



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Las Cruces District Office
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, New Mexico 88005
www.blm.gov/nm



In Reply Refer To:

1793 (L0310)

APR 23 2012



Mr. Carlos De La Torre
Professional Engineer
Cochise County
1415 W. Melody Lane
Bisbee, AZ 85603

Dear Mr. De La Torre:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Western Area Power Administration (Western) cordially invite you and your staff to participate in a public process to gather input regarding the preparation of the proposed Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and potential BLM land use plan amendments for the Southline Transmission Line Project (project) 345-kilovolt (kV) and 230-kV transmission line. This letter is an invitation to one or both of our Agency-only scoping meetings scheduled on May 8, 2012 and May 17, 2012.

Southline Transmission, LLC (Southline) has filed a right-of-way (ROW) application with the BLM pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1761) proposing to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a high-voltage alternative current electric transmission line across public land in southern New Mexico and Arizona. The project would provide more reliable infrastructure for local utilities and could facilitate anticipated renewable and nonrenewable generation projects in the region.

Both BLM and Western, as joint Lead Agencies, are initiating the process of preparing an EIS to assess the potential impacts of the proposed project. Western is a power-marketing agency within the Department of Energy and is participating in the project with the applicant, Southline, since the upgrade section of the proposed project would involve existing Western transmission lines. The BLM has authority under FLPMA for authorizing ROW grants for electric transmission, access roads, and site improvement on public land. As part of its agency mission, Western routinely studies power system requirements, plans for transmission line upgrades and additions, facilitates and finances transmission projects, and constructs, owns, operates, and maintains transmission infrastructure. Such projects may be solely Western projects, or may be projects undertaken with the participation of others.

The proposed project would consist of two segments. The first segment would be the construction of a new double circuit 345-kV transmission line linking existing substations at Afton (located south of Las Cruces, New Mexico) and Apache (located south of Willcox, Arizona). This proposed segment is approximately 205 miles long and will enable up to 1,500

megawatts (MW) of transmission capacity. The proposed segment also includes a 30-mile-long, 345-kV line between New Mexico Highway 9 and Interstate 10 east of Deming and 5-mile in-and-out loop between the existing Afton Substation and the existing Luna-Diablo 345-kV transmission line. The second segment would be an upgrade and rebuild of approximately 120 miles of existing 115-kV Western transmission line to a double-circuit 230-kV transmission line, providing up to 1,000 MW of increased transmission capacity between the Apache substation and the Saguaro substation (located northwest of Tucson, Arizona). Both segments would require new permanent and temporary construction ROW to accommodate a larger transmission line, access roads, and related facilities. The project would connect with and upgrade up to 10 existing substations, and Southline anticipates constructing one new substation. The project would cross public land administered by the BLM, a short segment of U.S. Forest Service administered land, State land in New Mexico and Arizona, and private land. A newsletter containing current project information is enclosed.

Public participation and scoping is now under way for this project. Your input is important to us, and we would like to hear about your issues or concerns regarding the proposed Project. We encourage you to attend one of the following Agency-only scoping meetings:

Agency Only Meetings	
Tuesday, May 8, 2012 10:00 am – 12:00 p.m. Mesilla Valley Days Inn & Suites 901 Avenida de Mesilla Las Cruces, NM 88005	Thursday, May 17, 2012 10:00 am – 12:00 p.m. National Advanced Fire & Resource Institute 3265 E. Universal Way Tucson, AZ 85706

You can make a difference by providing us with your ideas, comments, or concerns about the proposed Project. You may submit comments at any time during the preparation of the EIS; however, if you would like to have your comment(s) considered for inclusion in the Draft EIS, comments must be submitted by June 4, 2012. There are three ways in which you can submit your comments on the proposed Project:

- You may file your comments electronically by sending them to BLM_NM_Southline@blm.gov. Please include "Southline Scoping" in the subject line of your e-mail message.
- You may mail your comments to: Southline Transmission Line Project, Frances Martinez, Bureau of Land Management, Las Cruces District Office, 1800 Marquess Street, Las Cruces, NM 88005-3371.
- You may submit comments at one of the public scoping meetings that will be held in the project area.

If you cannot attend the agency only meeting, we encourage participation at one of the following public scoping meetings:

Public Meetings		
<p>Tuesday, May 8, 2012 5:30 – 8:00 pm Presentation begins at 6:00 p.m. Mesilla Valley Days Inn & Suites 901 Avenida de Mesilla Las Cruces, NM 88005</p>	<p>Wednesday, May 9, 2012 5:30 – 8:00 pm Presentation begins at 6:00 p.m. Mimbres Valley Special Events Center 2300 E Pine Street Deming, NM 88030</p>	<p>Thursday, May 10, 2012 5:30 – 8:00 pm Presentation begins at 6:00 p.m. Dugan-Tarango Middle School 1352 Hardin Street Lordsburg, NM 88045</p>
<p>Tuesday, May 15, 2012 5:30 – 8:00 pm Presentation begins at 6:00pm Quality Inn Willcox 1100 W Rex Allen Drive Willcox, AZ 85643</p>	<p>Wednesday, May 16, 2012 5:30 – 8:00 pm Presentation begins at 6:00pm Benson Unified High School 360 S Patagonia Street Benson, AZ 85602</p>	<p>Thursday, May 17, 2012 5:30 – 8:00 pm Presentation begins at 6:00pm Palo Verde Magnet High School 1302 S. Avenida Vega Tucson, AZ 85710</p>

