



Media Release

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PUC APPROVES IDAHO POWER'S CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY APPLICATION FOR B2H PROJECT

Approval enables Idaho Power to seek land rights for proposed transmission line

SALEM, Ore. – The Oregon Public Utility Commission (PUC) recently approved Idaho Power's application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN), required when an Oregon electric utility proposes to construct an overhead transmission line that requires condemnation of private property. Idaho Power's request is part of its proposed construction of a 300-mile transmission line that would connect the Hemingway substation in Idaho with a substation near Boardman, Oregon. The transmission line is known as the Boardman to Hemingway or B2H project and will be jointly owned by Idaho Power and PacifiCorp, with the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) contracting to use the line to serve customers in southeast Idaho.

With approval of the CPCN, Idaho Power can initiate condemnation proceedings in court to secure land rights along the transmission line's path. The certificate demonstrates to the court that the transmission line is a public use and necessary for public convenience, which is part of what is required to condemn private property. In addition, the court must decide what compensation must be given to the landowner.

By statute, when the PUC is presented with a petition for a CPCN, the Commission must determine after a hearing whether the transmission line has been proven to be necessary, safe, practicable, and justified in the public interest. When these criteria are met, the PUC must grant a CPCN to benefit the public interest, despite the private properties that may be impacted by its construction and operation.

During the PUC's nine-month proceeding to evaluate the CPCN, the Commission sought information from affected landowners, interest groups, utilities, and PUC Staff. The PUC's Hearings Division facilitated participation in the legal proceeding by self-represented groups and individuals. "We appreciate the constructive, well informed, and considerate involvement in this process by individuals and groups who are concerned about the B2H project's negative impacts on their land. The time and effort to voice concerns helped the Commissioners take the hard look at Idaho Power's proposal that it deserved," said Megan Decker, PUC Chair.

"We take our obligation to review CPCN applications seriously and recognize the importance of granting them only after robust scrutiny and careful weighing of the interests involved," added Chair Decker. In reaching the conclusion that the B2H project is in the public interest, the PUC considered several factors, including feasible alternatives for meeting the identified need; the benefits and costs to customers of Idaho Power and other electric utilities serving Oregonians; the value of improved connections across the regional electricity grid; Idaho Power's ability to construct and maintain safe operations of the line; environmental justice issues; and the overall balance of public and private benefits and costs.

The B2H transmission line is expected to allow Idaho Power, PacifiCorp, and BPA to reliably service their customers as energy demand continues to increase along with a growing need for transmission to deliver electricity from clean energy resources.

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The PUC regulates customer rates and services of the state's investor-owned electric and natural gas utilities, including Portland General Electric, Idaho Power, Pacific Power, Avista, Cascade Natural, and NW Natural. The PUC also regulates landline telephone providers and select water companies. The PUC's mission is to ensure Oregonians have access to safe, reliable, and fairly priced utility services that advance state policy and promote the public interest. We use an inclusive process to evaluate differing viewpoints and visions of the public interest and arrive at balanced, well-reasoned, independent decisions supported by fact and law. For more information about the PUC, visit oregon.gov/puc.