

Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project

Community Advisory Process

August 2009 Public Meetings

Overview

Background

Idaho Power hosted seven public meetings in August 2009 for the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line Project, a process to site and construct a 500-kilovolt transmission line between Boardman, Oregon, and Melba, Idaho.

The public meetings were an important component of Idaho Power's commitment to partner with communities when siting the proposed line. Idaho Power began identifying routes in 2007. Following public meetings in October 2008, Idaho Power removed previously identified routes from consideration and initiated the Community Advisory Process. The Community Advisory Process is intended to:

- Identify community issues and concerns
- Develop a range of possible routes
- Recommend proposed and alternate routes
- Follow through with communities during federal and state reviews

Three project advisory teams have been formed in the project area as a part of the Community Advisory Process. The teams meet in the northern, central and southern parts of the area between Boardman, Oregon, and Melba, Idaho. Team members include citizens, local officials and property owners who have agreed to a greater time commitment than the general public.

Purpose of the public meetings

The August 2009 public meetings, held in the North, Central and South advisory areas, were intended to give an overview of the project, share the outcomes of the Project Advisory Team meetings, and allow community members to ask questions and provide input on criteria for siting the transmission line.

The public meetings were held after Project Advisory Teams met twice to formulate community criteria for siting routes for the proposed transmission line. Community criteria were based on concerns and suggestions from community members in each advisory area. Regulatory, engineering and community criteria will be the basis for evaluating potential routes.

Public Meeting Objectives

- *Give an overview of the project*
- *Share the outcomes of the Project Advisory Team meetings*
- *Allow community members to ask questions and provide input on criteria for siting the transmission line*

Meeting planning

Idaho Power held meetings with Project Advisory Team members to help organize the first set of public meetings. At a planning meeting in July, team members discussed preferred times, dates, locations and notification processes for the public meetings. They also discussed what information should be presented at the public meetings.

Based on input from the teams, the public meetings were scheduled from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. in seven locations:

<i>North advisory area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baker City, Oregon, on Aug. 12• La Grande, Oregon, on Aug. 13
<i>Central advisory area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pilot Rock, Oregon, on Aug. 19• Boardman, Oregon, on Aug. 20
<i>South advisory area</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parma, Idaho, on Aug. 25• Marsing, Idaho, on Aug. 26• Ontario, Oregon, on Aug. 27

Following the planning meetings, a detailed work plan was developed to outline meeting objectives, the use of public comments, notification methods and deadlines, and materials and logistics.

Notification

A total of 88,520 invitations were mailed to residents in the project area in Oregon and Idaho.

- Central advisory area: 19,602 invitations
- North advisory area: 28,573 invitations
- South advisory area: 40,345 invitations

All three invitations were also mailed to a stakeholder database of Idaho Power and Oregon Department of Energy contacts. This database includes 2,766 elected officials, individuals living outside the project area and people involved in the scoping process.

Another 1,815 invitations were mailed to individuals on the BLM mailing database, which includes the agency's cooperating agencies list, BLM National Environmental Policy Act notifications list, scoping participants and other BLM contacts.

Electronic copies of the public meeting invitations were sent to individuals on the BLM mailing database, as well as the Oregon Department of Energy and Idaho Power combined stakeholder database. A total of 1,050 invitations were e-mailed to the contacts on these lists.

Meeting Format and Objectives

Each meeting followed an open house format. Attendees were greeted and asked to sign in. They were then given a meeting guide and a comment sheet, and were encouraged to view the nine display stations with information about the project. Idaho Power staff and PAT members were available to answer questions.

The stations and their contents were as follows:

Station 1: About the Boardman to Hemingway Project

This station gave background information and told the status of the project. A short video presentation played continually at the beginning of the station. Displays and handouts included:

- Welcome
- Overview
- Background
- Transmission Line (Design and Tower Height)
- Project History
- Anticipated Timeline
- Fact Sheet handout
- Transmission Line (Construction)

Station 2: Purpose and Need

This station explained why Idaho Power intends to build the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line. Displays and handouts included:

- Energy Demand
- Integrated Resource Planning
- Purpose and Need
- Transmission Basics handout
- Transmission Needs
- Reliability Needs
- The Role of Renewable Energy

Station 3: Siting a Transmission Line

This station outlined the multiple processes, jurisdictions, agencies and communities involved with siting the proposed transmission line. Displays included:

- Siting Overview
- Federal Process
- State Process
- Public Process
- Private Land

Station 4: Community Advisory Process

This station presented the process Idaho Power is using to involve communities in developing proposed and alternate routes that will be submitted to the Bureau of Land Management and Oregon Department of Energy. Displays included:

- Overview
- Project Advisory Teams
- List of team members
- Public Meetings
- Coordination
- Outcomes of the Community Advisory Process
- Advisory Areas map
- Project Advisory Team meeting photos

Station 5: Siting Criteria

This station provided the criteria that would be used to evaluate potential routes. This station included community criteria developed by Project Advisory Teams, as well as the regulatory and engineering criteria that will guide the Bureau of Land Management and Oregon Department of Energy's decision-making processes. Displays and handouts included:

- Criteria Overview
- Regulatory and Engineering Criteria
- Community Criteria
- Project Map
- Regulatory Criteria handout
- Community Criteria handout

A comment sheet was also available at this station for public input specific to the community criteria. A copy of the comment sheet is included in the "Meeting Materials" tab.

