Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
P.O. Box 281213
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213

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Mr. Eric Janes
USDA Forest Service
Content Analysis Enterprise Team
Attn: UFP, Building 2, Suite 295
5500 Amelia Earhart Drive
Salt Lake City, UT 84116

Dear Mr. Janes:

The Western Area Power Administration (Western) is a Federal power marketing agency who owns, operates and maintains numerous electrical transmission lines, access roads, and related facilities on public lands in fifteen western states. As such, Western is pleased to provide comments on the unified Federal policy for watershed management. The Clean Water Action Plan announced the intention of Federal agencies to adopt a policy that will reduce water pollution from Federal activities and foster a unified, watershed-based approach to land and resource management activities. The policy has two goals: to use a watershed approach to prevent and reduce water pollution resulting from Federal land and resource management activities, and accomplish this in a unified and cost-effective manner.

The February 22, 2000, Federal Register, notice concerning the proposed policy and requesting public comment on it stated that the policy will be implemented to the extent possible within the existing Federal land and resource management planning programs. Many of the U.S. Forest Service offices and Bureau of Land Management offices with which Western does business are in the process of preparing Environmental Impact Statements or Environmental Assessments in support of land and resource management plan revisions or resource management plan (RMP) amendments. Will the plan revision or RMP amendment processes be delayed pending the outcome of the current comment period on the watershed policy or will they continue on course even though there may be a future need to revise the plans to accommodate the guidelines and goals of the watershed policy?

The notice also indicated that the policy is being developed to provide a framework for a watershed approach to Federal land and resource management activities in order to protect water quality and the health of aquatic ecosystems on Federal lands. Western is concerned about the impact of the policy on power transmission lines and related facilities that cross over or lie within specific watersheds on Federal lands. What impact will the policy have on existing tower structures and access roads? What stipulations or mitigative measures will become factors in determining whether the

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Federal land management agency will grant new rights-of-ways or permits? What will be the effect, if any, for ongoing maintenance and operation activities?

Please feel free to contact Ms. Susan Starcevich of my staff at 720-962-7275 to discuss any comments or concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

R. Steven Warner
Lands Manager

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