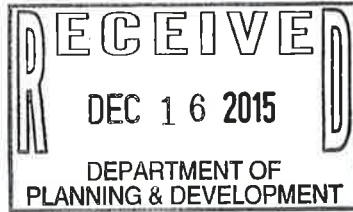




Christopher Burke
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105 S. Victoria Ave
Pueblo, CO 81003
719.546.6593

December 11, 2015

Ms. Joan Armstrong
Director of Planning
Pueblo County Planning and Development
229 West 12th Street
Pueblo, CO 81003

Re: Black Hills Energy Construction Activities Near Southern Delivery Pipeline Easement

Dear Ms. Armstrong:

It is my understanding that at this week's Pueblo County Commission public hearing on the 1041 permit for the Colorado Springs Utilities' Southern Delivery System project, CSU submitted a letter, dated December 2, 2015, related to Black Hills Energy's construction activities in the area of the Desert Cove substation and adjacent to CSU's Southern Delivery System revegetation area. The purpose of this letter is to provide Black Hills Energy's perspective on the CSU letter, outline our general approach to revegetation and ground disturbances resulting from system improvements and inform you as to our intent as it relates to the areas in question regarding work that may have impacted the SDS corridor.

As accurately stated in the letter from CSU, Black Hills Energy completed distribution system improvements in the area of the Desert Cove substation over the course of this last summer. In doing so, Black Hills Energy operated fully within existing easements in the area. Additionally, it should be noted that in performing this work, Black Hills Energy also operated within the requirements of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for the revegetation of disturbed areas (as established by Section (C)(4)(c) of the CDPS General Permit for Stormwater Discharges Associated with Construction Activities), in which the revegetation of such areas is to occur when more than one acre is affected. This approach is consistent with the standard operating protocols Black Hills Energy follows in executing all of its construction activities in southern Colorado. As a result, it is Black Hills Energy's position that it has no liability for revegetation of the area related to these distribution system improvements due to the size of area impacted.

As you may also be aware, Black Hills Energy has undertaken a significant transmission project in the area. With respect to this project, Black Hills Energy has previously received a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) from the County. However, as a result of work completed by a third party contractor working for Black Hills Energy on this project, there has been impact to a small area located just south of Highway 50 and within the SDS revegetation area. We have every intention of addressing these disturbances and welcome the opportunity to do so in a manner that satisfies the requirements of the County as it relates to this specific project.

In closing, I sincerely hope that this letter addresses the concerns raised at the recent public hearing. If, however, you have any questions or wish to discuss these matters further, please do not hesitate to contact Bret Jones at (719) 248-9139 or by e-mail at bret.jones@blackhillscorp.com.

Best regards,

Christopher Burke
Vice President of Electric Utility Operations
Black Hills Energy

Cc: Mr. John Fredell, Program Director, Southern Delivery System, CSU