Station 6: What's Next

This station listed the next steps in the siting process and information about how attendees can stay involved. Displays included:

- Stay Involved
- What's Next

Station 7: Idaho Power

This station included company information and details about various programs Idaho Power is involved in. A large map of the project area was posted on the wall.

Station 8: Oregon Department of Energy

This station included information about the Oregon Department of Energy siting review process.

Station 9: Bureau of Land Management

This station included information about the BLM siting review process and requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Materials and Comments

The following pages of this binder contain an overview of meeting outcomes, an overview of media coverage of the public meetings, copies of the meeting handouts, copies of the display boards and detailed summaries of the meetings in each of the three project areas.

Public Meeting Outcomes

Introduction

At each public meeting, attendees were given the opportunity to complete a comment sheet that asked the following questions:

- What are your concerns about siting the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission Line?
- What are your suggestions for siting the transmission line?
- Do you have comments on the regulatory and/or engineering criteria?
- Additional comments.

Below is a summary of the responses received from the Central, North and South advisory areas.

Central: Baker City and La Grande Summary of Comments

The public meetings in Baker City, Oregon (Aug. 12) and La Grande, Oregon (Aug. 13) had an overall attendance of 108 people.

A total of 28 comment sheets were collected. A detailed meeting summary and transcription of all comments will be posted on the project Web page www.boardmantohemingway.com.

The following is an overview of the themes and opinions expressed by the public:

Concerns

- Preservation of private and farm land
- Need for the transmission line
- Preservation of scenic beauty
- Preservation of wildlife
- Economic effects
- Compensation for land that will be used
- Public input will not be taken seriously
- Idaho Power has not considered other options/technology

Suggestions

- Avoid private land
- Do not build the transmission line
- The line should be sited to avoid wildlife habitats

- The line should not obstruct scenery

Other comments

- I think any concerns I had are adequately addressed in the Central Community Criteria.
- What will be given up to put it here for all involved?
- Build it.
- Put it on as much public land as possible.
- Keep up the community involvement.
- Look at smaller energy producing facilities closer to your projected needs.
- I'm for it going on either side of the Durkee Valley.
- With new technology and development, do we need these giant towers and lines?
- Idaho Power is a "for profit" corporation and is only looking at its bottom line.
- Will the communities be told where the line will go and when? And will the people's comments actually be listened to, not disregarded?

North: Pilot Rock and Boardman Summary of Comments

The public meetings in Pilot Rock, Oregon (Aug. 19) and Boardman, Oregon (Aug. 20) had an overall attendance of 106 people.

A total of 12 comment sheets were collected. A detailed meeting summary and transcription of all comments will be posted on the project Web page www.boardmantohemingway.com.

The following is an overview of the themes and opinions expressed by the public:

Concerns

- Effects on the Boardman airport expansion plan
- Loss of state and county tax revenue in Boardman Speedway excise tax district
- Siting may be politically and emotionally driven
- How will this project impact Conservation Reserve Program designated land?

Suggestions

- Avoid conflicts with the Boardman airport expansion plan
- Use common sense and economics
- Use existing pipeline/power corridors when possible (For example, Dead Man Page Rest Area gas line, which heads toward Baker.)

- Preserve Oregon Trail history
- Site south of Boardman to avoid conflicts with Navy operations

Other comments

There was only one comment in the “Other Comments” section.

- We appreciate your straightforward and professional approach, especially the quality of your staff that we have met in the meetings.

South: Parma, Marsing and Ontario Summary of Comments

The public meetings in Parma, Idaho (Aug. 25), Marsing, Idaho (Aug. 26) and Ontario, Oregon (Aug. 27) had an overall attendance of 287 people.

A total of 131 comment sheets were collected. A detailed meeting summary and transcription of all comments will be posted on the project Web page www.boardmanto hemingway.com.

The following is an overview of the themes and opinions expressed by the public:

Concerns

- Preservation of prime farmland and EFU land
- Preservation of private property
- Preservation of property values
- Disruption of farming operations, specifically irrigation
- Disruption of livestock
- Credibility of Idaho Power
- Preservation of areas of impact
- Health and safety concerns
- Interruption of TV, radio and cell phone reception
- Flight hazards
- Preservation of scenic beauty

Suggestions

- Site the transmission line on public land
- Stay off Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) land
- Keep the line in Idaho as much as possible
- Create both Idaho and Oregon routes

- Place the line in unpopulated areas, on non-productive land
- Use existing corridors as much as possible
- Go west out of the Hemingway substation

Other comments

- “We appreciate these meetings. It is my concern, however, that Idaho Power, BLM and other large entities will do what is best for their pocketbooks before they really take in the concerns of the landowners.”
- “I know that the state of Oregon, the state of Idaho and the federal government are a difficult task to fight, but they must be made to understand that the land is not their land, but the people of this country own it. The power lines should run on non-productive lands, not our farms or over our homes.”
- “We believe Idaho Power is providing a valuable service; we use and appreciate the services they offer. We hope to see a sincere effort on the behalf of Idaho Power to avoid our farm and the farms of our friends and to make this project have as little impact on private land as humanly possible.”
- “If absolutely necessary will Idaho Power really give us what our land is worth?”
- “Thank you for making the effort to seek community input and consider the options.”
- “Keep the public aware of what is happening. Make sure the people are informed when meetings occur.”