

**BEFORE THE NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION**

**IN THE MATTER OF SOUTHWESTERN  
PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY'S  
APPLICATION FOR EXPEDITED: (1)  
ISSUANCE OF A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC  
CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY  
AUTHORIZING CONSTRUCTION AND  
OPERATION OF A 345 KV TRANSMISSION  
LINE AND ASSOCIATED FACILITIES IN  
EDDY AND LEA COUNTIES, NEW MEXICO;  
(2) APPROVAL OF THE LOCATION OF THE  
345 KV TRANSMISSION LINE; (3)  
DETERMINATION OF RIGHT OF WAY  
WIDTH AND (4) AUTHORIZING ACCRUAL  
OF AN ALLOWANCE FOR FUNDS USED  
DURING CONSTRUCTION FOR THE  
TRANSMISSION LINE AND ASSOCIATED  
FACILITIES,  
  
SOUTHWESTERN PUBLIC SERVICE  
COMPANY,  
  
APPLICANT.**

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**CASE NO. 14-\_\_\_\_-UT**

**DIRECT TESTIMONY**

*of*

**SCOTT G. MORRIS**

*on behalf of*

**SOUTHWESTERN PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANY**

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## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND DEFINED TERMS**

<b>Acronym/Defined Term</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
BLM	United States Bureau of Land Management
Commission	New Mexico Public Regulation Commission
kV	kilovolt
NMSLO	New Mexico State Land Office
Proposed Project	345 kV transmission line and associated substation facilities in Eddy and Lea Counties, New Mexico
ROW	right-of-way
Rule 592	17.9.592 NMAC
SPS	Southwestern Public Service Company, a New Mexico corporation
TRC	TRC Environmental Corporation
Xcel Energy	Xcel Energy Inc.

## **LIST OF ATTACHMENTS**

<b>Attachment</b>	<b>Description</b>
SGM-1	Schematic Diagram

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1                   **I. WITNESS IDENTIFICATION AND QUALIFICATIONS**

2       **Q. Please state your name and business address.**

3       A. My name is Scott G. Morris and my business address is 600 S. Tyler Street,  
4           Amarillo, Texas 79101.

5       **Q. On whose behalf are you testifying in this proceeding?**

6       A. I am filing testimony on behalf of Southwestern Public Service Company, a New  
7           Mexico corporation ("SPS"), and wholly-owned subsidiary of Xcel Energy Inc.  
8           ("Xcel Energy"). Xcel Energy is a registered holding company that owns several  
9           electric and natural gas utility operating companies and a regulated natural gas  
10          pipeline company.<sup>1</sup>

11       **Q. By whom are you employed and in what position?**

12       A. I am employed by SPS as Senior Siting and Land Rights Agent.

13       **Q. Please briefly outline your responsibilities as Senior Siting and Land Rights**  
14       **Agent.**

15       A. In this position, I am responsible for the development of local, state, and federal  
16       land use permit applications for the construction, operation, and maintenance of

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<sup>1</sup> Xcel Energy is the parent company of four wholly-owned electric and gas utility operating companies: Northern States Power Company, a Minnesota corporation; Northern States Power Company, a Wisconsin corporation; Public Service Company of Colorado, a Colorado corporation; and SPS. Xcel Energy's natural gas pipeline subsidiary is WestGas InterState, Inc.

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1 major utility facilities including transmission lines, substation facilities, and  
2 power plants. I am also responsible for development and compliance of  
3 management plans to address state and federal natural resource management  
4 issues and monitoring and ensuring compliance with state and federal permits. In  
5 my current position, I am also responsible for performing permitting, planning,  
6 routing analysis, selection, and development of sites and corridors for major  
7 electric transmission lines and substation facilities, in addition to negotiating with  
8 landowners for the acquisition of land rights (easements and fee acquisitions)  
9 within the SPS service area.

10 **Q. Please describe your educational background.**

11 A. I received a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science/History in 2003 and a Masters of  
12 Public Administration in 2007 from Texas Tech University.

13 **Q. Please describe your professional experience.**

14 A. In 1995, I started a Real Estate company that primarily sold agricultural farm and  
15 ranch land in the Texas Panhandle and the South Plains of Texas. I operated this  
16 company from 1995 until 2007, negotiating with both buyers and sellers on the  
17 sale of land. In 2007, I went to work for the City of Amarillo. At the City of  
18 Amarillo, I worked directly for the Assistant City Manager in several different  
19 rolls, but primarily I administered all land owned by the City. I also bought right-

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1 of-way ("ROW") for the City's pipeline projects. In August of 2010, I accepted a  
2 position with SPS as a Senior Siting and Land Rights Agent.

