

**BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO**

PROCEEDING NO. 19M-0005E

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IN THE MATTER OF THE YEAR 2019 FILINGS BY COLORADO ELECTRIC UTILITIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH RULE 4 CCR 723-3-3206 FOR THE DESIGNATION OF ELECTRIC UTILITY TRANSMISSION FACILITIES WHETHER THE FACILITIES ARE IN THE NORMAL COURSE OF BUSINESS OR AN APPLICATION TO OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY IS REQUIRED.

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**DECISION REGARDING  
CERTIFICATION OF FACILITIES**

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Mailed Date: July 30, 2019

Adopted Date: July 25, 2019

**I. BY THE COMMISSION**

**A. Statement**

1. Rule 3206(d) of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) Rules Regulating Electric Utilities, 4 Code of Colorado Regulations (CCR) 723-3, requires each Colorado electric utility to file with the Commission, no later than April 30 of each year, information on proposed new construction or extensions of transmission facilities for the next three calendar years.

2. The following utilities filed Rule 3206 reports into this proceeding:

- Black Hills Colorado Electric Utility Company, LLC (Black Hills)
- Intermountain Rural Electric Association, Inc. (IREA)
- Public Service Company of Colorado (Public Service)
- Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. (Tri-State)

3. Commission Decision No. C19-0421-I issued May 17, 2019, provided notice of the filings, informed parties that specific information of each utility's filings was on file with the Commission, and established an opportunity for interested parties to file comments on or before June 14, 2019.

4. Commission Decision No. C19-0555-I issued June 27, 2019, waived Rule 3206(d)(II)(B) of the Commission's Rules Regulating Electric Utilities, 4 CCR 723-3 and ordered Commission Staff to make recommendations to the Commission by July 24, 2019.

5. IREA's report contained no new proposed construction or extensions of transmission facilities for the next three calendar years.

6. New projects that were filed in 2019 under Rule 3206(d) are listed below by utility with a brief description of each project:

Black Hills Colorado Electric Utility Company, LLC

- South Fowler Substation, consists of adding a new distribution substation including installation of a 115/69 kV, 80 MVA distribution transformer in Fowler, Colorado. The new substation will allow the Boone-La Junta to be rebuilt as a 115 kV line, offering additional capacity to the area. This facility will be designed by the utility to meet the Rule 3206 noise and magnetic field requirements. The utility requested the Commission find this project to be in the ordinary course of business.
- Boone-South Fowler 69 kV to 115 kV Conversion, consists of rebuilding the existing 69 kV line to 115 kV from Boone to S. Fowler Tap west of Rocky Ford, Colorado. This project will improve reliability and add capacity between Boone and the La Junta/Rocky Ford local network for load and generation interconnections. This facility will be designed by the utility to meet the Rule 3206 noise and magnetic field requirements. The utility requested the Commission find this project to be in the ordinary course of business.
- Airport Memorial to Nyberg 115 kV Rebuild, consists of upgrading the conductor and replacing the limiting breaker and line jumpers near Pueblo, Colorado. This project will improve reliability as overloads on this line were identified in previous ten-year planning assessments and generation interconnection studies. This facility will be designed by the utility to meet the Rule 3206 noise and magnetic field requirements. The utility

requested the Commission find this project to be in the ordinary course of business.

- Salt Creek 115 kV Distribution Substation, consists of constructing a new 115/13.2 kV, 25 MVA distribution substation near Pueblo, Colorado. The new substation will interconnect to the Reader-Pueblo 115 kV line, serving load and offering additional capacity to the area. The final location for this facility is under evaluation. The utility requested the Commission find that a CPCN is not required under Rule 206(b)(II) because it is designed at 115 kV or below and the facilities will be designed to meet the noise and magnetic field requirements in Rule 3206.

#### Public Service Company of Colorado

- Weld County Load Serving Substation and 230/115kV Transmission Line, consists of adding a new substation, including a 50 MVA load-serving transformer and infrastructure, and five miles of new transmission line near Kersey, Colorado. The new substation and transmission line will provide service for planned oil and gas growth in the area. Public Service will ensure that this project meets noise and magnetic field level requirements as per CPUC Rule 3206(e) and (f). The utility requested the Commission find this project to be in the ordinary course of business.
- Climax-Robinson Rack-Gilman 115kV Transmission Line Uprate and Replacement Project, consists of the addition of 115kV structures and conductor capable of transmitting a minimum of 905 amps (approximately 110MVA) near Leadville, Colorado. The larger conductors are required to meet expected demand in the Eagle/Vail Valley. Public Service will ensure that this project meets noise and magnetic field level requirements as per CPUC Rule 3206(e) and (f). The utility requested the Commission find this project to be in the ordinary course of business.

#### Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc.

