

Chapter 2

Proposed Action and Alternatives

This Chapter describes and compares:

- Agency Proposed Action
- Alternatives to the Proposed Action, including No Action
- Alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study

BPA proposes to construct a 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line that would extend approximately 84 miles between the Grand Coulee 500-kV Switchyard, near Grand Coulee Dam, and the Bell Substation, in Mead just north of Spokane. In addition to the transmission line, new equipment would be installed at the *substations* at each end of the new line and at other facilities. BPA is considering two construction alternatives, the Agency Proposed Action and the Alternative Action. Both construction alternatives would remove an existing transmission line and replace it with a new line on existing right-of-way for most of its length. Additional right-of-way would be needed in the first 3.5 miles out of the Grand Coulee Switchyard to connect the new 500-kV *bay* with the existing 115-kV right-of-way.

BPA is also considering the No Action Alternative. NEPA requires Federal agencies to analyze the consequences of taking no action, in this case, continuing to operate the transmission system under present conditions.

This chapter also describes other alternatives, such as burying a new transmission line, that have been suggested but eliminated from detailed study for technical, environmental, and economic reasons.

How the Alternatives Were Developed

In developing this EIS, BPA considered a wide range of potential alternatives to solve the problem. This range included alternatives developed by BPA based on its knowledge of transmission line design and possible environmental issues; alternatives considered and presented to the public in a previous process undertaken in the mid-1990s (see EIS History in Chapter 1); and alternatives that were suggested or that responded to concerns raised during the scoping process for this EIS.