

Summary of Regions 4, 5, and 6 Stakeholder Workshops May 29—June 6, 2019

Background:

In order to improve stakeholder engagement within the energy corridor regional review process, the agencies coordinated stakeholder workshops, which were held in Missoula, Montana; Rock Springs, Wyoming; Reno, Nevada; and Redmond, Oregon. The purpose of the workshops was to provide transparency regarding the agencies process and challenges in reviewing the energy corridors and identifying potential revisions, deletions, and additions, which facilitate a maximum amount of utility for future infrastructure while also minimizing adverse environmental impacts. The workshops provided a forum to have robust discussion among stakeholders with diverse interests and varied backgrounds. This was productive in seeking the balance between the need to plan for a reliable western energy grid as well as to maintain landscapes with highly valued resources. The workshops all began with an introduction and orientation by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and/or the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and a solicitation of general interests and introduction from stakeholders. The main focus of the workshops were two breakout sessions during which specific corridors were presented to discuss opportunities for revising, deleting, or adding corridors within the west-wide energy corridor network. See Table 1-1 for a list of the corridors discussed in each workshop. Each breakout session focused on individual corridors and sought information from stakeholders on issues such as:

- Opportunities to re-align the corridor along existing infrastructure, recently authorized transmission and pipeline projects, or locally designated corridors to avoid areas of conflict and reduce impacts;
- Tradeoffs between the designated corridor and any potential corridor revisions identified by stakeholders or the Agencies;
- Recent or potential future development within the area;
- Energy demand in the area to help identify need for potential corridor additions; and
- Revisions or additions to Interagency Operating Procedures (IOPs).

Each breakout group used corridor abstracts and the interactive Corridor Mapper to engage stakeholders and facilitate discussion. The outcomes differed between each breakout session but included identification of potential corridor revisions; potential corridor additions and future energy needs; potential revisions to IOPs; suggestions to be considered during future land use planning; and suggestions for potential future Section 368 energy corridor policy. Lastly, the agencies discussed the next steps in the process and closed-out the workshop with an emphasis to contact Jeremy Bluma, BLM National Project Manager or Reggie Woodruff, USFS National Project Manager if further discussion was desired on items not able to be covered at the workshop.

Corridor-Specific Discussions

Table 1-1 lists the corridors that were included on the workshop agenda as corridors to be discussed during the breakout sessions. These corridors were chosen because they met at least one of four different criteria:

1. The Agencies identified a potential revision, deletion, or addition for the corridor in the revised corridor abstracts;
2. The corridor was a corridor of concern identified in the Settlement Agreement;
3. The corridor has numerous environmental concerns along its route; or
4. The Agencies received stakeholder input about this corridor recommending a corridor revision, deletion, or addition.

Within individual breakout groups, stakeholders were also encouraged to raise concerns they had about additional corridors not listed in the agenda. Therefore, additional corridors may have been discussed beyond those listed in the agendas and in Table 1-1.

Table 1-1 Corridors Discussed During Stakeholder Workshops

Missoula, MT	Rock Springs, WY	Reno, NV	Redmond, OR
Corridor 229-254	Corridor 121-221	Corridor 18-23	Corridor 230-248
Corridor 229-254(S)	Corridor 121-220	Corridor 16-24	Corridor 4-247
Corridor 36-228	Corridor 220-221	Corridor 18-224	Corridor 7-24
Corridor 36-226	Corridor 218-240	Potential Addition- Ruby Pipeline	Corridor 7-11
Corridor 49-112	Corridor 121-240 Corridor 73-133		Potential Addition- Ruby Pipeline

The Agencies recorded the breakout sessions and are reviewing the suggestions brought forward by stakeholders and considering potential revisions, deletions and additions in the Regions 4, 5, and 6 Report. Examples of potential corridor revisions, deletions, and additions that were brought forward in the workshops are listed below.

