



Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
P.O. Box 281213
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213

RECEIVED

JUN 18 2009

**SOUTH DAKOTA PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION**

JUN 11 2009

Dear Interested Party:

Enclosed for your review in electronic format (Adobe® PDF) on a compact disk is the U.S. Department of Energy, Western Area Power Administration (Western) Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Project Final Environmental Impact Statement (DOE/EIS-0377). The Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), dated June 2009, contains four volumes, and was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and its implementing regulations. Volume I is the Final EIS, which integrates the information contained in the Draft EIS and the Supplemental Draft EIS, including revisions to the proposed Big Stone II Power Plant and Transmission Project (Project), as well as other revisions and edits made in response to specific comments. A summary of all substantive comments received and Western's responses are included in Volume II of the Final EIS. Volume III contains the Appendices, and Volume IV includes a copy of all substantive comments received on the Draft EIS and the Supplemental Draft EIS.

Western is considering a request from the Project's Co-owners to interconnect the Project with Western's transmission system at Morris and Granite Falls substations in Minnesota, an action which would require Western to complete modifications to these substations and modify delivery service contracts to support the interconnection.

Western issued the Draft EIS in May 2006 and the Supplemental Draft EIS in October 2007 for public comment. The public comment periods on the Draft EIS and the Supplemental Draft EIS expired July 24, 2006, and February 28, 2008, respectively. All comments received on the Draft EIS and Supplemental Draft EIS were carefully reviewed and considered in preparing the Final EIS. The Final EIS addresses the potential environmental impacts of Western's proposed action and the proposed Big Stone II Project.

Printed and electronic copies of the full Final EIS are available for public review at the public libraries listed below:

Ortonville Public Library, 412 Second Street NW, Ortonville, Minnesota
Morris Public Library, 102 East 6th Street, Morris, Minnesota
Granite Falls Public Library, 155 7th Avenue, Granite Falls, Minnesota
Appleton Public Library, 323 W. Schlieman Avenue, Appleton, Minnesota
Canby Public Library, 110 Oscar Avenue North, Canby, Minnesota
Willmar Public Library, 410 5th Street SW, Willmar, Minnesota
Kerkhoven Public Library, 208 North 10th Street, Kerkhoven, Minnesota
Benson Public Library, 200 13th Street North, Benson, Minnesota
Grant County Public Library, 207 Park Avenue East, Milbank, South Dakota
Watertown Regional Library, 160 6th Street NE, Watertown, South Dakota

The printed Final EIS is also available at the Reading Rooms at the following addresses: U.S. Department of Energy, Forrestal Building, Reading Room 1E-190, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585; Western Area Power Administration, Corporate Services Office, 12155 West Alameda Parkway, Lakewood, Colorado 80228; and Western Area Power Administration, Upper Great Plains Customer Service Region, South Dakota Maintenance Office, 200 4th Street SW., Huron, South Dakota 57350.

Western will issue a Record of Decision on whether or not to grant the interconnection request no sooner than 30 days after the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability of the Final EIS in the *Federal Register*.

For further information on the Final EIS or to request additional copies (please note that only printed versions of the Executive Summary or Volumes I and II or an electronic copy of the full EIS will be provided), please contact me at the above address, at (800) 336-7288, or BigStoneEIS@wapa.gov.

Thanks for your interest in the Big Stone II Project EIS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Blevins", written in a cursive style.

Matt Blevins
NEPA Document Manager

Enclosure (CD w/Big Stone II Final EIS)