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## II. ASSIGNMENT

**Q. What is your assignment in this proceeding?**

A. My testimony supports SPS's request for issuance of a certificate of public convenience and necessity, and for location approval of the new 345 kilovolt ("kV") transmission line, and associated substation facilities ("Proposed Project"). These facilities will connect the Potash Junction Substation to the proposed Roadrunner Substation, located in Eddy and Lea Counties, New Mexico. My testimony will specifically explain: (1) SPS's request for location approval of the proposed transmission line and route selection process; and (2) the Proposed Project's compliance with the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission's ("Commission") filing requirements under 17.9.592 NMAC ("Rule 592") for approval of the location of the transmission line.



### III. ROUTE SELECTION

**Q. Please generally describe the location where the proposed transmission line and facilities will be located.**

A. The proposed transmission line and facilities will be located in Eddy and Lea Counties, New Mexico. The proposed transmission line will begin at a connection point south of SPS's Potash Junction Substation, located approximately 17 miles northeast of Carlsbad, New Mexico and extend to a connection point approximately 22 miles northwest of Jal, New Mexico at the proposed Roadrunner Substation.

**Q. Please briefly describe SPS's route selection procedure.**

A. The transmission line will be located on federal land managed by the Bureau of Land Management ("BLM"), state land managed by the New Mexico State Land Office ("NMSLO"), and approximately one mile of privately owned land. To the extent possible, constraints such as individual residences, rural subdivisions, airstrips, mobile irrigation systems, cemeteries, wetlands, parks, churches, and schools are avoided to reduce the overall impact of the alternative routes. SPS also considered paralleling existing compatible ROW and property lines where reasonable and practical. The transmission line route was delineated using aerial photographs, following existing transportation and utility ROW where possible,

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1 with consideration being given to existing land use constraints along with  
2 consultation with the BLM.

3 **Q. Were field trips to the study area conducted?**

4 A. Yes. Multiple field trips to the study area were conducted from April 2013  
5 through December 2013 by members of a team consisting of myself and TRC  
6 Environmental Corporation ("TRC") representatives. TRC is an environmental  
7 consulting firm hired by SPS to provide an environmental assessment of the  
8 Proposed Project.

9 **Q. After SPS identified the preliminary alternative routes, what process did it**  
10 **use to evaluate the feasibility of those alternative routes?**

11 A. SPS provided information regarding the routes, identified existing land use  
12 constraints, and transportation and utility ROW to TRC. TRC was asked to  
13 prepare an environmental assessment of land uses, visual resources,  
14 socioeconomic elements, biological/ecological resources, geology and soils,  
15 hydrology, and cultural resources along the preliminary alternative routes. TRC  
16 used this information to delineate a study area, collect necessary data from local,  
17 state, and federal agencies, and develop maps. TRC examined the initial  
18 preliminary routes in the field, and as a result, adjustments were made to the

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1 location and alignment of the proposed route. These activities form the basis for  
2 SPS's selection of the proposed route.

3 **Q. Please describe the public involvement process utilized for the Proposed**  
4 **Project.**

5 A. The proposed route was presented at a public meeting held in Carlsbad, New  
6 Mexico on July 9, 2013. The meeting's objective was to inform and educate the  
7 public regarding the project, and to promote a better understanding of the  
8 Proposed Project, including the purpose, need, potential benefits, and impacts of  
9 the Proposed Project. Additionally, it was intended to solicit comments from  
10 citizens, landowners, and public officials concerning the Proposed Project. The  
11 meeting followed an informational station type format for one-on-one discussions  
12 with interested attendees.

13 **Q. How did SPS receive feedback from attendees of the public open-house**  
14 **meeting?**

15 A. Feedback from the public open-house meeting was received in two primary ways.  
16 First, attendees had one-on-one conversations with personnel from SPS about  
17 their interests and comments regarding the project. During the one-on-one  
18 conversations, attendees had the opportunity to provide comments and

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1 clarification regarding structures and features depicted on a mosaic of aerial  
2 photographs present at the meeting.

3 Second, each attendee at the meeting received a questionnaire that  
4 solicited comments on the Proposed Project. Oral comments and responses to the  
5 questionnaires were considered in the overall identification and evaluation of the  
6 alternative routes.

7 **Q. Please describe how SPS used the feedback from persons who attended the**  
8 **meeting.**

9 **A.** SPS considered the comments of the two attendees and determined that no change  
10 to the proposed route was necessary.