- Fairgrounds Substation Upgrade, consists of the addition of a 115-13.2 kV 24/32/40 MVA transformer, with a 230/115 kV high side unit in Brighton, Colorado. The substation upgrade is required to accommodate load growth. Tri-State will ensure that this project meets noise and magnetic field level requirements as per CPUC Rule 3206(e) and (f). The utility requested the Commission waive the CPCN requirement for the addition of a 230 kV transformer to an existing substation (*see* Decision

No. C14-0732)<sup>1</sup> and find that this project is in the ordinary course of business.

- Silver Saddle Substation Upgrade, consists of the addition of a second 230-13.2 kV 30/40/50 MVA transformer at Silver Saddle Substation in Henderson, Colorado. The transformer addition is required to accommodate load growth. Tri-State will ensure that this project meets noise and magnetic field level requirements as per CPUC Rule 3206(e) and (f). The utility requested the Commission waive the CPCN requirement for the addition of a 230 kV transformer to an existing substation (*see* Decision No. C14-0732) and find that this project is in the ordinary course of business.
- Spanish Peaks Solar Farm Interconnection, consists of a new 3 breaker ring bus 230 kV substation and interconnection with the Walsenburg-Gladstone 230 kV line. The project is located near Walsenburg, Colorado. Tri-State will ensure that this project meets noise and magnetic field level requirements as per CPUC Rule 3206(e) and (f). The utility requested the Commission find that this project is in the ordinary course of business similar to the Kit Carson Wind Interconnect (*see* Decision No. C10-0644).<sup>2</sup>
- Windtalker Switchyard (Crossing Trails Wind Farm) Interconnection, consist of a new three (3) breaker 230 kV POI Switching Station connecting the Crossing Trails Wind Farm to Tri-State's transmission system. The project is located near Cope, Colorado. Tri-State will ensure that this project meets noise and magnetic field level requirements as per CPUC Rule 3206(e) and (f). The utility requested the Commission find that this project is in the ordinary course of business similar to the Kit Carson Wind Interconnect (*see* Decision No. C10-0644).
- Rattlesnake Ridge Transformer Addition, consists of the addition of a 230/115 kV, 300 MVA transformer to the planned substation near Ft Lupton, Colorado. The transformer addition is required to accommodate load growth and will increase reliability. Audible noise and magnetic fields associated with the project will not exceed the levels set forth in Rule 3206(e) and (f). Tri-State believes this project may require a CPCN application pursuant to the criteria set forth in Commission Rule 3206(b).
- Davis Substation Upgrade, consists of replacing the current transformer with a 115/69 kV 60 MVA with a 115/69 kV 120 MVA transformer near Ft Lupton, Colorado. This transformer upgrade will increase the load serving capability and reliability. Audible noise and magnetic fields associated with the project will not exceed the levels set forth in

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<sup>1</sup> Decision No. C14-0732 was issued in Proceeding No. 14M-0061E on July 1, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Decision No. C10-0644 was issued in Proceeding No. 10M-206E on June 24, 2010.

Rule 3206(e) and (f). Tri-State considers the project to be “in the ordinary course of business” since the facilities will be designed for 115 kV and below.

- Greenhouse Delivery Point, consists of the installation of a 115/69 kV, 60 MVA transformer in a satellite yard near the existing Greenhouse substation near Ft. Lupton, Colorado. This transformer upgrade will increase the load serving capability and reliability. Audible noise and magnetic fields associated with the project will not exceed the levels set forth in Rule 3206(e) and (f). Tri-State considers the project to be “in the ordinary course of business” since the facilities will be designed for 115 kV and below.
- North Park Substation Reconfiguration, consists of the replacement of an existing transformer with a 115/69 kV 15/20/25 MVA transformer and the uses of the current transformer in a backup function. The North Park substation is located near Walden, Colorado. The substation reconfiguration will increase the load serving capability and reliability. Audible noise and magnetic fields associated with the project will not exceed the levels set forth in Rule 3206(e) and (f). Tri-State considers the project to be “in the ordinary course of business” since the facilities will be designed for 115 kV and below.
- Rancho Substation Upgrade, consists of the installation of a new 115-12.47 kV, 12/16/20 MVA transformer at the Rancho Substation near Fountain, Colorado. The new transformer will increase the load serving capability and reliability. Audible noise and magnetic fields associated with the project will not exceed the levels set forth in Rule 3206(e) and (f). Tri-State considers the project to be “in the ordinary course of business” since the facilities will be designed for 115 kV and below.
- Slater-Del Camino Line Upgrade, consists of a capacitor upgrade for parts of the Slater-Del Camino line, near Fredrick, Colorado. This line upgrade will increase the load serving capability. Audible noise and magnetic fields associated with the project will not exceed the levels set forth in Rule 3206(e) and (f). Tri-State considers the project to be “in the ordinary course of business” since the facilities will be designed for 115 kV and below.

