Mountain States Transmission Intertie 500kV, Wildlife Impacts in the Face of Energy Development

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Increasing electric consumption, population growth, increasing awareness of global warming, legislation, and insufficient infrastructure are combining to drive demand for new sources of electricity. Wind, clean coal, natural gas and possibly nuclear generation are likely new sources of electric generation. Most locations for new generation are long distances from the demand/population centers, requiring construction of new transmission facilities to deliver electricity. Construction of new generation and transmission facilities has the potential to impact wildlife on many levels. With a paradigm shift in the energy business toward cleaner energy production, innovative approaches for assessing impacts to wildlife are important to minimize wildlife impacts. Northwestern Energy, formerly know as Montana Power, is an investor-owned utility, proposing to build a 500-kV transmission line from southeastern Idaho to southwestern Montana. The proposed line would: extend 350-390 mi, be constructed of lattice steel towers and tubular steel self-supporting towers with an average height of 110-130 ft, require a right-of-way width approximately 220 ft, and have an average span of approximately 1500 ft between towers. Potential wildlife impacts are being identified through

a combination on Geographic Information System analyses, field verification, per onal communication with local agencies, and existing literature. Further a e sment(s) of impact to specific species and habitats is anticipated during and after construction through field investigations. Continued input of wildlife professionals is encouraged and appreciated.