



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

March 30, 2007

Steve Tuggle
Natural Resources Manager
Western Area Power Administration
Sierra Nevada Region
114 Parkshore Drive
Folsom, California 95630-4710

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Trinity Public Utilities
District Direct Interconnection Project (CEQ# 70039)

Dear Mr. Tuggle:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the DEIS referenced above. Our review is pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

This project is intended to improve system reliability by providing a shorter, new, direct interconnection with Western Area Power Administration (Western)'s transmission system at the Trinity Power Plant. The project involves removal of 5.3 miles of existing 12kV distribution line and construction of new 50kV transmission line on a 8.5 mile new right of way (ROW), and a new switchyard. The U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation participated as cooperating agencies, with the U.S. Department of Energy as the Lead Federal Agency. Four main system alternatives and 3 main routing alternatives were considered but only one alternative was analyzed in the DEIS, as it minimizes potential adverse impacts by using existing ROW, to the extent possible. We have rated this project as Lack of Objections (LO) (see enclosed *Summary of Rating Definitions*).

EPA strongly supports Western's adoption of the Environmental Protection Measures (Section 3.2) and the U.S. Forest Service Resource Management Plan Policies (Appendix E) identified in the DEIS. These protective measures are important because the project will permanently disturb 149.50 acres, including critical habitat for the coho salmon and the northern spotted owl. In addition, the existing access roads and transmission line ROW that would be used to construct the Proposed Project cross several streams that are governed by Riparian Reserve policies and Late Successional Reserves. EPA recommends that Western commit to these protection measures and policies in the Record of Decision.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the FEIS is released for public review, please send (1) copy to the address above (mailcode: CED-2). If you have any questions, please contact me at 415-972-3846 or Summer Allen, the lead reviewer for this project at 415-972-3847 or allen.summer@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

/S/

Nova Blazej, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Main ID # 4847

Enclosures: Summary of EPA's Rating Definitions

Cc: Carol Borgstrom, U.S. Dept. of Energy