

**Presented: SEPTEMBER 19, 2016 COUNCIL MEETING: PUBLIC COMMENT**

**JIM WEBB, LOWER VALLEY ENERGY**

**Request for support on a letter requesting a new transmission line**

Honorable Governor Mead & Congressmen:

On July 19, 2016, more than 130,000 customers in western Wyoming and eastern Idaho were without power for multiple hours due to a wide-spread outage from what appears to have been equipment failure in the Goshen Substation near Shelley, Idaho. The equipment that failed belonged to PacifiCorp but affected several of the public utilities served by Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) including Lower Valley Energy, Idaho Falls Power and Fall River Electric Cooperative.

This is the second significant outage the region has experienced in less than three years. The last one occurred during a minus 10 degree day in December 2013. During that outage Lower Valley Energy was able to work with customers to voluntarily reduce load to avoid a blackout.

From our perspective, both outages have raised concerns about our grid resilience and contingencies. For the entire geographic area to be served through one substation may have been acceptable years ago. However, given today's FERC reliability standards, we cannot help but wonder whether the transmission system serving our area has adequate contingencies. Given that our area frequently encounters extreme inclement weather presenting imminent danger to life and property, (eg, recent wildfires in eastern Idaho and western Wyoming), we are particularly concerned about grid resilience.

Lower Valley Energy has been working with BPA to build a new transmission line into the southern end of its system which would significantly strengthen the western Wyoming and eastern Idaho transmission grid. Had the Hooper Springs Transmission Project been in place, the Lower Valley Energy and Fall River Electric Cooperative service territories would not have experienced as extensive of an outage, if any at all. This line would have also alleviated system constraint in the December 2013 blackout for these same areas.

The Hooper Springs Transmission Project is a line proposed to be constructed by BPA from Soda Springs, Idaho to the Lower Valley Energy Substation near Freedom, Wyoming. BPA has been working to site this transmission line since at least 2006. BPA has completed extensive studies on the route alternatives. Unfortunately, they continue nearly 10 years later to deal with resistance to siting. Unfortunately, often times in transmission siting, you will not find support to advance the project beyond the study phase. This project seems to be stuck in that state.

We urge your support of timely advancement of route acquisition and construction of the project to alleviate grid congestion in eastern Idaho and western Wyoming. Given our exposure to inclement weather, our lack of alternative feeds into the region, and potential risks associated with extended regional outages, we believe this matter to be of highest importance.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

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Joel Neuenschwander, Mayor  
Town of Afton, Wyoming

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Sara Flitner, Mayor  
Town of Jackson, Wyoming

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W. Kennis Lutz, Mayor  
Town of Alpine, Wyoming

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A. DeLand Lainhart, Mayor  
Town of Thayne, Wyoming

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Kathleen Buyers, Mayor  
Town of Star Valley Ranch, Wyoming

cc: Representative Cynthia Lummis  
Senator John Barrasso  
Senator Mike Enzi  
Wyoming Public Service Commission  
Bonneville Power Administration