

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rural Utilities Service to prepare an environmental impact statement for the Southern Colorado Transmission Improvements Project

Refined routing information available to public

Denver, November 5, 2009 – The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) informed [Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association](#) and [Xcel Energy](#) today that the environmental review for the [Southern Colorado Transmission Improvements Project](#) will include the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

The transmission line project is subject to a federal environmental review in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The NEPA review originates from a request for financing to the RUS for Tri-State's ownership portion of the project. The NEPA process began as an environmental assessment (EA) with a public scoping process based on RUS environmental policies and procedures (7 CFR part 1794).

Based on initial review of the draft scoping report, as well as additional comments received beyond the official scoping period, the RUS has determined that the appropriate level of environmental review for this project includes preparation of an EIS.

The process to date, including the hosting of public scoping meetings, was structured to accommodate the development of either an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement.

The NEPA review process began in August 2009 with several public scoping meetings hosted by the RUS and a public comment period.

Comments received during these meetings and through the end of the initial comments period are summarized in a draft scoping report that is being finalized for public release by the RUS. Comments received after the initial comment period ended, along with comments received in an additional comment period, will be included in a supplemental scoping report. Details will be available in a future notice published by RUS in the Federal Register.

Next Step - Route refinement

Comments made to date on the proposal have been considered and additional field investigations have been completed as part of the route refinement process.

Refined routes are now available on the [project website \(www.socotransmission.com\)](http://www.socotransmission.com). Notification will be made to persons located in the project area and on the project mailing list. A detailed comparative analysis is also being performed on the revised routes.

Route refinement open houses will be held in early 2010 to encourage further public and stakeholder participation in the routing analysis. Dates for these open houses will soon be announced.

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About Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association

Based in Denver, Tri-State supplies wholesale power throughout a 250,000-square-mile service territory to 18 electric cooperatives in Colorado, 12 in New Mexico, eight in Wyoming and six in western Nebraska. The 44 co-ops, in turn, provide electricity to more than 600,000 meters – which translates to a population of approximately 1.4 million end-use consumers. More information is available at www.tristate.coop.

About Xcel Energy

Xcel Energy is a major U.S. electricity and natural gas company with regulated operations in eight Western and Midwestern states. Xcel Energy provides a comprehensive portfolio of energy-related products and services to 3.4 million electricity customers and 1.9 million natural gas customers through its regulated operating companies. Company headquarters are located in Minneapolis. More information is available at www.xcelenergy.com.

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