Policy Statement on Transmission Lines

(First created by the Western Organization of Resource Councils in December 2007; ratified by the Oregon Rural Action board of directors on March 14, 2009)

Transmission line planning should take into account and consider the following criteria:

1. Before looking to new bulk power generation sources to meet future load requirements, first analyze opportunities for energy efficiency, distributed generation, conservation, demand response, and other technologies to address and lessen future load concerns.
2. Where the need for new bulk power transmission is established, first identify opportunities for renewable energy sources, such as wind, solar, and geothermal, and associated transmission needs. Begin with renewable energy sources in close proximity to major demand and load centers.
3. Evaluate the opportunities to upgrade and expand existing transmission infrastructure through the application of state-of-the-art technology, including new conductor materials, sensing and control systems, and improved transformer and system control technologies.
4. Focus on truly needed corridors by identifying key areas of transmission congestion, constraint, or absence. In areas of documented congestion or constraint, first analyze opportunities to solve the constraint by re-dispatch, offering conditional firm service or other market, operational, tariff, or regulatory changes.
5. Avoid sensitive lands recognized for agricultural, scenic, natural, recreational, cultural, or historic resources. Avoid condemnation of private lands where transmission corridors can be sited on less sensitive public lands.
6. Minimize impacts to affected lands, wildlife, and other resources through the adoption of Best Available Practices and Technology for right-of-way siting, construction, ongoing maintenance, and reclamation.
7. Employ the concept of corridors. If planned and implemented properly, corridors create opportunities to harness multiple industry proposals for energy transmission into discrete, well-defined, and studied areas to minimize adverse impacts.
8. Compensation for landowners and community members whose lands are used for rights-of-way should be at fair-market value *and/or comparable sales*, and should include the value of the remaining property not crossed but devalued by the transmission line(s).
9. Landowners should be able to negotiate the placement of a right-of-way on their own property.
10. Compensation for transmission corridors should give landowners the option to receive payment as a one-time lump-sum settlement or as an annual rental payment, *tied to the land*, for as long as the corridor is in place. The rental payment would increase annually by the percentage of increase in the *ad valorem* (real estate) tax in place as an annual rental payment for as long as the corridor is in place.
11. Finally, to the extent practicable, require the use of designated renewable energy transmission corridors for future right-of-way applications in order to avoid duplicative rights-of-way and unnecessary impacts.