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[mcmahon@wapa.gov](mailto:mcmahon@wapa.gov)  
Please include: "SVS Comments" in the subject line

- ◆ **Mail us at:**  
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# Sacramento Area Voltage Support EIS News

*A periodic publication of Western Area Power Administration, Sierra Nevada Region—Issue 2, September 2001*

## The Project Manager's Corner

Welcome to the second newsletter describing activities on the Sacramento Area Voltage Support Environmental Impact Statement (SVS EIS). In the first issue, we introduced the potential project, presented comments that we received during the scoping period, and announced a public workshop.

The March 22, 2001 workshop attracted attendees who heard about our progress, scoping comments, and alternatives Western was considering for the environmental impact analysis. We would like to thank all who attended, and encourage you to attend our next public workshop scheduled for September 19, 2001 (see article to the right).

The past several months have been very busy. We have selected project alternatives (see alternatives selection process on page 2) to be evaluated, and are currently preparing the draft EIS. We have preliminary results from the impact analyses, which are summarized on page 3. The draft EIS is scheduled for public release in October 2001.

Western feels very strongly that actions such as the SVS EIS should have a strong public involvement component. A 45-day comment period has been established and copies of the draft will be available for all interested parties. We encourage you to read the document, participate in the public meetings, and provide Western with comments on the SVS EIS.

Thank you for your continued interest in the project. Please let us know if you have any suggestions on how we can make this newsletter more useful to you

Cordially,

Loreen McMahon  
Environmental Project Manager  
Sacramento Area Voltage Support EIS  
Western Area Power Administration  
Sierra Nevada Region

*Call toll-free: 1-877-913-4440 for more information about the SVS EIS, or visit us at: [www.wapa.gov](http://www.wapa.gov)*

## SVS EIS Public Workshop & Meetings



Western will host a public workshop in Folsom, CA on September 19, 2001, from 10:00 am until noon. There will be a presentation on the alternatives analyzed in the SVS EIS and results of the impact analyses. Western staff will be on-hand to answer your questions on an informal basis. The workshop will be at Western's office, 114 Parkshore Drive. Please make time in your busy schedule to attend.

Western also invites you to attend one of the public meetings to be held during the draft EIS comment period in November 2001.

At the public meetings, there will be a short presentation about the project, followed by an opportunity for you to voice your comments on Western's alternatives presented in the draft SVS EIS. A transcript of these meetings will be made available as part of the final SVS EIS along with responses to comments, as appropriate. If you are unable to attend any of these public meetings, you can still submit your comments by following the instructions on the last page of this EIS News.

### Public Meetings November 5, 6 & 8, 2001

- **Monday, November 5, 2001—**  
Yuba County Board of Supervisors Chambers,  
Third Floor, 215 Fifth Street, Marysville, California,  
7-9:00 pm
- **Tuesday, November 6, 2001—**  
Western Area Power Administration  
114 Parkshore Drive, Folsom, California  
3-5:00 pm
- **Thursday, November 8, 2001—**  
City of Lodi Council Chambers,  
Carnegie Forum Room  
305 West Pine Street, Lodi, California  
7-9:00 pm
- Call our toll-free number 1-877-913-4440 for further information. We hope you can join us!



# Alternatives Selection/Impact Analyses

## Alternatives Selection Process

Western undertook an extensive alternatives selection process that started with the examination of a 100-mile radius around Sacramento. Through a series of progressive steps documented in the SVS EIS, Western narrowed the potential alternatives to be considered to two action alternatives and No Action. The SVS EIS action alternatives that Western is evaluating include: reconductoring of the existing transmission lines from the O'Banion substation to the Tracy substation and constructing a new transmission line from the O'Banion substation to the Elverta substation.

## Reconductoring

The existing 230-kV transmission lines running from O'Banion to Tracy are being evaluated for reconductoring. Reconductoring includes replacement of the existing transmission line conductor (wire) with larger, higher capacity conductors, and possibly the replacement of some insulators and towers. This is referred to as Alternative 1.

## New Transmission Systems

Initially, five new transmission systems were identified for possible consideration in the SVS EIS:

- New 230/500-kV transmission line from O'Banion to Elverta
- New 230/500-kV transmission line from Elverta to Tracy
- New 230/500-kV transmission line from Elk Grove to Tracy
- Maxwell to Elverta 500-kV single circuit transmission line
- Yolo area to Elverta 500-kV single circuit transmission lines

After evaluating the transmission line options, only a new 230-kV transmission line from O'Banion to Elverta remained viable. The other four alternatives were eliminated because of their potentially adverse impacts or construction could not meet the short-term (within 5 years) requirement of the project purpose and need. The O'Banion-Elverta Transmission line would be designed and constructed as a double circuit line, approximately 26 miles long, paralleling portions of the existing Western transmission lines. In the SVS EIS, the new 230-kV transmission line from O'Banion to Elverta is identified as Alternative 2.

