



September 27, 2011

Mr. Patrick Reiten
Western Electric Industry Leaders
PacifiCorp
825 N.E. Multnomah Street
Portland, Oregon 97232

Dear Mr. Reiten:

Thank you for your June 29, 2011, letter cosigned by your colleagues, concerning the need for reasonable and predictable schedules for issuing permits or approvals for electric transmission projects crossing Federal lands. We appreciate and share your concerns about the need to ensure responsible development of electric transmission facilities—when and where needed—in the western United States.

As your letter clearly expresses, we must have a robust and reliable transmission network to realize the benefits of developing renewable energy resources. Appreciating the significant investment needed to update and expand our existing network, our Departments understand your desire for reliable project schedules and are committed to avoiding unnecessary procedural delays.

The U.S. Departments of Interior, Agriculture, and Energy are making significant progress in their efforts to coordinate actions to facilitate development of needed electric transmission capacity nationwide, particularly in the western United States. This work began in early 2009, when the Departments began meeting regularly to promote transmission planning and to coordinate transmission siting and permitting responsibilities across the Federal Government. One early product of that cooperation is the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in October 2009 by nine Federal Agencies “to expedite the siting and construction of qualified electric transmission infrastructure in the United States.” The nine Agencies are the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Council on Environmental Quality, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The MOU was initially conceived as a vehicle for coordinating efforts among the nine Agencies with respect to a limited number of large-scale electric transmission projects, but it became apparent that a much broader group of electric transmission projects would benefit from enhanced agency coordination. Accordingly, the nine Federal Agencies established the Rapid Response Transmission Team (RRTT), whose charge includes:

- Coordinating a timeline for completion of Federal review, including major milestones, among the Federal Agencies and the applicant;
- Coordinating and expediting permitting, review, and consultation schedules and processes among affected Federal agencies and state agencies, as appropriate, through integrated Federal planning;
- Applying a consistent approach to consultation with tribal governments;
- Expeditiously resolving interagency conflicts and ensuring that all affected agencies are fully engaged and meeting schedules; and
- Tracking the status of all RRTT activity through a publicly available electronic dashboard.

The RRTT has selected a handful of pilot projects, including the two projects identified in your letter, Gateway West and Cascade Crossing.

The nine Federal Agencies subject to the MOU have not only created the RRTT, but have taken the following actions to improve the Federal role in building America's infrastructure:

- The DOE has expanded the scope of its transmission project tracking system to enable all agencies to track the status of projects subject to the MOU. The DOE is tracking close to 40 projects, and this number is likely to grow.
- The U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management are developing an integrated, project-specific planning process for affected Federal, state, and tribal entities for all electric transmission projects crossing Federal land.
- Through its recently established siting clearinghouse, DOD is encouraging development of America's renewable energy resources, while preserving the military's ability to train, test, and operate. The siting clearinghouse recently completed its first round of reviews and cleared 229 of 249 projects, 10 of which involve electric transmission facilities, for the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) obstruction-evaluation process. These cleared projects, which include more than 6,300 wind turbines and 30 solar arrays, could add more than 10 gigawatts of renewable energy to America's energy grid. For the 20 projects not yet cleared, DOD will enter into discussions with developers to determine whether military impacts can be mitigated. In addition, DOD is beginning a second round of review for project applications filed after January 2011.

We can improve these procedures by identifying issues and working together to create appropriate solutions. Ongoing cooperation with states, tribes, your member companies, and many other electricity-related organizations will make this process even more effective, and we look forward to working with you as these projects proceed. We would be pleased to meet with you and the cosigners of your letter at your earliest convenience to discuss how we might work together to

accomplish our shared goals. Please share this response with your cosigners, and contact one of our staff (Lauren Azar at DOE, Sarah Bittleman at USDA, or Steve Black at DOI) for additional information and to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture



Steven Chu
Secretary of Energy