

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
AND FLOODPLAIN STATEMENT OF FINDINGS**

**Gila to North Gila Transmission Line Rebuild and Upgrade Project
Yuma County, Arizona
DOE/EA-1948**

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact and Floodplain Statement of Findings

BACKGROUND: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to rebuild and upgrade the existing 4.8-mile-long Gila to North Gila 69-kilovolt (kV) transmission line and the existing Gila-Knob 161-kV transmission line segment between the Gila and North Gila substations. Western also proposes to expand its right-of-way (ROW) and grant Arizona Power Service Company (APS) the right to cross Western's Gila Substation with its North Gila-Orchard 230-kV Transmission Line Project. The Proposed Action would be completed in conjunction with APS, because it involves temporary relocation of Western's existing Gila-North Gila 69-kV circuit to APS's new North Gila-Orchard 230-kV Transmission Line structures as an underbuild. Temporary relocation of the existing Gila-North Gila 69-kV circuit would occur concurrently with construction of the APS North Gila-Orchard 230-kV Transmission Line Project. At a later date, Western would rebuild the existing Gila-Knob 161-kV line and upgrade it to 230-kV on new steel structures and permanently move the Gila-North Gila 69-kV circuit from APS structures to the new Gila-Knob structures as an underbuild.

Western prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the Proposed Action which crosses Gila Substation, a Certificated Route Alternative that does not cross Gila Substation, and a no action alternative. The EA is titled "Environmental Assessment for the Gila to North Gila Transmission Line Rebuild and Upgrade Project (DOE/EA-1948)" and dated February 2014. Western incorporates this EA by reference.

Western determined that the Proposed Action would have no effect to species listed under the Endangered Species Act. Western consulted with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. On December 30, 2013, the SHPO concurred with Western's finding of no adverse effect regarding the undertaking (SHPO-2013-1120).

DETERMINATION: Based on the analysis contained in DOE/EA-1948, Western determined that the Proposed Action to rebuild and upgrade the Gila-North Gila and Gila-Knob transmission lines and grant APS the right to cross Western's Gila Substation does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) with one condition. Western's determination is conditioned on Arizona Public Service obtaining approval from the State of Arizona for the portion of the North Gila to Orchard (TS-8) Transmission Line not already covered in its Certificate of Environmental Compatibility (Docket No. L-

00000D-11-0389-00163; Decision No. 72801, 1/26/2012). Therefore, if this condition is met, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

In addition, based on the analysis of Water Resources and Floodplains in DOE/EA-1948 (Pages 3-68 to 3-76), Western determined that the Proposed Action would not adversely affect floodplains or wetlands.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT: Additional information and copies of the EA and FONSI are available to all interested parties and the public from the following contact:

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The EA and FONSI can be downloaded from Western’s website or the U.S. Department of Energy’s website at:

<http://www.wapa.gov/dsw/environment/GilaToNorthGilaRebuild.htm>

<http://energy.gov/nepa/ea-1948-gila-north-gila-transmission-line-rebuild-and-upgrade-project-yuma-county-arizona>

For further information on the DOE NEPA process, contact:

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