Potential corridor revisions include:

- Revise corridor to avoid private land parcels or to include more contiguous federal land.
- Revise corridor to better align with recently authorized transmission or pipeline projects.
- Revise corridor to avoid specially designated areas such as National Recreation Areas, roadless areas, National Conservation Areas, lands with wilderness characteristics) or other environmental concerns (Greater Sage-grouse).
- Revise corridor to avoid tribal lands.
- Revise corridor to better align or collocate with existing infrastructure.
- Revise corridor to avoid challenging terrain or unstable soils.
- Widen corridor to accommodate future development.
- Narrow corridor to avoid resource concerns (National Historic Trails, rivers).
- Change corridor's mode (multi-modal, underground-only, electric-only, or upgrade-only) either to limit future development or to allow great flexibility for future energy projects within the corridor.

- Revise corridor to include land along route which was acquired since original corridor was designated.

Potential corridor deletions include:

- Delete corridor because of environmental concerns (wildlife habitat, Greater Sage-grouse habitat, Wilderness Study Areas).
- Delete corridor because there is no existing infrastructure within the corridor and there would be significant environmental impacts if the corridor were to be developed.
- Delete corridor because of unstable soils and challenging terrain.

Potential corridor additions include:

- Add a corridor to provide transmission connection to renewable energy development.
- Add a corridor along a newly authorized transmission line or pipeline route.

General Themes from Stakeholder Workshops

In addition to specific recommendations for corridor revisions, deletions, and additions, a number of issues common to all Section 368 energy corridors were discussed and are listed below. Issue topics included: improved engagement with local and state government and tribes; industry engagement and participation; general siting recommendations to improve corridor utility; energy demand; regional reviews process and planning; and Interagency Operating Procedures.

Improved Engagement with Local and State Governments and Tribes

- Local governments stressed the importance of improved engagement when considering corridor revisions during the land use planning stage to help determine the best route across multiple jurisdictions. They also expressed early involvement from the BLM and USFS when project proponents approach the agencies with an application or potential routes. There could be regulatory considerations that if addressed early in the process could avoid additional costs.
- A common concern across all four workshops was that local agencies do not feel they are being informed about energy corridors and project-specific proposals.
- State agencies (particularly state transportation agencies) expressed the need for improved coordination, particularly when crossing or collocating energy corridors within highway rights-of way.
- Improved coordination with Tribes could help the Agencies improve energy corridor placement through or in the vicinity of tribal lands.

Industry Engagement and Participation

- Industry participation is crucial to the regional reviews process since energy corridors should be sited near energy sources and connect to areas of demand.

Corridor Siting Recommendations to Improve Corridor Utility

- Corridor should be located in areas that avoid sensitive resources and designations (inventoried roadless areas, wilderness areas) as much as possible.
- Corridor widths are often not consistent. Although a wider corridor provides more flexibility in siting projects to minimize impacts, there is concern that project proponents will view the corridor width as more capacity for additional projects.
- Corridors should be sited on public land wherever possible to reduce impacts on local communities and landowners.
- Concern that if you keep revising corridor locations, project proponents will use both the old corridors and new corridors, resulting in a spider web of infrastructure across public lands.
- Stakeholders questioned under what conditions a corridor could be deleted. If the corridor is not in a preferred location and an alternative location and demand is not well documented, the Agencies should recommend corridor deletion.
- Concern about how potential corridor revisions would impact valid existing rights, such as mining operations.
- Collocation with existing infrastructure (including roadways/highway corridors) is preferred over separate transmission lines and pipelines to reduce fragmentation and visual impacts.
- Concerns with collocation include: potential additional costs for collocation, separation integrity requirements, and corridor width required for collocation.
- Consider the 'first come, first serve' aspect of collocation; the siting choice of the first transmission line or pipeline should not be at the detriment of additional transmission lines or pipelines (e.g. meandering across the width of the corridor, preventing future projects from collocation).

Energy Demand

- There is a need for better information on energy demand/need for energy related to corridor location. Recent projects have not always followed Section 368 energy corridors and the Agencies should better understand why projects were sited along the approved routes.
- There have been many proposals from Wyoming through Idaho to Nevada in recent years, indicating future energy pathways.
- There is a focus on pipeline development in Oregon to move natural gas from the Rockies or Canada to export facilities on the Oregon coast.
- The energy corridors should be intended for domestic energy transportation rather than to provide pathways to import/export energy to non-US destinations.
- Corridor routes need to be data driven and dependent on energy needs; what is expected to come online and offline.
- The Agencies need to provide better connections to renewable energy development projects or to where projects might be sited in the future.
- Industry does not seem to be using the Section 368 energy corridors. Consider the future need for large planning corridors if an increase in distributed energy generation reduces demand for long-distance energy transmission.

