



The Secretary of Energy  
Washington, DC 20585

September 5, 2002

The Honorable James L. Connaughton  
Chairman  
Council on Environmental Quality  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Jim:

Thank you for your letter regarding the need to protect electric transmission lines during the extreme fire and drought conditions in the Western United States. We applaud your efforts to ensure the safety of our citizens, protection of the environment, and the uninterrupted flow of power throughout the West.

As you know, these extreme fire conditions coincide with the summer months in which electrical demand is at its peak. Efforts to ensure that the Western transmission infrastructure will not be interrupted and lines will not be taken out of services are critically important and will benefit and protect consumers with increased reliability and reduced costs.

I have forwarded your letter to Mr. Stephen Wright, Administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration, and Mr. Michael HacsKaylo, Administrator of the Western Area Power Administration, and have asked them to ensure that the recommendations contained in your letter are implemented. Furthermore, I have asked them to implement any other actions that they feel are prudent and necessary to protect their transmission lines in the West from wildfires.

I appreciate your efforts to protect the electrical infrastructure in the West during these critical months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer Abraham".

Spencer Abraham

cc: Stephen Wright, Bonneville Power Administration  
Michael HacsKaylo, Western Area Power Administration





United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary  
Washington, D.C. 20250

SEP 26 2002

The Honorable James L. Connaughton  
Chairman  
Council on Environmental Quality  
Executive Office of the President  
722 Jackson Place, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter of July 26, 2002, regarding the Energy Project Streamlining Task Force (Energy Task Force) recommendation of protecting power lines from wildfire. I certainly share your concern regarding the pressing need to protect electrical transmission lines properly from wildfire damage. The severe drought and fire conditions throughout the Western states, and now in some of our Eastern states, highlight the increasing risks of interrupting power supplies due to increased fire threat.

I have selected Robert Cunningham of the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service as the key staff person to coordinate this critical effort and address each of the three actions recommended in your letter. He can be reached at 202-205-2494. It is our intent to take all necessary actions to ensure the integrity of the Nation's electrical transmission system, particularly during these severe conditions.

Forest Service staff will continue to be in contact with the Energy Task Force as actions are implemented.

Thank you again for your letter. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Veneman", written in a cursive style.

Ann M. Veneman  
Secretary