

DETERMINATION TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Name of Project: Bouse Upgrade Project

Location: Near Parker, La Paz County, Arizona and San Bernardino County, California

Description of the Proposed Action: Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Desert Southwest Region (DSW), proposes to modify the Parker-Davis Project's transmission system to remedy reliability, safety, and growth issues at Bouse and Headgate Rock substations. WAPA's facilities need to meet North American Electric Reliability Corporation, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and Western Electric Coordination Council reliability standards as well as follow guidance in WAPA's Power System Safety Manual. The Parker Bouse and Parker Headgate Rock 161-kV transmission lines are in poor condition and require mitigation. Portions of these lines are located close to residential development that blocks access for maintenance equipment. La Paz County requested that these lines be removed from a residential area known as the "Parker strip." WAPA's customers anticipate load growth in the Parker, Arizona area.

WAPA's action, as defined in 10 CFR 1021.104, entails constructing, operating, maintaining, and decommissioning the facilities associated with the Bouse Upgrade Project. As shown in Figure 1, this project consists of four components:

- 1) Constructing an approximately 18-mile-long, new, double-circuited, 230-kV transmission line connection between the existing Bouse Substation and the existing Parker Liberty #2 Transmission Line in the vicinity of Structures 10/1 or 12/1;
- 2) Expanding the existing Bouse Substation by adding breakers, switches, and two 230-kV bays;
- 3) Connecting the existing Parker Bouse and Parker Headgate Rock 161-kV transmission lines with a jumper at one of two possible locations; and
- 4) Decommissioning approximately 10-mile-long segments of the existing Parker Bouse and Parker Headgate Rock 161-kV transmission lines (for a total of 20 miles) that cross the "Parker strip."

The proposed action is further described in "Bouse Upgrade Project, Short Form Revision" dated October 2018.

The proposed action occurs on land managed by Arizona State Land Department (ASLD), Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Lake Havasu Field Office, Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) Yuma Area Office, as well as private and WAPA-owned lands near Parker, La Paz County, Arizona and San Bernardino County, California. WAPA will locate the new transmission line along the existing corridors for Shea Road and the Parker Bouse 161-kV transmission line to the extent practical and obtain a right-of-way from BLM. WAPA will use the existing 7.25-acre, WAPA-owned parcel for the Bouse Substation expansion. WAPA will acquire a right-of-way for the new jumper connection from either ASLD or private landowners depending on which option is more cost-effective and quicker. Once the transmission line structures are removed, WAPA will file a quit claim deed for the portions located on private land and follow ASLD and Reclamation procedures for cancelling the right-of-way on the others. The legal description for each project component is shown in Table 1.

