

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**Rural Utilities Service**

**Hualapai Tribal Utility Authority, Hualapai Tribe: Notice of Finding of No**

**Significant Impact**

**AGENCY:** Rural Utilities Service, USDA

**ACTION:** Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

**SUMMARY:** Notice is given that the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance for Hualapai Tribal Utility Authority, Hualapai Tribe, Grand Canyon West 69kV Interconnection Project, Mohave County, Arizona.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR FOR COPIES OF THE EA AND FONSI,**

**CONTACT:** Ms. Kristen Bastis, Environmental Branch Chief, Water and Environmental Programs, USDA Rural Utilities Service, at 202-692-4910; or e-mail: [RUSPublicComments@usda.gov](mailto:RUSPublicComments@usda.gov). The EA and BLM FONSI can be accessed at the BLM National NEPA Register (NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2021-0020-EA) at <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2012131/510> and the RUS FONSI and NOA can be accessed at USDA's website at: [Grand Canyon West 69kV Interconnection Project | Rural Development \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/Grand-Canyon-West-69kV-Interconnection-Project)

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** Hualapai Tribal Utility Authority, Hualapai Tribe proposes the Grand Canyon West 69kV Interconnection Project reduce current electrical costs and save approximately \$2 million per year. The project would reduce diesel fuel consumption, reduce operating costs and provide additional housing and reliable electrical services to those employed at GCW. A new 48 strand fiber optic line would be run along with the electric line. This would stabilize telecommunications and provide broadband to GCW. The proposed project consists of four main components: The new GCW Substation, located on Tribal lands just south of GCW, a new, approximately 36-mile long, 69kV transmission line, originating at the existing UES Dolan Springs Substation, north of Dolan Springs, Arizona, extending east and north to the new GCW Substation and then on to the existing GCW power distribution system, a new 69kV circuit breaker, isolating switches, 5 MVAr capacitor bank, and primary metering point located at the UES Dolan Springs Substation and a new 48-strand fiber optic line. The proposed transmission line with fiber optic would be constructed along the 35.84 mile (57.7 km) long Tenney Ranch Road alignment

The HTUA, submitted an application (SF-299 "Application for Transportation and Utility Systems and Facilities on Federal Lands") to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Kingman Field Office on August 23, 2017, requesting rights-of-ways to construct, operate, and maintain a 69kV electric transmission line and fiber optic line across BLM-administered lands. The purpose of the project is to improve electrical and communication services at the Grand Canyon West development located on the Hualapai

## Indian Reservation.

There were six alternatives considered in the Environmental Assessment (EA). The No Action Alternative which provides a baseline with which to compare any proposed activities; The Proposed Action; and four alternatives that were considered but dismissed for various reasons including non-compatibility with the BLM's Kingman Resource Management Plan, culturally sensitive areas and one of the routes would be outside the certified service area for the utility. Renewable energy sources do not meet the need to tie into the existing grid and have been dismissed from consideration for the time being but may be considered in the future.

The EA was posted and available for review and comment on the BLM's ePlanning website from October 25, through November 24, 2021. On October 25, 2021, the BLM Kingman Field Office issued a press release to local media outlets announcing the opening of the public comment period. The press release was emailed to interested stakeholders, including all individuals who participated in scoping. Individuals who did not provide an email address were sent a copy of the press release via U.S. Mail. Local, County, State and Tribal governments, agencies, and non-profits were also notified of the opportunity to comment on the EA. A summary of the comments are included in Appendix A. The BLM signed their FONSI on May 23, 2022, and posted their FONSI on the BLM's ePlanning website.

RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the proposed project have been adequately addressed. RUS's federal action would not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, and as such it will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its action related to the proposed project.

RUS posted the FONSI on the RUS website on October 12, 2022.