

Decision No. C22-0734

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

PROCEEDING NO. 22M-0514E

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMMISSION'S INVESTIGATION INTO TRANSMISSION SOLUTIONS FOR THE SAN LUIS VALLEY.

**DECISION OPENING PROCEEDING
AND SOLICITING COMMENTS**

Mailed Date: November 18, 2022
Adopted Date: November 16, 2022

TO ALL INTERESTED PERSONS, FIRMS, OR CORPORATIONS:

I. BY THE COMMISSION

A. Statement

1. On June 2, 2022, by Decision No. C22-0270 in Proceeding No. 21A-0096E (CPP Proceeding), the Commission granted Public Service Company of Colorado (Public Service) a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity for Colorado's Power Pathway 345 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Project. That decision further approved, with modifications, a Non-unanimous Comprehensive Settlement Agreement that recommended the Commission open a miscellaneous proceeding to solicit further comments and study the potential value in alternative transmission solutions into and out of Colorado's San Luis Valley. The Commission stated that it will open such a proceeding within six months of the effective date of the order.¹

2. By this Decision, we open this Proceeding as a repository for comments and as a means to further examine potential transmission solutions for the San Luis Valley. We encourage

¹ Decision C22-0270, issued June 2, 2022, Proceeding No. 21A-0096E.

interested persons to file a notice of participation in this Proceeding no later than December 30, 2022, and to file initial comments no later than February 3, 2023.

B. Discussion

3. Paragraph 29 of the Non-Unanimous Comprehensive Settlement Agreement approved in the CPP Proceeding states:

The Settling Parties recognize there might be potential value in a new transmission solution into/out of the San Luis Valley. The Settling Parties recommend the Commission open a miscellaneous proceeding to solicit further comments and study on this issue.

4. At the hearing in the CPP Proceeding, Public Service witness Ms. Brooke Trammell noted the historic difficulty in siting transmission facilities in that part of the state, but testified in support of the above recommendation, opining that “Commission inquiry and stakeholder inquiry could help move the needle.”² Mr. Gene Camp, the primary witness representing the Trial Staff of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, also testified at the hearing in support of a Commission investigation into transmission options in the San Luis Valley, stating that such an investigation would be “probably well worth the time.”³

C. Findings and Conclusions

5. In accordance with Decision No. C22-0270, we open this Proceeding for the purpose of examining alternative options for expanding the transmission capacity serving the San Luis Valley, both to improve service reliability for the area’s residents and businesses and for the potential to export power generated there to load centers elsewhere in the state.

² Proceeding No. 21A-0096E Hearing Transcript, November 15, 2021, pp. 177-178

³ *Id.*, pp. 262-263.

6. The Commission is aware that the San Luis Valley Subcommittee of the Colorado Coordinated Planning Group (CCPG Subcommittee) has recently initiated its own evaluation of options to improve the reliability and increase the capacity of transmission serving the area. As the modeling to be conducted by the CCPG Subcommittee is highly relevant to the Commission's investigation, we invite Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. (Tri-State), which is leading the CCPG Subcommittee's investigation, to participate in this Proceeding and ask that it file relevant meeting notes, presentations, and reports regarding this ongoing investigation as they become available.

7. The Commission is also aware that Public Service is currently conducting and planning for numerous significant transmission projects in the San Luis Valley that were either approved by the Commission as part of its Wildfire Mitigation Plan, are line rebuilds, or are otherwise considered to be in the ordinary course of business.⁴ Notwithstanding the value these projects will provide in improving service reliability and reducing the risk of wildfire, the Commission seeks to examine how Public Service's substantial investments in that area may, in the not too distant future, host significant solar generating resources. Accordingly, the Commission seeks to receive additional information from Public Service and Tri-State in this Proceeding describing all in-process and planned transmission line and substation projects operating or to be operated at or above 69 kV in the San Luis Valley.

8. As set forth above, for the purpose of using the Commission's E-Filing System as the public repository for filings and comments, we encourage interested participants to file a notice of participation in this Proceeding by December 30, 2022. Participants should file initial comments no later than February 3, 2023.

9. The Commission will establish additional procedures by separate order.

II. **ORDER**

A. **The Commission Orders That:**

1. A miscellaneous proceeding is opened to commence the Commission's consideration of the potential value in a new transmission solution into and out of Colorado's San Luis Valley in accordance with Decision No. C22-0270 issued in Proceeding No. 21A-0096E.

2. Consistent with the discussion above, any person desiring to participate in this Proceeding shall file a notice of participation no later than December 30, 2022.

3. Initial comments shall be filed no later than February 3, 2023.

⁴ See Attachment A to Public Service Company of Colorado 2022 Rule 3206 Report in Proceeding No. 22M-0005E.

4. This Decision is effective upon its Mailed Date.

**B. ADOPTED IN COMMISSIONERS' WEEKLY MEETING
November 16, 2022.**

(S E A L)



ATTEST: A TRUE COPY

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Doug Dean".

Doug Dean,
Director

THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

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JOHN GAVAN

MEGAN M. GILMAN

Commissioners