adjacent to the interstate. The proposed power line route is within one half mile of the Oasis commercial area and residence at Oasis. It is within a mile of the residences at the Oasis Mobile Home Park.

Oasis is a natural place for further development. It is at an intersection of a state highway (233) with Interstate 80. A commercial development already exists with services for the highway travelers: fuel, mechanical services, motel, convenience store, and cafe. There is a 48 unit mobile home park that serves as a residential area for the Oasis employees and people who work in Wendover. An electrical substation is located at Oasis and a substantial water system with fire fighting capabilities is in place.

Northern Holdings Incorporated acquired the two sections of property at Oasis in 1988 with the intention of pursuing both commercial and residential development there. The previous owner, Flying 'S' Land & Cattle Company, had demonstrated an intention of development by its activities from 1983 to 1988. These activities included a number of meetings with the Elko County Planning Commission, the Elko County Commissioners, and the BLM.

Northern Holding's plan of development for sections 2 & 3 includes both residential and commercial use under and near the proposed location of the power lines. The power line path runs directly through the middle of section 3, virtually destroying the possibility of development.

Section 3 is the most visually appealing part of the Oasis property. The property lies at the base of the Pequop Mountains, across the mouth of Payne Basis, a beautiful area with many recreational possibilities. Much of this visual beauty will be spoiled by the proposed 150 foot towers and power lines.

LETTER #A-35
COMMENTS

A [There are several ways that the power line will adversely affect
the ability of Northern Holdings to develop its property. The first
is the direct loss of property. If the easement is 1,000 wide for a
mile that amounts to a direct loss of 121 acres. Since the line goes
down the center of the section it severely restricts the ability to
utilize the remaining portions of the section. The visual impact
B [would further reduce the ability to utilize section 3 and would also
make section 2 less desirable residentially. The concern about
Electromagnetic Fields, real or imagined, would certainly reduce the
number of potential residents of the Oasis area. Even if it turns
C [out that there are no long term detrimental effects of living or
working near powerful Electromagnetic Fields, many, if not most,
people are not convinced of that today, and would not knowingly
purchase or rent land near a large power line.

The visual impact and concern over EMF's would adversely affect
the desirability of Oasis as a stop for the traveling public as well
as the potential property owner or tenant.

Interest in Oasis as a residential community is increasing. The
population at Oasis rose 24% in the past year: primarily from people
who work in Wendover, but would rather live in a more rural setting.
The growth has been in tenants at the mobile home park, but there
have been inquiries about property in the area available for
purchase. Currently, of course, there is none.

Pressure on Wendover housing is high, and with all the possible
developments in the gaming and recreation industries, this pressure
will likely increase, creating more interest in Oasis as a bedroom
community. It is our clear intent to pursue development to satisfy
the demand.

Northern Holdings would encourage the BLM to reconsider the
placement of the SWIP power lines to a location east of Oasis, at
least to the Nevada Northern railroad. Further east would be
preferable.

RESPONSES

- A The right-of-way requested for the SWIP is 200 feet wide or about 24.5 acres per mile.
- B The BLM is unable to assess the specific visual impacts to future residential areas of Section 3 because there are no specific development plans for this land. Potential visual impacts to future land uses of mixed residential and commercial within Section 3 are addressed under "Impacts to the Oasis Area" in Chapter 3 of this document.
- C The numerous studies that have been conducted on EMF demonstrate that we are all affected in everyday life. EMFs are generated by microwaves, fluorescent lights, waterbed heaters, hair dryers, and any other device powered by electricity. The right-of-way width of 200 feet is intended to minimize these effects. Outside of the right-of-way, EMFs are expected to be no higher than those that normally occur in household appliances. Please refer to pages 3-72 through 3-82 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA and the Recent EMF Research section on page 3-19 of this document for additional information on EMFs.

While various studies of property value impacts have been conducted in the U.S., there is no conclusive evidence to suggest that transmission lines reduce the value or interest of adjacent properties. Some studies have shown no substantial decrease in value, while others have indicated property values and interest to be depressed.

