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October 17, 2014

Mr. James Hodgens
1112 Wild Like Rd
Rapid City, SD 57702

RE: Teckla – Osage – Rapid City 230kV Transmission Line

Dear Mr. Hodgens;

Black Hills Power received the comments you submitted to the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission on October 6, 2014, and is able to provide the below responses to your inquiries.

Before responding to your comments, I do want to ensure that you are aware the Final Route that has been depicted for the proposed transmission line does not traverse nor is it adjacent to your property. As a result, Black Hills Power can assure you that at this time it does not envision a need to negotiate or acquire an easement from you.

In your numbered paragraph 1, you inserted a figure and asked why the figure did not reflect the tree removal that would take place in the right of way. The figure in question was prepared to depict the view of the line crossing from the end of Sun Ridge Road. The figure was not prepared with the intent to depict removal of trees or other vegetation.

Black Hills Power agrees with your assertion that the maps submitted to the Commission on September 5, 2014 and October 3, 2014 differ. The maps provided on September 5, 2014, in response to SDPUC Data Requests 1-5 and 1-18, were submitted to satisfy a request for maps with a better resolution than those that were electronically filed with the original Application. In response to feedback from potentially impacted landowners, Black Hills Power has agreed to line route modifications since the preparation of these maps. The resultant modifications are depicted in the Final Route maps. As such, the two sets of maps reflect different centerline configurations.

You also expressed concerns that comments you have provided have not been appropriately addressed. Black Hills Power has and continues to endeavor to respond to comments that it receives from potentially impacted landowners. Your May 9, 2014 and August 19, 2014 comments were provided in response to a request for comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Study (“DEIS”). Under the procedures that govern the DEIS comment period, the United States Forest Service (“USFS”) is the entity that is charged with providing a response to received comments. As illustrated by the enclosure to this correspondence, the USFS did respond to your comments. In addition, suggestions that you provided to the USFS were taken into account in the preparation of alternate route J that was considered under the DEIS evaluation processes.

While Black Hills Power did not provide a formal response to these comments, it has considered the concerns you expressed in these communications. There have also been a number of public meetings and private conversations with various landowners along the line route. The “Final Route” takes into account your concerns and concerns that have been raised in these various meetings, including the August 25th public input meeting. For example, in an effort to minimize the potential impacts, Black Hills Power has made the following modifications:

- The line route has been shifted towards the east so that it crosses two landowner parcels instead of the three landowner parcels that were crossed by the original proposed route.
- The initial proposed route that ran west to east along the southern border of Section 30 was modified to be routed along the western edge of Section 30. This modification was made in response to a number of Ponderosa Ridge landowners who felt that the original proposed route was too close to their property.
- The Jay Way & JW alternative routes, referenced in your May, August, and public input meeting comments, suggested a relocation of the route from the western edge of Section 30 to a location within Section 25. Your alternative route impacts more private landowner parcels than the proposed route or the Final Route. Further, landowners that would have been impacted by your alternative routes indicated they would be unwilling to grant easements.

The trees and vegetation within the right of way easement will be removed in order to maintain proper clearances to the line conductors. However, there may be geographical areas along the route where the line crosses over a valley or steep terrain. If this proves to be the case, it is possible that trees or other vegetation may remain within the right of way. Black Hills Power will review and evaluate potential locations of this nature on a case by case basis to preserve trees where proper clearance can be maintained.

Sincerely,



Mark Carda
Enclosures