

principles for implementing BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program. In accordance with the Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act of 1974, the Administrator "shall operate and maintain the Federal transmission system to \* \* \* maintain the electrical stability and electrical reliability of the Federal (transmission) system \* \* \*." In order to ensure safe and reliable power, BPA must control the vegetation on land around the electrical transmission facilities.

BPA has invited the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to be cooperating agencies in this EIS process. They have been asked to participate in the formal scoping process; to review resource analysis; and to assist in developing alternative principles to guide the standards, techniques, and procedures used in BPA's Transmission System Vegetation Management Program. These agencies were invited because they manage some of the land where BPA transmission facilities are located.

BPA invites public comment on the range of actions, alternatives, and impacts to be addressed in the Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS.

**DATES:** BPA has established a scoping period during which affected landowners, concerned citizens, special interest groups, local governments, and any other interested parties are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. BPA will hold one scoping meeting (possibly more depending on public interest) and will contact tribes, agencies, and groups interested in BPA's Vegetation Management Program. Written comments are due to the address below no later than July 23, 1997.

**ADDRESSES:** Send comment letters and requests to be placed on the project mailing list to Communications, Bonneville Power Administration—ACS-7, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, Oregon, 97212. The phone number of the Communications office is 503-230-3478 in Portland (toll-free 1-800-622-4519 outside of Portland); or comment at our internet address at: comment@bpa.gov.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:** Tammie Vincent at (503) 230-3469, Bonneville Power Administration—ECN-4, P.O. Box 3621, Portland, Oregon, 97208-3621.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** BPA owns and operates a high-voltage transmission system throughout Washington and Oregon, and in parts of Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and

California. To ensure safe, reliable service, vegetation is managed as part of the normal operation of the transmission system.

#### **Proposed Action**

BPA proposes to review its Transmission System Vegetation Management Program and set principles to guide the planning and implementation of vegetation management techniques used in the program. The objective of the proposed action is to provide the most cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally acceptable means of controlling vegetation that may threaten transmission system safety and reliability. General issues the EIS may address include the following: vegetation management, land management, water quality management, fish and wildlife management, threatened and endangered species management, cultural resources management, and economic effects. Additional issues may be identified by the public scoping process; scoping may also eliminate some issues from in-depth analysis. The EIS will develop broad, program-wide standards and practices for planning and implementing vegetation management. Site-specific analysis would then be tiered to the Program EIS, when needed.

Information developed from other environmental reviews, especially concerning vegetation management in the Pacific Northwest, may be included in the BPA Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS, as appropriate.

#### **Current Practice**

BPA currently manages vegetation with a mix of techniques on a project-by-project basis. This approach does not foster consistency across projects, jurisdictions, BPA's regions, or over time. BPA needs to find a way to ensure consistency.

#### **Alternatives Proposed for Consideration**

Alternatives to be considered in the BPA Transmission System Vegetation Management Program EIS would include alternative vegetation management planning and implementation principles for each management issue addressed. The EIS will also consider a No Action alternative, i.e., continuing project-by-project vegetation management without defined program-or region-wide standards and guidelines.

#### **Identification of Environmental Issues**

The environmental issues associated with transmission system vegetation management include potential effects on land use, vegetation communities, water quality, human health and safety, and wildlife populations.

Issued in Portland, Oregon, on June 6, 1997.

**Randall W. Hardy,**

*Administrator and Chief Executive Officer.*

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#### **DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

##### **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Docket No. ER97-1546-001]

##### **Illinova Energy Partners, Inc.; Notice of Filing**

June 10, 1997.

Take notice that on May 5, 1997, Illinova Energy Partners, Inc. tendered for filing its compliance filing in the above-referenced docket.

Any person desiring to be heard or to protest said filing should file a motion to intervene or protest with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE., Washington, DC 20426, in accordance with Rules 211 and 214 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (18 CFR 385.211 and 18 CFR 385.214). All such motions or protests should be filed on or before June 20, 1997. Protests will be considered by the Commission in determining the appropriate action to be taken, but will not serve to make protestants parties to the proceeding. Any person wishing to become a party must file a motion to intervene. Copies of this filing are on file with the Commission and are available for public inspection.

**Lois D. Cashell,**

*Secretary.*

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#### **DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY**

##### **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**

[Docket No. CP97-558-000]

##### **Northern Natural Gas Company; Notice of Request Under Blanket Authorization**

June 10, 1997.

Take notice that on June 2, 1997, Northern Natural Gas Company