LETTER #A-36
COMMENTS



September 16, 1992

Mr. Karl Simonson
BLM Project Manager
Burley District Office
Route 3, Box 1
Burley, ID 83318

Regarding: Comments on the EIS for the SWIP in Elko County, Nevada.

Dear Mr. Simonson:

This letter is a follow up to the presentation made by Northern Holdings, Inc. (NHI) at the August public hearing on the Southwest Intertie Project in Wells, Nevada. At that time we were asked to comment on the adequacy of the EIS. We have also been requested to add any specific suggestions as to route alternatives.

A [It is the contention of Northern Holdings that the EIS did not adequately address the adverse impact of the power line route on the private land owners whose properties are to be affected by the construction and continual presence of the power lines. In looking through the EIS it was difficult to find reference to Oasis and even more difficult to see that it had been considered any more than a reference point.

B [Northern Holdings received a copy of the SWIP EIS in June 1992. We were surprised to see the projected path of the power lines running through the middle of NHI property at the Oasis interchange on I-80. This was quite a change from the utility corridor published in the 1985 Wells Record of Decision by the BLM.

C [Northern Holdings acquired two sections of property at Oasis in October 1988 with the intention of pursuing both commercial and residential development on the property. The previous owner, Flying 'S' Land and Cattle company, had demonstrated an intention of development as documented by its activities from 1982 to 1988. These activities included a number of meetings with the Elko County Planning Commission, the Elko County Commissioners, and the BLM. (Please see Exhibit 'A': Chronicle of Planning Activities.) This chronicle also includes the fact that Northern Holdings has been before the Elko County Planning Commission requesting change to commercial zoning of a portion of the impacted property.

RESPONSES

A The development plans for Northern Holdings would have been included in the impact assessment had they been made public or been on file with Elko County. Further, there was no mention of these developments during the public scoping meetings held in March 1989, during the public planning workshop held January 8, 1991 (attended only by representatives of Big Springs Ranch), or in response to the numerous newsletters mailed out throughout the over three-year EIS process.

Future planned developments by Northern Holdings and CSY Development have been considered in the SWIP FEIS/PPA (refer to Impacts to the Oasis Area on page 3-36 of this document).

B The alternative routes evaluated in the SWIP DEIS/DPA in the Oasis area were identified during the regional environmental study (refer to Chapter 2 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA), were presented to the public during the scoping meetings in January 1989, and discussed in several of the newsletters. Some of the alternative routes do deviate from the BLM-designated or planning corridors established by the Wells Resource Management Plan (1985). Some of these deviations are due to environmental issues (e.g., cultural sites and the BLM low-visibility corridor along Interstate 80) along the established corridors and some are a result of project requirements. The SWIP DEIS/DPA contains a draft plan amendment that proposes to change the utility corridors to include these deviations along the selected alternative route. If an alternative route outside of the designated corridors within the Wells Resource Area is selected in the Record of Decision for the SWIP, this decision will serve as a plan amendment to the 1985 Wells RMP Record of Decision. Refer to Plan Amendment on page 1-32 of this document for more information.

C Research with BLM realty specialists and the Elko County planning department did not reveal any proposed developments in the Goshute Valley. Refer to response "A" above.

LETTER #A-36 COMMENTS

Oasis is the only commercial development along I-80 between Wells and Wendover. It is also the only residential development in this area directly adjacent to the interstate. The proposed power line route is within one half mile of the Oasis commercial area and residence at Oasis. It is within a mile of the residences at the Oasis Mobile Home Park.

Oasis is a natural place for further development. It is at the intersection of State Highway 233 and Interstate 80. A commercial development already exists with services for the highway travelers: fuel, mechanical services, motel, convenience store, and cafe. There is a 48 unit mobile home park that serves as a residential area for the Oasis employees and people who work in Wendover. An electrical substation is located at Oasis and a substantial water system with fire fighting capabilities is in place.

D [In our discussions with representatives from the BLM, Dames & Moore, and Idaho Power, we were told that in the urban areas where the engineers live, power lines a mile away are not considered a problem. In rural areas, though, power lines of this size a mile away from people create a tremendous visual impact. This is the reason the BLM suggested moving the lines out of the utility corridor as mapped in the Wells Record of Decision (1985). If the power lines create a negative visual impact on the I-80 traveler, the impact must surely be greater on the residents of an area who have that visual impact every time they look out the window of their homes.

