DECISION MEMORANDUM

TO:COMMISSIONER NELSON

COMMISSIONER SMITH

COMMISSIONER HANSEN

MYRNA WALTERS

TONYA CLARK

STEPHANIE MILLER

KEITH HESSING

DAVID SCHUNKE

DON HOWELL

GARY RICHARDSON

WORKING FILE

FROM:SCOTT WOODBURY

DATE:JUNE 15, 1995

RE:CASE NO. IPC-E-95-6

APPLICATION TO AMEND IPCO CERTIFICATE NO. 272

On June 2, 1995 Idaho Power Company (Idaho Power; Company) filed an Application with the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (Commission) requesting an amendment to its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity No. 272 deleting its prior authorization to construct a new 138 kv transmission line from the Wood River substation to the Ketchum substation in Blaine County.  The prior authorization was obtained from the Commission in 1973 in Order No. 11315, Case No. U-1006-89.  The purpose of the proposed line was to provide backup service for the existing Wood River/Ketchum 138 kv transmission line which runs along the east end of the Wood River Valley.  Subsequent changes including an extensive reassessment of the feasibility and need for an additional 138 kv transmission line, the Company contends, have eliminated the need for the line.

The Company reports that despite its best efforts since the Commission issued its Order in 1973, it has been unable to obtain the necessary rights-of-way for the additional 138 kv Wood River/Ketchum transmission line.  The reassessment study performed by the Company includes a review of both the capacity requirements and the reliability requirements for Idaho Power’s electric service to the Ketchum/Sun Valley area.  The Company concludes that the existing line has sufficient capacity to meet the area’s electric needs for the foreseeable future.  The Company states that it will continue to monitor its load growth projections and make modifications when necessary.

Idaho Power reports that it has also thoroughly reviewed the reliability of its electric service to the Ketchum/Sun Valley area.  The Wood River/Ketchum 138 kv transmission line, the Company contends, has had an excellent record of reliability since its construction in 1962 (only two unplanned outages in the past 14 years, for a total duration of only three minutes).  Nonetheless, the Company states that it has taken a number of steps to further improve the reliability of the line including the following: structural assessment, electrical assessment, fire protection, avalanche study, conductor assessment, maintenance plan and emergency action plan.

The Company reports that it also recently completed an extensive public participation process regarding the possible construction of a second 138 kv transmission line from the Wood River substation to the Ketchum substation.  Input was received from the area’s public officials and citizens.  The overwhelming response from the parties commenting, the Company indicates, was that, despite the unavoidable risk of an outage to the existing transmission line, the proposed transmission line should not be built.  The reasons for public opposition to the line included the difficulty of finding an acceptable route for the transmission line, aesthetic impacts, health and safety concerns, and the excessive cost of burying part or all of the line.

Based on its need analysis and public comments, Idaho Power concludes that construction of an additional 138 kv transmission line from the Wood River substation to the Ketchum substation is not feasible at this time.  The Company reports that it will continue to monitor the condition of the existing Wood River/Ketchum transmission line, the increase in load growth in the Ketchum/Sun Valley area, and the feasibility of obtaining the required right-of-way and public permits for a second 138 kv line.

Because the project is neither needed nor feasible, the Company requests authority to amend its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity No. 272 by removing the language authorizing the construction by Idaho Power of a second Wood River/Ketchum 138 kv transmission line.  Reference Case No. U-1006-89, Order No. 11315.

COMMISSION DECISION

Staff recommends that this case be processed pursuant to Modified Procedure, i.e., by written comment rather than by hearing.  What is the Commission’s preference?

Scott D. Woodbury

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