7. Commission Rule 3206(b)(I) states that transmission facilities designed at 230 kV or above, even if initially operated at a lower voltage, require a certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN), unless the facility is a radial transmission line designed at 230 kV or above serving a single retail customer and terminating at that customer’s premises.

8. Pursuant to Commission rules, the Commission finds that Public Service's Weld County Load Serving Substation and the 230/115kV Transmission Line project each requires a CPCN or a formal determination that no CPCN is required.

9. Pursuant to Commission rules, the Commission finds that Tri-States' Spanish Peaks Solar Farm Interconnection, Windtalker Switchyard (Crossing Trails Wind Farm) Interconnection, and Rattlesnake Ridge Transformer Addition, projects each requires a CPCN or a formal determination that no CPCN is required.

10. Commission Rule 3206(b)(II) (A) and (B) states that transmission facilities designed at 115 kV or 138 kV require a CPCN if the facilities do not meet the noise and magnetic field thresholds established in Commission rules, or if the Commission determines that the facilities are not in the ordinary course of business. Commission Rule 3206(d) allows utilities to request a decision that certain projects are in the ordinary course of business and do not require a CPCN.

11. Pursuant to Commission rules, the Commission finds that the Black Hills' South Fowler Substation, Boone-South Fowler 69 kV to 115 kV Conversion, Airport Memorial to Nyberg 115 kV Rebuild, and Salt Creek 115 kV Distribution Substation projects are in the ordinary course of business and therefore do not require a CPCN.

12. Pursuant to Commission rules, the Commission finds that the Public Service Climax-Robinson Rack-Gilman 115kV Transmission Line Uprate and Replacement project is in the ordinary course of business and therefore does not require a CPCN.

13. Pursuant to Commission rules, the Commission finds that Tri-State's Davis Substation Upgrade, Greenhouse Delivery Point, North Park Substation Reconfiguration, Rancho

Substation Upgrade, and Slater-Del Camino Line Upgrade projects are in the ordinary course of business and therefore do not require a CPCN.

14. Commission rules generally require a CPCN for transmission facilities designed at 230 kV or above. The Commission may waive applicable rules and not require CPCNs for specific projects, such as the addition of 230 kV transformers or other similar equipment inside of existing substations that would otherwise require a CPCN. Tri-State requests that the Commission find that the Fairgrounds Substation Upgrade and Silver Saddle Substation Upgrade not require a CPCN and provided justification for this request. The Commission will waive Rule 3206(b)(I) for these projects. The Commission finds that no CPCN shall be required for the Fairgrounds Substation Upgrade and Silver Saddle Substation Upgrade projects.

## **II. ORDER**

### **A. The Commission Orders That:**

1. A Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN), or a formal determination that no CPCN is required, shall be required for the following Public Service Company of Colorado (Public Service) project:

- a. Weld County Load Serving Substation and 230/115kV Transmission Line

2. A CPCN, or a formal determination that no CPCN is required, shall be required for the following Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. (Tri-State) projects:

- a. Spanish Peaks Solar Farm Interconnection,
- b. Windtalker Switchyard (Crossing Trails Wind Farm) Interconnection, and
- c. Rattlesnake Ridge Transformer Addition

3. The following Black Hills Colorado Electric Utility Company, LLC projects are in the ordinary course of business and do not require a CPCN:

- a. South Fowler Substation,
- b. Boone-South Fowler 69 kV to 115 kV Conversion,
- c. Airport Memorial to Nyberg 115 kV Rebuild, and
- d. Salt Creek 115 kV Distribution Substation

4. The following Public Service project is in the ordinary course of business and does not require a CPCN:

- a. Climax-Robinson Rack-Gilman 115kV Transmission Line Upgrade and Replacement Project

5. The following Tri-State projects are in the ordinary course of business and do not require a CPCN:

- a. Fairgrounds Substation Upgrade,
- b. Silver Saddle Substation Upgrade,
- c. Davis Substation Upgrade,
- d. Greenhouse Delivery Point,
- e. North Park Substation Upgrade,
- f. Rancho Substation Upgrade, and
- g. Slater-Del Camino Line Upgrade

6. The 20-day period provided for in § 40-6-114, C.R.S., within which to file applications for rehearing, reargument, or reconsideration begins on the first day following the effective date of this Decision.



7. This Decision is effective on its Mailed Date.

**B. ADOPTED IN COMMISSIONERS' WEEKLY MEETING  
July 25, 2019.**

( S E A L )



ATTEST: A TRUE COPY

Doug Dean,  
Director

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

JEFFREY P. ACKERMANN

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FRANCES A. KONCILJA

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JOHN GAVAN

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Commissioners