



**Forest Service**

White River National Forest  
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# News Release

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**April 7, 2020**

## **Forest Service announces additional comment period for Holy Cross Energy Avon-to-Gilman 115-kV Transmission Line Project**

**MINTURN, Colo.** – The White River National Forest will provide a second 30-day comment period for Holy Cross Energy’s proposed Avon-to-Gilman 115-kV Electric Transmission Line project.

The second comment period responds to widespread requests from the public for more time to provide input on the proposal. The White River National Forest heard multiple concerns that the current COVID-19 crisis and public safety mitigation measures were limiting the public’s ability to provide meaningful input in the first comment period that closed April 1.

The Forest Service will open the second comment period later in 2020, once the draft Environmental Assessment (EA) is available for public review. Although no specific dates are scheduled due to the ongoing nature of the COVID-19 crisis, a mid to late summer 2020 timeline is probable.

Adam Bianchi, Acting Eagle-Holy Cross District Ranger, stated, “The White River National Forest is determined to ensure that the public has sufficient opportunity to let us know their thoughts regarding this important project. Public input is essential for guiding environmental analyses and making good, appropriate decisions. We appreciate those who have taken the time to provide us with comments, and we look forward to receiving additional input later this year in response to the draft Environmental Assessment.”

In addition to the recent public feedback, the public input received during the second comment period will further assist the forest in finalizing the EA and reaching a final decision. Through the development of the EA, the forest will analyze the potential effects of issuing a Special Use Authorization to Holy Cross Energy to construct the transmission line on National Forest System lands. The proposed action includes: construction of new power structures along 8.9 miles of new transmission line; right-of-way clearing and hazard tree removal; conductor stringing and splicing work; staging and construction access; and minor maintenance and patrolling. About three miles of the transmission line is anticipated





to be placed underground, and the remainder of the transmission line would be constructed on overhead transmission structures. If approved, construction would take approximately eight months and occur during late spring through fall when weather conditions are favorable. The decision would also authorize the use of existing and new access roads for any associated construction and future maintenance activities.

Additional project information can be found on the White River National Forest website at:

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=57224>.

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Later this year, the Forest Service will be seeking input from interested members of the public. Public comments will assist the Forest Service in finalizing the draft EA. Public comments are a key part of the review process as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Once the draft EA is available for public review, specific written comments on the draft Environmental Assessment will be accepted for 30 calendar days following publication of a legal notice in the Glenwood Springs Post Independent. The publication date in the newspaper of record is the exclusive means for calculating the comment period. The regulations prohibit extending the length of the comment period any further. Detailed instructions on how to submit comments will be provided within the legal notice announcing the availability of the draft EA.

~~Written comments must be submitted via mail, fax, electronically, or in person (Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding holidays) to: Mr. Scott Fitzwilliams, Forest Supervisor, c/o Matt Klein, Realty Specialist, White River National Forest, PO Box 190, Minturn, CO 81645; FAX (970) 827-9343. Comments may also be submitted online at: <https://cara.ecosystem-management.org/Public/CommentInput?Project=57224>~~

~~Persons commenting should include: 1) name, address, telephone number, organization represented, if any; 2) title of project for which the comment is being submitted (Holy Cross Energy Avon to Gilman Electric Transmission Line); and 3) specific facts and supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider.~~

~~Additional information can be obtained from: Matt Klein, Realty Specialist for the Eagle-Holy Cross Ranger District, [matthew.klein@usda.gov](mailto:matthew.klein@usda.gov) or (970) 827-5182.~~

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