



Idaho Public Utilities Commission

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Case No: IPC-E-16-28

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Public hearing set for Idaho Power proposal to build new transmission line

BOISE (July 14, 2017) – The Idaho Public Utilities Commission has scheduled a public hearing regarding Idaho Power Company’s proposal to construct a new transmission line in the Wood River Valley.

The hearing is set for July 26 from 7 pm to 9 pm at Ketchum City Hall.

There will be no formal presentation at the hearing; instead, the Commission will take testimony from Idaho Power customers and members of the public.

Testimony offered will be made part of the formal record as the Commission considers Idaho Power’s application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) to build a second high-voltage power line between Hailey and Ketchum. Idaho Code requires a public utility to obtain a CPCN before constructing certain facilities or infrastructure.

In its application, Idaho Power said redundancy afforded by a second transmission line is necessary for several reasons, including increased reliability and the need to rebuild the existing, “aged” transmission line without long-term disruption of service to the approximately 9,000 customers in the area, which is home to several resort communities.

The area is served by two substations fed by a single, 138-kilovolt transmission line that spans 12.4 miles to connect substations near Hailey and Ketchum.

The existing line was built in 1962 on wooden poles, in steep and rugged terrain that can be difficult to access, the company said, adding that structure failure along the line could lead to an extended power outage. A redundant line would eliminate that risk, Idaho Power said.

The need for a second energy source for the area was identified in the mid-1970s, and Idaho Power said it has engaged the communities that would be affected “on a consistent basis” for more than two decades.

A previous CPCN issued by the Commission was canceled in 1995 at the company's request because of public opposition related to aesthetic impacts, perceived health and safety concerns, and difficulty in finding an agreed-upon route.

In its current CPCN application, Idaho Power listed four options for the route that range in cost from approximately \$30 million to \$45.9 million.

Each option calls for approximately 7.5 miles to run alongside state Highway 75 from the substation near Hailey north to the area near Owl Rock Road south of St. Luke's Wood River Medical Center.

From there, the options vary in either route or configuration – overhead or underground - for the section that runs into the Ketchum substation on Sun Valley Road.

The company's preferred route is estimated to cost \$30 million and calls for a transition from an overhead configuration to underground at Elkhorn Road, north of the medical center. Its cost is equivalent to the option with all overhead lines, and is significantly less than the all-underground configuration.

The case has generated nearly two dozen comments to the PUC, a mix of support and opposition.

Those who have submitted written comment do not need to testify at the public hearing since those comments are included in the case's official record. Anyone wishing to testify may do so, however.

Anyone with questions about testifying is encouraged to call the commission at (800) 432-0369.

Ketchum City Hall is located at 480 East Avenue N. in Ketchum.

In addition to the public hearing, the Commission has scheduled a technical hearing for August 8 and 9 in the Commission's hearing room, 472 W. Washington St. in Boise.

Parties to the case, including commission staff, have submitted their comments. Those comments and other documents filed in the case can be found at www.puc.idaho.gov. Click on the electric icon, then on "Open Electric Cases," and scroll down to Case No. IPC-E-16-28.