This became evident to Northern Holdings after the impressive turn out of Oasis residents at the public hearing. Their comments made it clear that the lines would have an even greater negative impact on the economic and development potential of the Oasis property than was previously anticipated. It was quite clear that the Oasis residents would like to see the power line as far away from Oasis as possible.

The development plan put together by Northern Holdings is phased. The early phases deal with development of the commercial area. Recently 38,000 gallons of underground fuel storage was installed. The next step is to build new fuel islands and extend a water line to connect the mobile home park water system with the water system at the commercial area. Residential subdivision is to follow the commercial area development or possibly proceed at the same time. The first area of subdivision will be in section 2 near the existing residential development at the mobile home park, within a mile of the proposed power line. Planing work has begun on this subdivision. Subdivision of section 3, the section currently proposed as the location of the power lines, would be farther down the road. There is no detailed subdivision plan of section three at the moment, but we are submitting a copy of the Oasis Master Plan that was submitted to the BLM in 1986 by Flying 'S' for the EIS on the Thousand Springs Power Project.

E [The record clearly shows the prior intent of Flying 'S', and more recently Northern Holdings, to develop the two sections at Oasis. This development would be made impossible by the presence of the SWIP power lines on or directly adjacent to Northern Holdings property.

RESPONSES

D Visual impacts were assessed from all residences along the alternative routes. Residences were considered more visually sensitive than travelers on Interstate 80. This was part of the criteria used in assessing visual impacts. Table VR-7 of Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report documents that all residences were considered to have high visual sensitivity while travelers on Interstate 80 received a moderate visual sensitivity rating (refer to Appendix H of the DEIS/DPA for the locations where the technical reports can be reviewed).

E Future planned developments by Northern Holdings and CSY Development have been considered in the SWIP FEIS/PPA (refer to Impacts to the Oasis Area on page 3-36 of this document).

LETTER #A-36
COMMENTS

Northern Holdings would like to offer an alternative route to the one proposed in the EIS. Since the public hearing, it has become evident that the residents at Oasis feel their lives would be adversely impacted by the relative close proximity of these lines and they would like to see the lines located as far from Oasis as possible.

F [The reason given by the BLM representatives for moving the lines out of the utility corridor and running them through the only developments in the valley was that they would be less visible to the highway travelers. With this in mind we would like to suggest that the lines be run along the foot of the hills on the east side of the valley instead of the west side. There they would be less visible than if they were in the center of the valley for both the valley residents and the highway travelers. This would place them much further away from the existing developments than if they were on the west side. There currently are no developments on the east side of the valley to affect.

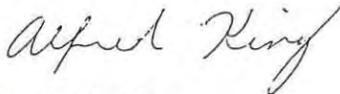
I understand that this proposal will most likely require additional study. It is unfortunate that it was not considered before, but it wasn't and we need to proceed from where we are today. This version of the EIS is a draft, and it would be best if all the options were taken into consideration before the final proposal is made in the final version of the EIS.

If it is impossible to perform another study, and the lines must be placed within existing study areas, NHI would suggest that the utility corridor in the center of the valley be considered above siting the lines on NHI property. If this alternative is selected NHI would like to see the lines located as far east in the corridor as possible. This would put the lines further away from the developed and developable areas at Oasis.

G [To be complete, the EIS must adequately address the adverse impact of the power lines on private property. In many areas the power lines may be entirely on public land. In the vicinity of Oasis, however, there is a great deal of private land and the criteria for evaluating private land should be quite different than that of evaluating public land.

In Summary: Northern Holdings Inc and the populace in and around Oasis strongly recommend that the SWIP lines be routed on the east side of the Goshute Valley, as shown on the enclosed map labeled Exhibit 'B.'

Sincerely



Alfred W. King II
for Northern Holdings Inc.