Regional Reviews Process and Planning

- Agencies should encourage preferred use of energy corridors, possibly through incentives similar to those identified in the Solar PEIS. Incentives could include predictability, guidance, or NEPA tiering.
- Stakeholders suggested that the Agencies should consider a multi-state land use plan amendments effort to implement corridor revisions, deletions, and additions.
- There was a question about how compensatory mitigation would be implemented at the project-specific level since compensatory mitigation actions were assumed in the WWEC PEIS.
- Data sharing capabilities should be improved across agencies and organizations. The Agencies should consider a clearinghouse for data, information, energy need and demand and encourage involvement from all agencies and jurisdictions.
- The Agencies should address competing designations. Where an energy corridor is designated as a preferred location for energy infrastructure but is sited across a designated avoidance area, the two designations are in conflict with one another.

Interagency Operating Procedures

- Stakeholders recommended that the Agencies revise an existing IOP to including reducing the corridor width at some river crossings.
- In areas where the corridors cross GRS habitat, an IOP could be added related to predation issues (installation of barriers, structures to prevent raptors from predation).
- Stakeholders recommended that the Agencies could add a new IOP for National Historic Trails and could include the consideration of designating a corridor underground-only at some trail crossings.
- The Agencies should be consistent in addressing wildlife corridors/migration patterns at the project-specific level.

Conclusion

Overall, the workshops enabled the agencies to gain stakeholders' insights on addressing both the challenges and opportunities in managing the west-wide energy corridor network. The agencies are thoughtfully reviewing the information from the workshops in addition to the previous stakeholder feedback and are compiling a report on the management of energy corridors in these two regions. Recommendations from stakeholders on corridor revisions, deletions and additions were recorded and will be considered in the Regions 4, 5, and 6 Report (targeted release of Fall 2019). The Regions 4, 5, and 6 Section 368 energy corridors discussed in the workshops are listed in Table 1-1 above. The ideas and recommendations gathered from the stakeholder workshops will be applied to all corridors where the agencies believe it is viable and appropriate. Stakeholders will have the opportunity to review and comment on all corridor revisions, deletions, and additions when the Regions 4, 5, and 6 Report is released.

List of Participating Organizations

Missoula, Montana

Defenders of Wildlife
Jefferson County Commission
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Montana Department of Transportation
Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
National Park Service
National Park Service-National Trails
Intermountain Region
Owyhee County
Representative for U.S. Congressman Gionforte
TC Energy
Tongue River Electric Cooperative
The Wilderness Society
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Forest Service

Rock Springs, Wyoming

Andeavor Gathering LLC
Campbell County Board of Commissioners
Defenders of Wildlife
Exxon Mobil
Greater Little Mountain Coalition
Lincoln County Commission
Medicine Bow Conservation District
Petroleum Association of Wyoming
Representative for Congresswoman Cheney
SER Conservation District
SWCO
Wilderness Society
Wyoming Department of Transportation
Wyoming Department State Parks
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Forest Service

Reno, Nevada

Big Pine Paiute Tribe
Citizens for the Preservation of Long Valley
Ducks Unlimited
EMPSI
Friends of the Inyo
Inyo County
LS Power
Mono County
Nevada Department of Wildlife
Nevada Governor's Office of Energy
NV Energy
Nye County
ONEOK, Inc.
Pacific Crest Trail Association
Pacific Gas & Electric
Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe
Sierra Club
Southwest Gas Corporation
The Nature Conservancy
Valley Electric Association
Walker Basin Conservancy
Wells Rural Electric
Wilderness Society
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Forest Service

Redmond, Oregon

BARK
Bitterbrush Broads-Great Old Broads for
Wilderness
Booz Allen Hamilton
Oregon Natural Desert Association
The Wilderness Society
Tree Trouble
Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Forest Service