

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Tucson-Apache 115-kV Transmission Line Right-of-Way Application Project Pima County, Arizona DOE/EA-2002

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

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

BACKGROUND: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Western Area Power Administration (Western) has submitted an application to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for a right-of-way (ROW) for the existing Tucson-Apache 115-kV transmission line segment crossing tribal land in Tucson, Pima County, Arizona (Figures 1 and 2). Western's Tucson-Apache transmission line was built in the early 1950s and currently comprises wood H-frame and 3-pole turning transmission structures and appurtenant facilities. The full transmission line runs from Tucson substation near Grant and Flowing Wells roads in Tucson, Pima County, Arizona to the Apache substation southwest of Willcox, Cochise County, Arizona. The segment of the Tucson-Apache transmission line requiring a ROW crosses the Tohono O'odham Nation, San Xavier District in Tucson, Pima County, Arizona. The line segment comprises 2.9 linear miles (about 53 acres) between Los Reales Road and South Nogales Highway in Township 15 South, Range 13 East, Sections 23, 24, 25, and 36 of the Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian. The previous ROW for the segment located on Tohono O'odham lands has expired.

Under the Proposed Action, Western would apply for, and the BIA would determine whether to allow, use of tribal lands for the existing Tucson-Apache transmission line segment as described above. The Proposed Action would grant Western legal rights to operate and maintain the transmission line and associated access road, as well as plan for future upgrades to meet anticipated demand on the electrical grid. Western and the BIA, as co-lead federal agencies, prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) analyzing the Proposed Action and a no action alternative. The EA is titled "Environmental Assessment for Western Area Power Administration's Right-of-Way Application for the Tucson-Apache Transmission Line, Tohono O'odham Nation, San Xavier District, Pima County, Arizona (DOE/EA-2002)" and dated February 10, 2015.

DETERMINATION: Based on the analysis contained in DOE/EA-2002, Western determines that the Proposed Action to apply for and obtain a ROW across tribal lands 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). The Proposed Action will not impact any floodplains or wetlands. Therefore, preparation of an environmental impact statement is not required.

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/DOEEA2002.html>

For further information on the DOE NEPA process, contact:

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Issued at Phoenix, Arizona on March 30, 2015.



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Figure 1. Project Overview



Figure 2. Project Area Map

