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Contact: Sahar Wali (CEQ) (202) 395-5428
Adam Fetcher (DOI) (202) 208-6416
Justin DeJong (USDA) (202) 720-4623
Tiffany Edwards (DOE) (202) 586-4940

Obama Administration Announces Job-Creating Grid Modernization Pilot Projects

Seven Transmission Projects Across 12 States Will Increase Grid Reliability and Integrate Renewable Energies

Washington – Demonstrating its commitment to job creation and modernizing America’s infrastructure, the Obama Administration today announced it would accelerate the permitting and construction of seven proposed electric transmission lines. This move will speed the creation of thousands of construction and operations jobs while transforming the nation’s electric system into a modern, 21st century grid that is safer and more secure, and gives consumers more energy choices.

“The President wants to get America working again. He is committed to cutting red tape and making immediate investments to put people to work modernizing our roads, bridges, airports, and energy systems,” said Nancy Sutley, Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality. “Building a smarter electric grid will create thousands of American jobs and accelerate the growth of domestic clean energy industries translating into more energy choices and cost savings for American consumers, and a more secure energy future for our country.”

These projects will serve as pilot demonstrations of streamlined federal permitting and increased cooperation at the federal, state, and tribal levels. Project developers expect that the streamlined projects will increase grid capacity and create thousands of jobs in Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Minnesota, New Mexico, Nevada, Wyoming, Utah, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Oregon, and Wisconsin.

“These are the kinds of job-creating projects that the President wants to see across the country,” Sutley said. “The American Jobs Act would make immediate investments in infrastructure, putting hundreds of thousands of workers back on the job across the country. These investments would not only put people to work now, but also yield lasting benefits for the economy, increasing growth in the long run.”

Building electric transmission lines involves coordination among multiple federal, state, and tribal agencies subject to permitting, review, and consultation. Improving the overall quality and timeliness of these procedures enables the federal government to help expedite new transmission lines. Adding necessary transmission infrastructure will integrate renewable electricity sources into the grid, accommodate the growing number of electric vehicles on America's roads, help avoid blackouts, restore power more quickly when outages occur, and reduce the need for new power plants.

"Transmission is a vital component of our nation's energy portfolio, and these seven lines, when completed, will serve as important links across our country to increase our power grid's capacity and reliability," said Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar. "This is the kind of critical infrastructure we should be working together to advance in order to create jobs and move our nation toward energy independence."

"To compete in the global economy, we need a modern electricity grid," said Energy Secretary Steven Chu. "An upgraded electricity grid will give consumers choices while promoting energy savings, increasing energy efficiency, and fostering the growth of renewable energy resources."

"USDA's collaboration with other agencies to build electric transmission will help to meet our country's electric needs in the 21st century," Vilsack said. "These infrastructure projects will also create jobs and opportunities that will strengthen our economy to benefit households and businesses throughout the country."

"These projects will put Americans to work building the electricity grid of the future - one that allows for more electric vehicles on the road and homes and businesses powered by renewable energy," EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said. "This is yet another step forward in our efforts to build a 21st century energy sector in America that is cleaner, healthier and more sustainable."

"A modern, 21st century transmission grid that expands transmission capacity in an efficient, cost-effective manner is critical to ensuring that Americans will have reliable, reasonably priced electricity," FERC Chairman Jon Wellinghoff said.

"It's important that these pilot projects move forward quickly while getting the economic, cultural and sustainability benefits provided by historic preservation reviews," said Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA, chairman, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. "The pilot project approach provides an efficient means to meet our respective agencies' legislated responsibilities. They benefit the American people while creating a model to streamline future efforts. This is good government at work."

In October of 2009, nine Federal entities including, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the Department of the Interior (DOI), the Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of Commerce, the Department of Defense, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Electric Regulatory Commission (FERC), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, signed a Memorandum of Understanding increasing their coordination to expedite and simplify building of transmission lines on Federal lands.

