

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION IX  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105

April 16, 2012

Ms. Kathryn D. Hardy  
Forest Supervisor  
Eldorado National Forest  
100 Forni Road  
Placerville, California 95667

Subject: Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Kirkwood Meadows Power Line Reliability Project, Amador, Alpine, and El Dorado Counties, California (CEQ# 20120105)

Dear Ms. Hardy:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the above-referenced document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The EPA reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and provided comments to the Forest Service on May 31, 2011. A preferred alternative had not been identified in the DEIS, so we rated each alternative accordingly. We rated the Proposed Action (Alternative 2) and the document as Environmental Concerns – Insufficient Information (EC-2) because of concerns over potential impacts to wetlands and cultural resources. We asked the Forest Service to describe in the FEIS anticipated impacts to wetlands, how the project would comply with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and the potential for the proposed action and other alternatives to induce growth in Kirkwood Valley. We rated the No Action Alternative as Environmental Concerns because it would continue to rely on diesel-fired internal combustion engines, a source of both greenhouse gas emission and particulate matter. We rated a combination of Alternatives 3 and 4, which the DEIS characterized as the “environmentally superior alternative,” as Lack of Objections and recommended that the Forest Service choose it as the Selected Alternative.

The FEIS addresses the potential impacts to wetlands identified in our review of the DEIS. We thank the Forest Service for including supplemental information on potential wetlands impacts, compliance with Section 404, and induced growth. The EPA commends the Forest Service for modifying the Proposed Action by substituting environmentally preferable segments from Alternative 3, incorporating the Alternative 4 substation location, and avoiding the Carson-Mormon Emigrant Trail. These modifications, which closely align with the environmentally superior alternative identified in the DEIS and with EPA recommendations, should result in reduced impacts to sensitive environmental and cultural resources.

We appreciate the opportunity to review this FEIS. If you have any questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or contact Jason Gerdes, the lead reviewer for this project. Jason can be reached at (415) 947-4221 or [gerdes.jason@epa.gov](mailto:gerdes.jason@epa.gov).

Sincerely,

/s/

Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager  
Environmental Review Office (CED-2)