

## **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the North Plains Connector Project (NPC)**

### **Last updated January 2025**

#### **Did DOE decide where the North Plains Connector project would go?**

No. DOE did not propose the alignment of the North Plains Connector Project, nor does DOE have a nexus to propose alternative routes. The North Plains Connector is owned and being developed by North Plains Connector, LLC, a wholly owned, single-purpose indirect subsidiary of Grid United.

For more information on the North Plains Connector and Grid United, please visit [www.northplainsconnector.com](http://www.northplainsconnector.com).

#### **Is DOE in charge of issuing permits for the North Plains Connector project?**

No. DOE is coordinating the Federal environmental reviews of the project pursuant to federal requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Endangered Species Act (ESA), and other relevant federal and state permits.

DOE is coordinating the Federal environmental reviews and jointly working with the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the North Plains Connector. At the close of the environmental review process, each agency will use the environmental review document as the basis for their respective authorization decisions on the NPC. Each federal agency will still be responsible for their own decision to issue the right of way for the transmission line to cross their managed lands, and MDEQ is responsible for issuing a certificate to construct and operate the NPC in Montana. DOE is not responsible for issuing any permit or right of way for this project.

#### **Is this effort part of the Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits (CITAP) program?**

No, the NPC is not subject to the CITAP Program because the CITAP rulemaking was not finalized at the time DOE initiated federal agency coordination on the NPC under its authority pursuant to Federal Power Act Section 216(h). While the project is not subject to the final CITAP rule, DOE's authority and review of the NPC follows a consistent framework laid out in the CITAP final rule.

#### **What alternatives will be evaluated in the EIS?**

In an environmental impact statement (EIS), federal agencies "Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate reasonable alternatives to the proposed action, and, for alternatives that the agency eliminated from detailed study, briefly discuss the reasons for their elimination." (40 CFR 1502.14(a)) Reasonable alternatives are a "reasonable range of alternatives that are technically and economically feasible, and meet the purpose and need for the proposed action." (40 CFR 1508.1(hh)) The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) explains, "The agency need not consider every conceivable alternative to a proposed action; rather, it shall consider a reasonable range of alternatives that will foster informed decision making." (40 CR 1502.14(a)) During the EIS scoping process from October 25 through December 9, 2024, DOE requested public comment on the scope of the EIS, including alternatives. The EIS will evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives, including the no action alternative (which serves as a baseline against which the impacts of the other alternatives can be compared).

#### **How can I comment on the project?**

On October 25, DOE published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the North Plains Connector for opened a 45-day comment period for interested parties to submit comments on the NPC. Comments had to be submitted in writing by email or mail by 11:59 pm MT on December 9, 2024.