

NEWS RELEASE

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Two Wyoming Transmission Projects Targeted for Advancement by Federal “Rapid Response Team for Transmission”

CHEYENNE, October 10, 2011 – Federal officials [announced](#) that two of the seven transmission line projects picked by the federal government for accelerated permitting and deployment originate in the State of Wyoming.

The new Rapid Response Team for Transmission (RRTT) is co-led by the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the White House Council on Environmental Quality. By making permitting processes across federal land faster and more streamlined, the goal of the RRTT is to “create thousands of construction and operations jobs, and help to transform the Nation’s electric system into a modern, 21st century grid that is safer, more secure, and gives consumers more choices about their energy.”

The Wyoming transmission lines chosen for the national RRTT program include the proposed [TransWest Express Transmission Project](#) and the proposed [Energy Gateway West Transmission Project](#), both of which must cross hundreds of miles of federally owned land.

The 725-mile TransWest Express Transmission Project is a 600 kV, 3,000 MW direct current (HVDC) transmission line to deliver high-capacity, cost-effective Wyoming wind energy to utility customers in the California-Nevada-Arizona market. It is being developed by TransWest Express LLC, an independent transmission developer, and Western Area Power Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Energy.

Gateway West includes 1,100 miles of new 230 kV and 500 kV AC lines between the Windstar Substation near Glenrock, Wyoming, and the Hemingway Substation near Melba, Idaho. It is being developed by Idaho Power and Rocky Mountain Power to address long-term native-load needs and federal open transmission system access obligations. Any capacity on the Gateway system that is used by third parties will be paid for by those third parties and the revenue credited back to Rocky Mountain Power’s retail customers thereby reducing their costs.

“This federal announcement is good news for Wyoming and good news for a region that can benefit from greater access to Wyoming’s cost-effective energy resources,” said Loyd Drain, Executive Director, Wyoming Infrastructure Authority. “Both Gateway West and TransWest Express are very advanced in their respective federal permitting processes. We are hopeful that this new federal team will enable Wyoming transmission and generation projects to be constructed and placed in-service even earlier than planned. This will lead to more jobs; a stronger power grid for all of our connected Western states; and lower costs of electricity, among other benefits.”

This RRTT accelerated program benefiting Wyoming transmission builds on positive news released last month from the Western Electric Coordinating Council (WECC), which coordinates the bulk electric system across the Western U.S. and Canada. WECC's U.S. Department of Energy-funded "[10-Year Regional Transmission Plan](#)" analysis indicates that if California met just 20% of its renewable energy demand with deliveries of high-capacity wind energy from Wyoming instead, California ratepayers could save on the order of \$600 million every year, translating to billions of dollars in savings for those customers over time.

Additional benefits for California, relative to new transmission infrastructure, includes greater grid reliability; greater optionality of power supply sources for the life of the transmission; natural gas-fired generation in Wyoming to address the variability of renewable energy; geographic diversity relative to Wyoming Wind vs. California Wind & Solar which would mitigate ramping events and result in lower integration costs; and finally, an increased ability to provide for alternate points of delivery for off-peak power in the future.

According to a WIA-commissioned study by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the development of 9,000 MW of new power transmission lines in Wyoming for export to California and other states would add \$12 billion to \$15 billion in total economic output in the State of Wyoming (construction plus 20 years of operation). An estimated average of 4,000-5,900 jobs would be supported from construction of infrastructure from 2011-2020 and 2,300-2,600 permanent jobs was estimated during operation.

Contact Information:

For more information, contact Loyd Drain, Executive Director, Wyoming Infrastructure Authority at 307.635.3573 or loyd.drain@wyo.gov. Visit the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority website at www.wyia.org to learn more about the transmission activity in Wyoming.

About the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority:

The **WIA**, an instrumentality of the State, was created by the State Legislature in 2004 to diversify and expand the Wyoming economy through improvements in the state's electric transmission infrastructure and to facilitate the consumption of Wyoming energy. The authority is governed by a Board of Directors composed of five (5) members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. It is responsible for promoting the planning, development and financing of transmission facilities in the State including associated generation. In addition, the WIA has \$1 Billion in bonding authority relative to the financing of transmission infrastructure in Wyoming.