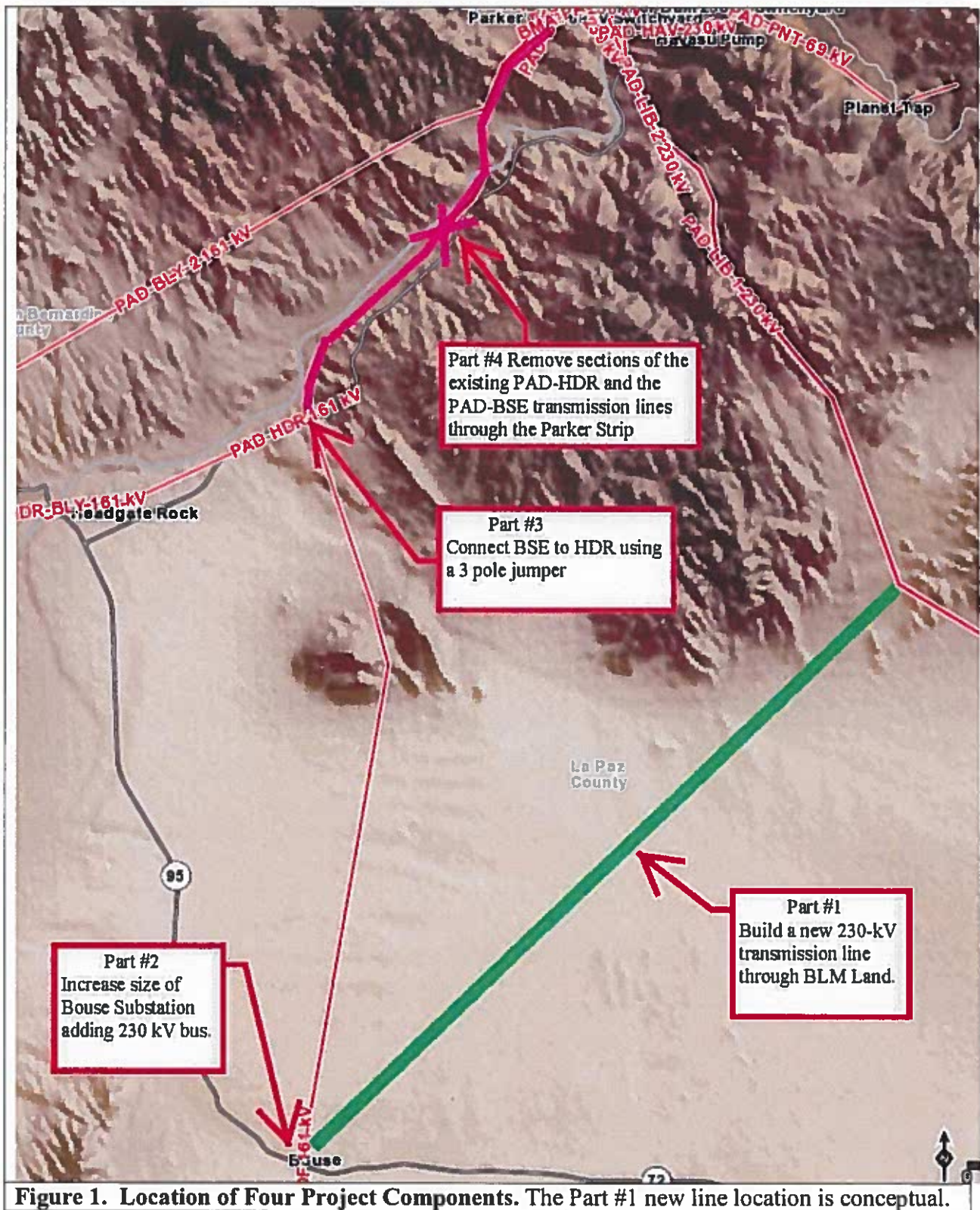


Table 1. Legal Description for each Project Component.					
Project Component	Section	Township	Range	Baseline	Land Jurisdiction
Construct transmission line	29, 32	10 North	17 West	Gila & Salt River	BLM
	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 18	9 North	17 West	Gila & Salt River	BLM
	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23, 24	9 North	18 West	Gila & Salt River	BLM
	24, 25, 26, 35, 36	9 North	19 West	Gila & Salt River	BLM
	2, 11, 14, 23, 26, 27, 34	8 North	19 West	Gila & Salt River	BLM, WAPA
Expand substation	34	8 North	19 West	Gila & Salt River	WAPA
Connect transmission lines	22, 27	10 North	19 West	Gila & Salt River	ASLD, private
Decommission transmission lines	4, 8, 9, 17, 20	2 North	27 East	San Bernardino	private, Reclamation
	31	11 North	18 West	Gila & Salt River	private
	6	10 North	18 West	Gila & Salt River	ASLD
	1, 11, 12, 14, 15, 22, 27	10 North	19 West	Gila & Salt River	ASLD, private, Reclamation

WAPA plans to start construction in October 2022 and complete it by July 2025. The new transmission line will take 520 days to construct as will the substation expansion. The jumper connection will take 80 days and decommissioning the old transmission lines 170 days. WAPA will perform some work concurrently. WAPA will schedule the work to avoid taking outages during the summer peak load season, which occurs between May 1 and October 1. WAPA will operate and maintain the facilities.

WAPA's construction contractors and maintenance crews may use the following equipment: all-terrain vehicle, auger, backhoe, boom truck, bucket truck, bulldozer, cement mixer, cement truck, compressor, crane, crew truck, drill rig, dump truck, front-end loader, grader, pole truck, spool rig, tensioners, and tractor-trailer. A helicopter may be used to lift pole sections into place or string wires. WAPA may splice the conductor using either hydraulic compression or implosive sleeving methods. WAPA typically augers 10-to-20-foot deep holes for structure foundations and backfills them with concrete; excess dirt spoils may be spread on the ground surface around the base. WAPA may remove the existing wood pole transmission line structures entirely or cut them off near ground level. WAPA will use existing roads to reach work areas or create new dirt roads, especially to reach new transmission line structure locations. Dirt road surfaces may be smoothed and leveled, and steep grades, usually associated with dry wash crossings, may be reduced so that equipment operators can safely use the roads. At work areas, WAPA will create equipment pads, because operators require stable, level, brush-free areas to work safely.

Class of Action from Department of Energy (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Procedures (10 CFR 1021): The items listed in Appendix C are classes of actions that normally require Environmental Assessments (EA), but not necessarily Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). Appendix C4 states "...construction of powerlines (1) more than approximately 10 miles in length outside previously disturbed or developed powerline or pipeline rights-of-way or (2) more than approximately 20 miles in length within previously disturbed or developed powerline or pipeline rights-of-way."

Appendix C4 applies to the proposed action, because it entails constructing more than 10 miles of transmission line located outside an existing powerline right-of-way.

Determination: Based on the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures, I determined that WAPA will prepare an EA to assess the proposed action. Based on the analysis in the EA, WAPA will either prepare a finding of no significant impact and proceed with the action, or prepare an EIS if the EA reveals the potential for significant environmental impacts.



Ronald E. Moulton
Senior Vice President and
Desert Southwest Regional Manager

2/4/2019
Date