Enc. - 2
AK/dl

RESPONSES

F According to a map of the conceptual development received from CSY Development on October 7, 1992, hunting club areas and recreational use areas are proposed on the east side of the valley and south of Interstate-80. The letter accompanying the concept plan stated a preference for the rail corridor which is also the BLM's planning corridor. This corridor appears to impact the least amount of CSY's property and the conceptual development area. Another reason an alternative was not routed along the east side of the valley is because of the proximity to Bluebell WSA and impacts to low-level military flight operations in the Lucin C Military Operating Area (MOA).

G An extensive regional study was completed for this entire area and was coupled with the BLM's corridor studies completed during their Resource Management Plan process to plan a set of "reasonable and feasible" alternative routes. The regional study and alternative routes developed during this study were presented to the public during the scoping meetings in March 1989. Refer to Chapter 2 and Chapter 5 of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for a further discussion of the scoping process.

Private lands were not intentionally impacted by the routing alternatives. In fact, during the scoping process the public stated a preference for use of public lands over private lands for routing of alternatives. Private lands and environmental issues were both considered during development and refinement of the alternatives.

Visual impacts were adequately addressed and they do not overemphasize visual impacts of motorists using Interstate 80. Residences were considered the highest sensitivity viewpoints because of the long duration of views, while travelers on Interstate 80 received a moderate visual sensitivity rating. This was part of the criteria used in assessing visual impacts (refer to Table VR-7 of Volume III - Human Environment Technical Report). Refer to Appendix H of the SWIP DEIS/DPA for locations where the technical reports can be reviewed.

LETTER #A-36
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

EXHIBIT A: CHRONICLE OF PLANNING ACTIVITIES

Prior to 1981 Robert J. Beaumont, at that time the owner of Big Springs Ranch, had a preliminary plan drawn for a rest area on section 3.

On January 25, 1983, Flying 'S' Land and Cattle Company filed for "municipal" water rights for the Oasis area. These rights were granted on August 7, 1984. The rights have been maintained annually and are currently still in effect. The permit numbers are #46579, #46580 and #46581, for a combined duty of 1600 acre/feet per year.

An Oasis Master Plan was presented to the Elko County Planning Commission on October 23, 1985 by Flying 'S' as part of a request for a change in zoning and a conditional use permit for the Oasis Commercial Area. This and all other presentations to the planning commission can be verified in the planning commission meeting minutes. The Oasis master plan included additional sections other than sections 2 and 3 that are currently under consideration. The portions of section 3 under the proposed power lines are designated for Agricultural-Residential and Ag-Recreational zoning for housing.

In July of 1986 Flying 'S' and Oasis Energy Corporation presented a land use master plan to the Bureau of Land Management for use in preparing the Environmental Impact Study for the Thousand Springs Energy Project. The master plan included a proposal for residential development on section 3 on the present proposed SWIP route.

On October 22, 1986 Flying 'S' presented the master plan to the Elko planning commission requesting that the commission give an indication that they approved of the concept, that this might create a tool for attracting money for development. The planning commission seemed in favor of the idea and voiced no objections.

LETTER #A-36
COMMENTS

RESPONSES

On January 28, 1987 the planning commission unanimously approved the master plan as stated in the minutes of the meeting. A transparency of the map was left with the county engineer.

On February 18, 1987, the master plan was presented to the county commissioners. The commissioners directed the planning commission not to approve the master plan because it would be a promise of zoning.

On February 25, 1987 the planning commission under the direction of the county commissioners voted that the map was not a master plan, but only a proposal of development.

In the fall of 1987 Flying 'S' lost the title to Big Springs Ranch, retaining, however, sections 2 and 3. Alfred King was hired at that time as Oasis General Manager.

Northern Holdings acquired sections 2 and 3 from Flying 'S' on October 21, 1988. Alfred King was retained as General Manager, due partially to his experience in development planning for the Oasis properties.

On January 25, 1989 Northern Holdings, Inc. requested a change of zoning on sections 2 and 3, from Open Space to Commercial for 238 acres at a preliminary hearing before the planning commission. Steven Crane, an architect with Niels E. Valentez and Assoc., represented Northern Holdings. The concept presented at that time included a large motel, casino and recreation complex.

The public hearing for change of zoning before the planning commission was held on March 22, 1989. The change of zoning was denied because the project was too ambitious.