



Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
P.O. Box 281213
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213

June 25, 2020

MEMORANDUM FOR FILE

FROM: MARK A. GABRIEL
ADMINISTRATOR AND CEO

SUBJECT: Environmental Impact Statement Determination for Trinity Public Utilities District and Western Area Power Administration Right-of-Way Improvements Project

Trinity Public Utility District (TPUD) and WAPA are proposing a proactive ROW expansion and vegetation management project to reduce fire risk to the surrounding communities and public lands, as well as to increase electrical reliability to maintain critical services in local communities. The areas surrounding TPUD and WAPA's systems are particularly vulnerable to fire risk due to the dense vegetation and steep terrain. WAPA proposes to expand the right-of-way (ROW) for its 17-mile-long transmission system from 80 feet to up to 130 feet on U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and private lands.

TPUD proposes to expand its transmission and distribution system ROWs to up to 130 feet for a total of 276 miles on USFS, BLM, BOR, and private lands. Vegetation would be removed as necessary for risk reduction and to meet utility safety and reliability mandates and standards. The clearance distance on either side of the centerline would vary based on topography, land use conflicts, and other factors. Vegetation would be cleared using a combination of mechanical, manual, and herbicidal control methods. WAPA and TPUD would rehabilitate, improve, and may realign legal access road access as needed.

WAPA will be the Federal lead agency for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance. The USFS, BLM, and BOR have public land and resource management responsibilities for portions of the land that is crossed by WAPA and TPUD's transmission and distribution lines. USFS, BLM, and BOR will be cooperating agencies that will issue separate Records of Decision (ROD) for their individual agency actions.

In accordance with my responsibilities under Section 3.b of the Department of Energy Policy 451.1, NEPA Compliance Program, I have determined that it is appropriate to prepare an environmental impact statement to analyze the effects of the proposed project. Mark Wieringa will be the NEPA Document Manager for the EIS and may be reached at (720) 962-7448.

cc:
B. Costner, GC-54, Washington, DC