

**Bonneville Power Administration  
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## Proposed power line to be delayed;

*Routes outside Cedar River watershed to be analyzed*

**SEATTLE, Wash.** - SEATTLE, Wash. - The Bonneville Power Administration will delay an important power line upgrade for at least one year in order to supplement the draft environmental impact statement on the project. The time will be used to more thoroughly evaluate routes outside the Cedar River Watershed east of Seattle. The line is needed to avoid power outages as early as next winter in the Seattle area.

Public meetings on the routes are scheduled for June 5 in Seattle, June 6 in North Bend, June 8 in Black Diamond and June 13 in Maple Valley. (See below for details.) BPA will supplement its draft environmental impact statement and issue a final statement in May 2003.

"Some members of the Seattle City Council and residents of Seattle have expressed concern about expanding an existing right-of-way through the Cedar River Watershed," said Lou Driessen, project manager for the Kangley-Echo Lake line. "We are confident that this route can be built and operated safely, but we will take a closer look at alternatives before making a final decision."

The nine-mile line was scheduled for completion this fall. Under normal operating conditions, the existing system can function reliably for another year, Driessen said. However, delay will increase the risk of potentially severe outages in the Seattle area this coming winter.

"If we get extremely cold weather and we lose another line, the system would automatically protect itself from further damage by cutting off power to large blocks of customers," said Driessen. "But, if one of the transformers failed due to significant overload, voltage would collapse, causing blackouts in most of the Seattle area."

BPA launched an extensive environmental review of the project more than two years ago. The agency conducted public meetings and received over 700 comments. In June 2001, BPA issued a draft environmental impact statement with a preferred route through the watershed. Other routes were considered but not studied in depth because of public opposition, environmental impacts and substantially higher cost.

Driessen said that, although the delay will increase risks, BPA takes seriously concerns expressed recently and is willing to reconsider other options. There are, however, no adequate nontransmission alternatives to the project. The project is needed to serve demand growth in the Puget Sound area, as well as to return power to Canada - energy that Canada has been making available to the Northwest for many years under a reciprocal treaty.

"The need for this project has been growing for a decade, but we have been able to delay it with technical adjustments," Driessen explained. "Now conservation and other approaches simply won't provide enough additional capacity. As the economy picks up steam in coming months, the problem will

only grow more acute."

Concerns expressed by city officials and environmental groups center on the possibility of erosion that could diminish the quality of Seattle's water supply. BPA has agreed to use helicopters and other special construction methods to protect the Cedar River and would correct any problems that might arise due to the project. The existing line has been operating for 30 years without incident.

"Safe, reliable electricity is necessary to maintain public health and welfare and support the economy," Driessen said. "Federal law requires BPA to provide adequate electrical transmission."

Alternative routes also cross the Cedar River although outside the reserved watershed, or other rivers and forested areas. Routes to the west of the preferred right-of-way transect more populated areas of Maple Valley in King County. In earlier public meetings, large numbers of landowners strongly objected to these routes.

"The problem we face here is that the metropolitan area needs the electricity, but every conceivable route encounters opposition," said Driessen. "We think the best all-around solution is the preferred route through the watershed, but we want to be sure that we have thoroughly considered every alternative."

Public meetings are scheduled as follows:

Wednesday, June 5, 4-8 p.m.

Seattle Center

305 Harrison Street

Rainer Room, North of the Key Arena

Thursday, June 6, 4-8 p.m.

Mt. Si Senior Center

411 Main Ave. South, North Bend

Saturday, June 8, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Black Diamond Community Center

31605 3rd Avenue (State Route 169)

Main Hall

Black Diamond, WA

Thursday, June 13, 4-8 p.m.

Maple Valley Community Center

22010 SE 248th St., Maple Valley

See the attached maps for route descriptions.

[Alternatives 1-4b](#)

[Alternative A](#)

[Alternative C](#)

[Additional Alternatives](#)

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