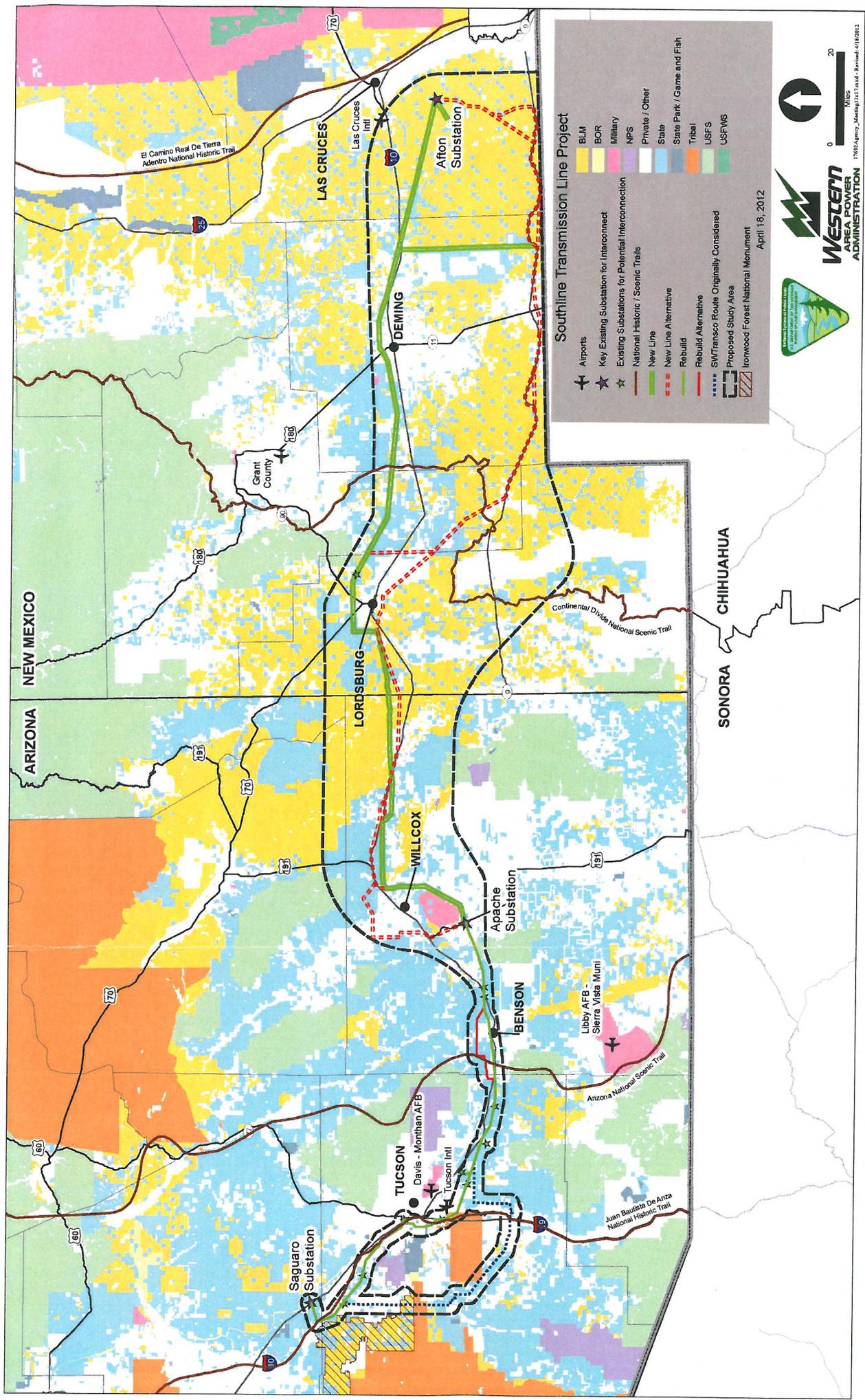
If you have any questions about this Project, please contact Tom Hurshman, BLM National Project Manager, at 970.240.5345. If you require special accommodations for the scoping meeting(s), please contact Ellen Carr at Galileo Project, LLC by e-mail at ellen.carr@galileoaz.com or by telephone at 480.629.4705. We appreciate your participation in this proposed Project.

Sincerely,



Bill Childress
District Manager

1 Enclosure



Southline Transmission Line Project

- ✈ Airports
 - ★ Key Existing Substation for Interconnect
 - ☆ Existing Substations for Potential Interconnection
 - National Historic / Scenic Trails
 - New Line
 - New Line Alternative
 - Rebuild
 - Rebuild Alternative
 - SWTransco Route Originally Considered
 - Proposed Study Area
 - ▨ Ironwood Forest National Monument
- BLM
 - BOR
 - Military
 - NPS
 - Private / Other
 - State
 - State Park / Game and Fish
 - Tribal
 - USFS
 - USFWS

April 18, 2012



WESTERN AREA POWER ADMINISTRATION



176924mpg_Meeting1117.mxd - Revised - 4/18/2012

NEW MEXICO

ARIZONA

SONORA CHIHUAHUA

Saguaro Substation

TUCSON

Davis - Monahan AFB

Tucson Intl

BENSON

Libby AFB - Sierra Vista Muni

Arizona National Scenic Trail

Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail

WILCOX

Apache Substation

LORDSBURG

DEMING

Afton Substation

LAS CRUCES

Las Cruces Intl

El Camino Real De Tierra Adentro National Historic Trail

Grant County

Continental Divide National Scenic Trail