State Infrastructure Authorities Meeting

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Key Elements to Successful Siting and Permitting of Transmission Lines

Presenters

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Environmental Planning Group (EPG)

- Interdisciplinary planning and landscape architecture firm with 10 offices in 7 western states
- Services include:
  - Project management
  - Federal and state siting permitting/applications
  - Biological resources (avian, terrestrial and aquatic)
  - Cultural and archaeological resources
  - Land use and visual assessment studies
  - Public involvement
  - Construction monitoring and reclamation planning

- Over 30 years of experience with transmission line routing, siting, permitting
- Thermal and renewable generation siting
- Current and recent projects:
  - 750 miles, 500kV line in WY, CO, UT, NV
  - 550 miles, 500kV line in ID, NV
  - 460 miles, 500kV line NM, AZ
  - 140 miles, 500/345kV line in UT
  - 120 miles, 500kV line in AZ
  - 160 miles, 345kV line in UT
  - 135 miles, 345kV line in ID, UT

A Top Ten List for State Infrastructure Authorities

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10. Defensible purpose and need statement

- Solid justification for the facilities is needed
  - Does it provide future load growth for the utility?
  - Will it provide transmission for a new generation source?
  - Merchant lines in particular need to justify purpose and need for a project
- Is the line a connected action with generation or just tying together substation hubs?

9. **Clearly defined project description and project study area**

   - What are they going to build?
   - Does the project study area take into account all reasonable route alternatives?

8. Early and continuous scoping to identify stakeholders and issues

- Recommend meeting with lead federal and state agencies before beginning application process
- Early meetings with landowners, special interest groups

7. Integration of agency, stakeholder and public input in the planning process

- Lots of comments received, but how are they used to make route adjustments, respond to issues, or apply mitigation?
- Tracking and documentation of comments is important for decision making and legal procedures

6. Identification of a full range of reasonable alternatives

- Includes not only alternative routing options, but analysis of distributed generation, demand-side analysis, AC vs DC, etc.
- Always better to have more alternative routes than less; adding routes later = time

5. Adequately characterize alternative routes

- Key environmental resource studies
  - Wildlife resources
  - Cultural resources and tribal consultation
  - Visual resources (simulations of proposed action)
  - Land use and recreation resources

4. Defensible decision criteria and route selection process

- Document route screening process to narrow down alternatives
- How did the proponent select a preferred route?
- How did the federal or state agency select a preferred route?
- Is it clearly defined and understandable?
- Can it be duplicated and is it defensible?

3. Coordination between federal, state and local agencies

- Clear communication is important
- Partnership approach to achieve results
- Cooperating agency status on federal EIS documents

2. Local and state political support for project

- Keep politicians informed and up-to-date on status of project
- Invite them to participate in key stakeholder and issue resolution meetings

1. **Lots of time, money, and patience**
   - Typically 3 to 5 years to permit long line transmission (over 100 miles on federal lands)
   - 2 or more years to construct