

BLM Public MSTI Meeting

Wednesday, June 29, 6 pm, Whitehall High School

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will hold a public meeting with Jefferson County officials on Wednesday, June 29, at 6 pm at Whitehall High School concerning NorthWestern Energy's proposed 500 kV Mountain States Transmission Intertie (MSTI).

The June 29 BLM public meeting does not meet JeffCo's demands for consultation –

The public demands that BLM and Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) consult meaningfully with local governments pursuant to the Montana Fifth District Court's ruling in favor of Jefferson County. DEQ chose to appeal the Fifth District Court's ruling rather than comply with it.

Eleven new condemnations for private profit –

On June 16, a Canadian firm, Tonbridge Power, Inc., filed condemnation lawsuits against 11 more Montana property owners in connection with its merchant/export transmission venture, Montana Alberta Tie Line (MATL). This action belies NorthWestern Energy's lobbying spin that House Bill 198 was needed to save MATL from "one holdout." It is now clear that HB198 paves the way for wholesale condemnations of Montanans' property for foreign and out-of-state private gain. This is a preview of things to come in Jefferson County. The public needs to tell BLM yet again that MSTI belongs on established Section 368 federal energy corridors on public land, not productive agricultural lands and residential communities.

New mile-wide corridor legislation – The recent state legislature also passed, and the governor signed into law, Senate Bill 206, which allows a merchant/export venture like MSTI to condemn land for a transmission line anywhere within a mile-wide corridor. This new law increases the potential impacts of MSTI in Jefferson Valley, the number of residents most directly affected, and the area BLM must study in the DEIS.

Still no public use, necessity, and benefit of MSTI – NorthWestern Energy's unprecedented second Open Season was to have concluded December 31, 2010. But NorthWestern Energy "extended" the Open Season yet again due to lack of demand for MSTI. How long will our government agencies subject the local public to the negative economic impacts caused by the threat of MSTI while NorthWestern Energy continues to fail to prove the public use, necessity, and benefit of MSTI? When is it time to just say NO?

Who will build, own, and operate MSTI? – The public has a right to know. It matters even more now that any private entity, foreign or domestic, can condemn land in Montana with a mere DEQ certificate. NorthWestern Energy states in its SEC filings that it seeks a partner to own up to 50% of MSTI. Whom? Further, there is concern that NorthWestern Energy is not financially able to build MSTI at all, but rather, seeks BLM and DEQ certificates and permits in order to sell them at a profit any time over ten years. Wouldn't that be an abuse of political power given that public necessity for MSTI has not been shown?



Save Scenic Jefferson Valley Coalition

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