

# State Set to Target More MSTI on Jeff Valley

## DEQ Responds to Public Outrage in Butte by Doubling Whitehall Impact, Hitting Silver Star, Twin Bridges

Some 250 14-Story Structures To Wall Whitehall On Two Sides, Pipestone Residents Surrounded On Three Sides

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) appear set to react to organized MSTI opposition in Butte by changing the “preferred route” of the proposed Mountain States Transmission Intertie (MSTI) over from Butte and I-15 to the less populated Jefferson Valley.

In a purportedly objective and scientific analysis, consultants for the State of Montana paid with NorthWestern Energy (NWE) funds appear prepared to conclude that condemning a new corridor through green field conditions in Jefferson and

Boulder Valleys has less negative environmental impact than following the already existing, already heavily impacted federal energy corridor along the existing BPA 500 kV line.

That federal energy corridor was established by the federal government in November, 2008 for the purpose of expediting approval for transmission lines such as MSTI and ensuring that public lands can be readily used for such facilities. The existing federal energy corridor used by the BPA 500 kV line lies primarily on public land.

While DEQ has repeatedly claimed

in the press that it created the Jefferson Valley (“2C”) route in late 2009 to use public land, the route runs primarily through private land within Jefferson County and would require extensive condemnation through grazing land, irrigated land, and residential areas.

NWE initially proposed MSTI in 2004 to carry coal based generation. Currently, NWE advertises the project as a wind energy project. NWE has filed a “Statement of Interest” to participate in the Western Area Power Administration’s taxpayer funded federal “stimulus” programs.

### NorthWestern’s wind energy hype is smoke-screen.

MSTI started out as a coal line and turned “green” only after that became fashionable. MSTI would still tie to Colstrip and use coal as base load power. And the hype around wind energy ignores that wind, like all energy sources, has serious negative by-products. Vast land is ruined for relatively little energy. Voltage is lost in long-distance transmission. Eighty percent of the \$2.1 billion in federal “stimulus” money spent on wind turbines thus far has gone overseas — a jobs bonanza for Germany and China.

### You’ll pay for MSTI

Just like with previous utility blunders, they say you won’t but you will. Those pushing MSTI have yet to level with the Montana public as to how linking Montana with the expensive California energy market will affect the state’s own ratepayers. Neither can NorthWestern and its political promoters guarantee that ratepayers won’t be left holding the bag on MSTI costs.

### Where is the in-state benefit?

There is no net in-state net benefit for MSTI. Even the “draft-draft” EIS says MSTI brings no significant permanent Montana jobs. MSTI’s benefits to corporations and out-of-state customers are obvious, but there is no local public benefit that justifies forcibly condemning our land and blighting our landscape.

### Will your own taxes be used against you to build MSTI?

NorthWestern has submitted a “Statement of Interest” to the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) to participate in “stimulus” funded programs promoting renewable energy transmission projects. Our Freedom of Information Act request for information as to the amounts and specifics is held up in processing. Don’t let NorthWestern Energy grab YOUR federal “stimulus” taxes and use them against you!

### Property taxes don’t compensate for damage to the community!

We all pay our taxes, and we don’t blight the community! We can expect that NorthWestern will continue its pattern of paying under protest, negotiating down, and going to the legislature to get abatements. MSTI promoters won’t level with us about the new tax abatements for wind transmission already in place. If MSTI’s truly a wind transmission line, NorthWestern will pay practically nothing. Where will NorthWestern get the money to pay taxes anyway? Blighting Jefferson Valley on the chance of collecting taxes from NorthWestern is cutting off our nose to spite our face!



NorthWestern is running expensive color ads of a little girl blowing a pinwheel and a boy waving an American flag. Those kids are actors. Jefferson Valley kids are real. Shame on NorthWestern waving the flag over their half-truths and selfish, mistaken goals. Let’s not look back later and ask how we let it happen, as with the Montana Power Company fiasco.

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