Leveraging this interagency collaboration and expanding the scope of activity beyond Federal lands, the Administration's recently formed Rapid Response Team for Transmission (RRTT), comprised of these same nine agencies, will accelerate responsible and informed deployment of these seven key transmission facilities by:

- Coordinating statutory permitting, review, and consultation schedules and processes among involved federal and state agencies as appropriate through Integrated Federal Planning,
- Applying a uniform and consistent approach to consultations with Tribal governments, and,
- Expeditiously resolving interagency conflicts and ensuring that all involved agencies are fully engaged and meeting schedules.

Crossing twelve states the RRTT's seven selected pilot project transmission lines are as follows:

- **Boardman-Hemingway Line powering Oregon and Idaho:**
The new 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line proposed by Idaho Power would create an approximately 300 mile long, single-circuit electric transmission line from a proposed substation near Boardman, Oregon to the Hemingway Substation near Melba, Idaho—known as the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project or B2H Project. According to the developer of this project during peak construction, this project is estimated to create about 500 jobs in Idaho and Oregon.
- **Gateway West Project to bring new transmission across Wyoming and Idaho:**
Jointly proposed by Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power, this project would add approximately 1,150 miles of new, high-voltage transmission lines between the Windstar Substation near Glenrock, Wyoming and the Hemingway Substation near Melba, Idaho. According to the developer of this project, during peak construction, it is estimated to create between 1,100 and 1,200 jobs.
- **Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse Line to power to Minnesota and Wisconsin:**
This double-circuit capable 345 kV transmission line will run between a new substation near Hampton, Minnesota, a new substation north of Pine Island, Minnesota, and continue on to cross the Mississippi River near Alma, Wisconsin. A single circuit 345 kV line will be built in Wisconsin to a new substation in the La Crosse area. Two 161 kV lines will be built between the new substation near Pine Island and existing substations northwest and east of Rochester. According to the developer of this project, approximately 1,650 jobs will be created during peak construction.
- **Oregon to get additional transmission from Cascade Crossing Line:**
Portland General Electric's proposed Cascade Crossing Transmission Project includes approximately 210 miles of 500 kV transmission line from Boardman to Salem, Oregon—for the construction of four new substations, expansion of three existing substations, and upgrades to the existing transmission systems near Salem. According to

the developer, Cascade Crossing is expected to create about 450 jobs during peak construction.

- **SunZia Transmission, LLC to bring power to New Mexico and Arizona:**
SunZia Transmission, LLC plans to construct and operate up to two 500 kV transmission lines originating at a new substation in Lincoln County in the vicinity of Ancho, New Mexico, and terminating at the Pinal Central Substation in Pinal County near Coolidge, Arizona. According to the developer estimated job creation will be about 3,408 direct jobs during the construction period.
- **Susquehanna to Roseland Line brings new transmission to Pennsylvania and New Jersey:**
PPL Electric Utilities (PPL) and Public Service Electric and Gas Company (PSE&G) have proposed the Susquehanna-Roseland power line project which includes an approximately 145-mile long 500 kV transmission line from the Susquehanna Substation in Pennsylvania to the Roseland Substation in New Jersey, and several 500 – 230 kV substations in both Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Based on the current schedule for the environmental review, the project is expected to be in service in the spring of 2015. According to the project's developer, over 2000 jobs will be created in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.
- **Transwest Express to stand-up transmission from Wyoming to Utah and Nevada:**
TransWest Express LLC plans to construct and operate a more than 700 mile, 600 kV, transmission line which is estimated by the developer to create 1,035-1,550 direct jobs per year at peak construction. This project will facilitate the development of new wind projects in Wyoming.

For a map of the transmission line pilot projects please visit:

<http://trackingsystem.nisc-llc.com/etrans/utility/Search.seam>

For more information on the Rapid Response Team for Transmission please visit:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/initiatives>

For more information on the Memorandum of Understanding please visit:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ceq/Press_Releases/October_28_2009

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