

Expanding N. Shore electric lines being studied



Proposed route changes to Liberty Utilities' North Shore lines.

By Kathryn Reed

Five routes for a massive electrical line on the North Shore are being studied in the environmental documents that were released in November.

CalPeco – short for California Pacific Electric Company – wants to strengthen its ability to provide power to that area. CalPeco is the parent company of Liberty Utilities, the electric company for the California side of the Lake Tahoe Basin, Truckee and Alpine County.

For Northstar to be able to grow it needs to be able to tap into more power. These upgrades would allow for the ski resort

to grow as outlined in its master plan.

CalPeco officials had expected the process to move faster.

The draft environmental documents that are out for circulation are a joint effort between the U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and California Public Utilities Commission. Much of the land involved with the project is on Forest Service property.

The project also includes Truckee, Kings Beach, Tahoe City, Martis Creek Lake Recreation Area and Burton Creek State Park, as well as private property.

The existing lines run in a northeast-southwest direction between Kings Beach and Tahoe City and then parallel to Highway 267 from Truckee to Kings Beach.

CalPeco wants to remove that first segment and replace it with a higher voltage line. The second line would be realigned. Where exactly will be determined through the environmental analysis. Six substations on the Truckee-Kings Beach route could be upgraded or eliminated.

The current lines are 60 kilovolts and new ones would be 120 kilovolts. Substations would also be upgraded to the increased voltage.

“These improvements would increase the ability to maintain the current maximum system loads during an outage on any of the four key power lines within the North Lake Tahoe Transmission System, increasing the system’s reliability,” according to the three entities that released the draft EIR/EIS.

A year ago this month planners didn’t know if the line would require Tahoe Regional Planning Agency approval – it does.

The Advisory Planning Commission of TRPA will hear the proposal Dec. 4, with the Governing Board discussing it Dec. 18. Public comment will be taken at both meetings. These

meetings were pushed back from earlier this fall because of the federal government shutdown.

Informational meetings are set for Dec. 10 from 2-4pm at the Tahoe National Forest Truckee Ranger District Office at 10811 Stockcrest Springs Road, Truckee and Dec. 10 from 6-8pm at the North Tahoe Events Center, 8318 North Tahoe Blvd., Kings Beach.

The 971-page draft environmental impact report and draft environmental impact statement are available online. Public comment is being accepted until Jan. 7.