

3.20.4.3.2 *Alternative B – MMC’s Proposed Transmission Line (North Miller Creek Alternative)*

The transmission line would generate radio noise that may interfere with AM radio and television reception close to the line. FM broadcasts and 2-way communications generally would not be affected. The effect of the line on AM radio and TV interference would decrease rapidly as distance from the line increases. The closest residence to the North Miller Creek Alternative is 380 feet from the proposed centerline, west of US 2 (Asher Sheppard Consulting 2007, 2012). Under Montana’s regulations, the proposed centerline may vary up to 250 feet from the final centerline in final design. The calculated radio interference at the closest residence of MMC’s proposed centerline (380 feet) would be between 40 and 45 dB μ V/m for the rain-weather condition and around 25 dB μ V/m for the fair-weather condition. The calculated television interference at the closest residence (380 feet) would be about 8 dB μ V/m for the rain-weather condition. A guideline for radio noise is a fair-weather level of about 40 dB μ V/m at a lateral distance of 100 feet from the outermost phase (Power Engineers, Inc. 2006a).

If interference were to occur once the line was energized, MMC or the operating utility would correct the interference as required by FCC regulations and MMC’s Environmental Specifications (MMI 2005b). Correction of interference would depend on site-specific circumstances. According to FCC regulations, the line must not degrade radio or TV reception beyond current levels. Typically, changes in line operation or measures such as installation of remote antennae correct most interference problems (Power Engineers, Inc. 2006a). Possible radio and TV interference problems along the transmission line typically cannot be accurately identified until the final line location and design are known.

3.20.4.3.3 *Transmission Line Alternatives C-R, D-R, and E-R*

The three other transmission line alternatives would use the eastern alignment and route the line east of the most of the residences along US 2. All residences are greater than 450 feet of the centerline of the agencies’ alternatives and would not be affected by radio interference. The agencies’ Environmental Specifications (Appendix D) would govern radio and television interference.

3.20.4.4 *Cumulative Effects*

Past actions and current actions, such as the activity at the Libby Adit Site, and vehicular traffic and NFS roads, have increased ambient noise levels over that of an undisturbed forest. The existing BPA transmission line also has EMF near the line. The KNF’s Miller-West Fisher Vegetation Management Project will consist of vegetative treatments including timber harvest, slash treatment, site preparation, prescribed burning, tree planting, precommercial thinning, construction of new roads, road storage and decommissioning activities, road reconstruction, and implementation of BMPs. Depending on the timing of these activities and construction of the transmission line, noise from equipment and helicopters may be cumulatively greater in the Miller Creek and West Fisher Creek drainages. Many of the reasonably foreseeable actions would use the same roads as the Montanore Project. The reasonably foreseeable actions and the Montanore Project would cumulatively increase traffic noise near access roads. Cumulative noise levels would be unlikely to exceed 55 dBA. The Rock Creek and Montanore projects would not have cumulative effects.