Alternative 2 would have three potential routes. Please refer to the map to see the approximate location. Route 1 would be adjacent to the existing O'Banion-Elverta transmission line for the entire route and would require acquisition of new right-of-way. This is the shortest route. Route 2 would parallel the existing O'Banion-Elverta Transmission line for the first seven miles south of O'Banion, but would then head southeasterly from approximately Sankey Road, towards the Cottonwood-Roseville Transmission line at Baseline Road. At this point, the transmission line would head southwesterly along the existing Cottonwood-Roseville Transmission line right-of-way, until it reached the Elverta substation. This would require the acquisition of approximately 2 miles of new right-of-way. Route 3 would realign the existing Cottonwood-Roseville Transmission line, utilizing a portion of the pathway identified in Route 2 (from Sankey Road to Baseline Road) and would shorten the Cottonwood-Roseville Transmission by approximately 4 miles. Approximately 2 miles of new right-of-way would be required for this part of the project. The portion of the existing Cottonwood-Roseville Transmission line running north and south would then be available for conversion to a new O'Banion to Elverta Transmission line without the need to acquire new right-of-way for that area.



Alternative Routes 1 and 2 for the New O'Banion to Elverta Transmission Line

## Preliminary Results of Impact Analyses

Western has conducted impact analyses for the resources area of concern. A summary of the preliminary results is presented below.

**Air Quality**—The effects to air quality resulting from either of the alternatives would be temporary dust and exhaust emissions from vehicles or equipment used in the reconductoring or construction.

**Biological Resources**—Affects to biological resources under Alternative 1 would be temporary removal of vegetation for the construction of equipment staging areas. This area would be less than 10 acres, and would avoid any sensitive or critical habitats. The areas would be replanted with native plant species after completion of the reconductoring. Alternative 2 would result in additional right-of-way, creating gaps in areas of tree-dominated habitat. (However, rights-of-way are generally densely vegetated with shrubs, grasses, and blackberry bushes, minimizing the impact to wildlife movement.

**Cultural and Historic Resources**—Under either alternative, there would be a potential impact to cultural and historic resources from equipment driving across the ground during construction activities. Alternative 2 would require some excavation for tower footings, increasing the potential for destruction of cultural and historic resources. The impact potential could be reduced for either alternative by identifying and avoiding cultural and historic resources.

**Environmental Justice**—Alternative 1 would require no new acquisition of rights-of-way and is not projected to have any disproportionate impact to minority or low-income populations. Alternative 2 would require acquisition of new right-of-way, but the analysis found no disproportionate impact to minority or low-income populations.

**Wetland/Floodplain Resources**—Under either alternative, potential impacts to wetland/floodplain resources could result from construction of equipment staging areas and travel across wetlands or floodplains during construction. Impact potential can be minimized by placing staging areas away from wetlands, maximizing use of existing access roads during construction, and avoiding identified wetland/floodplain resources during construction. Potential impacts of new towers required by Alternative 2 could be reduced by slight changes in tower locations to avoid any wetland/floodplain resources that may be present.

**Geology, Seismology, and Soils**—Alternative 1 would not require excavation, and there are no projected impacts to geological resources. Excavation for tower footings required for Alternative 2 could affect paleontological sites, but impact potential could be reduced by monitoring construction in areas with high paleontologic resource sensitivity.

**Land Use**—Alternative 1 would require no change in existing land use or visual resources. Alternative 2 would result in a visual impact, but there are no scenic resources in the area.

**Noise**—There would be temporary noise generated by construction activities under either alternative. There would not be significant impacts from operation of lines under either alternative.

**Socioeconomics**—Construction activities under either alternative would result in a temporary increase of population and economic activity in the construction area. Improvements in the availability of electricity could improve the efficiency of business operations, indirectly resulting in future increased economic productivity and growth.

**Water Resources and Hydrology**—Under either alternative, there is a potential for impacts to water resources during construction from runoff in equipment staging areas and spills of hazardous substances. The potential for these impacts could be minimized through management practices aimed at prevention and immediate cleanup of spills and prompt removal of any hazardous substances (for example, fuels, coolants, solvents, paint) that might be used during construction activities. There is also a potential for increased erosion in construction areas resulting in discharges of sediments into water. This potential could be reduced through management practices to minimize surface-disturbing activities in the channel of watercourses, to encourage prompt removal of soil or other debris, and to describe situations where work should occur during dry periods. Under Alternative 2, new towers could obstruct or alter watercourse flows. To avoid potential impacts, towers would be placed away from watercourses, where possible. If tower placement in a watercourse were required, a permanent diversion structure or culvert would be constructed to carry flow around the tower.

## The Answer Box

*This space has been reserved for you! Do you have questions or comments about the SVS EIS and don't know how to get them addressed? Then this space is for you! We will answer questions or comments posed about the SVS EIS.*

*Send us your questions or comments including your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address.*

*See page 4 on how to contact us by mail, telephone, e-mail, or through the website.*

*We look forward to hearing from you!*