11 **Q. Did SPS or TRC make any other modification to the alternative routes?**

12 **A.** Yes. Several modifications were made to the proposed route at the direction of  
13 the BLM.

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1           **IV.    LOCATION APPROVAL REQUIREMENTS AND OTHER**  
2                           **GOVERNMENTAL PERMIT REQUIREMENTS**

3       **Q.    Please identify the transmission line for which SPS is requesting location**  
4       **approval under NMSA 1978, Section 62-9-3 and Commission Rule 592.**

5       **A.    SPS is requesting location approval for the 345 kV transmission line component**  
6       **of the Proposed Project, which will extend from the Potash Junction Substation**  
7       **(located approximately 17 miles northeast of Carlsbad, New Mexico) to the**  
8       **proposed Roadrunner Substation (located approximately 22 miles northwest of**  
9       **Jal, New Mexico). Please refer to the Environmental Assessment (Attachment**  
10       **HCH-1 to the Direct Testimony of Howard C. Higgins, Appendix A) for a map**  
11       **showing the location of the transmission line. Also please refer to Attachment**  
12       **SGM-1 for a schematic diagram showing the proposed transmission line and the**  
13       **interconnection of the transmission line to the transmission grid.**

14       **Q.    Please describe the ownership of the land to be crossed by the proposed**  
15       **transmission line, the overall length of the transmission line, and the specific**  
16       **length for each ownership interest?**

17       **A.    The transmission line will be located on BLM, NMSLO and privately owned land.**  
18       **The total length of the transmission line will be approximately 40 miles. In this**  
19       **regard the transmission line will cross approximately 28.7 miles of federal land**

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1 that is managed by the BLM, approximately 10.3 miles of state owned land  
2 managed by the NMSLO, and approximately 1 mile of privately owned land.

3 **Q. Please describe the interconnection facilities that the transmission line will be**  
4 **connected to.**

5 A. The transmission line will connect the new Roadrunner Substation to the Potash  
6 Junction Substation and will be built to 345 kV specifications, but will have a 230  
7 kV transformer and initially operate at 230 kV. As explained by SPS witness  
8 Roland Azcarraga, the 230 kV transformer will be replaced with a 345 kV  
9 transformer prior to 2018, and will operate at 345 kV after that time.

10 **Q. Has SPS arranged for an environmental assessment to evaluate the**  
11 **environmental impacts of the Proposed Project?**

12 A. Yes, as discussed earlier, this study has been undertaken by TRC and SPS witness  
13 Higgins addresses the results of the environmental assessment in his testimony.

14 **Q. Has SPS complied with all requirements of Section 62-9-3 and Commission**  
15 **Rule 592?**

16 A. Yes. My testimony and the testimony of SPS witnesses Azcarraga and Higgins  
17 discuss SPS's compliance with the requirements under Section 62-9-3 and  
18 Rule 592.

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1     **Q.     In relation to SPS's request that the Commission approve the proposed 345**  
2     **kV transmission line and associated substation facility, what governmental**  
3     **permits are required?**

4     **A.     Because most of the facilities are on federal and state land, several governmental**  
5     **permits are required before the location of the 345 kV transmission line and**  
6     **associated substation facilities can be approved.     The required permits and**  
7     **permitting process are discussed in the testimony of SPS witness Howard Higgins.**

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## V. CONCLUSION

1

2     **Q.    Is Attachment SGM-1 a true and correct representation of the**  
3     **interconnection of the Proposed Project with the electric grid?**

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Does this conclude your pre-filed testimony?

6 A. Yes.

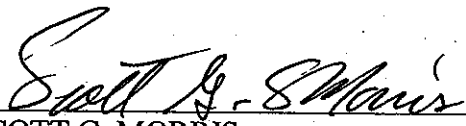


**VERIFICATION**

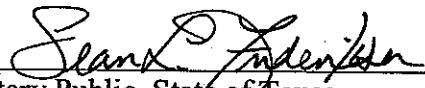
STATE OF TEXAS           )  
  ) ss.  
COUNTY OF POTTER       )

Scott G. Morris, first being sworn on his oath, states:

I am the witness identified in the preceding testimony. I have read the testimony and the accompanying attachments and am familiar with their contents. Based upon my personal knowledge, the facts stated in the direct testimony are true. In addition, in my judgment and based upon my professional experience, the opinions and conclusions stated in the testimony are true, valid, and accurate.

  
SCOTT G. MORRIS

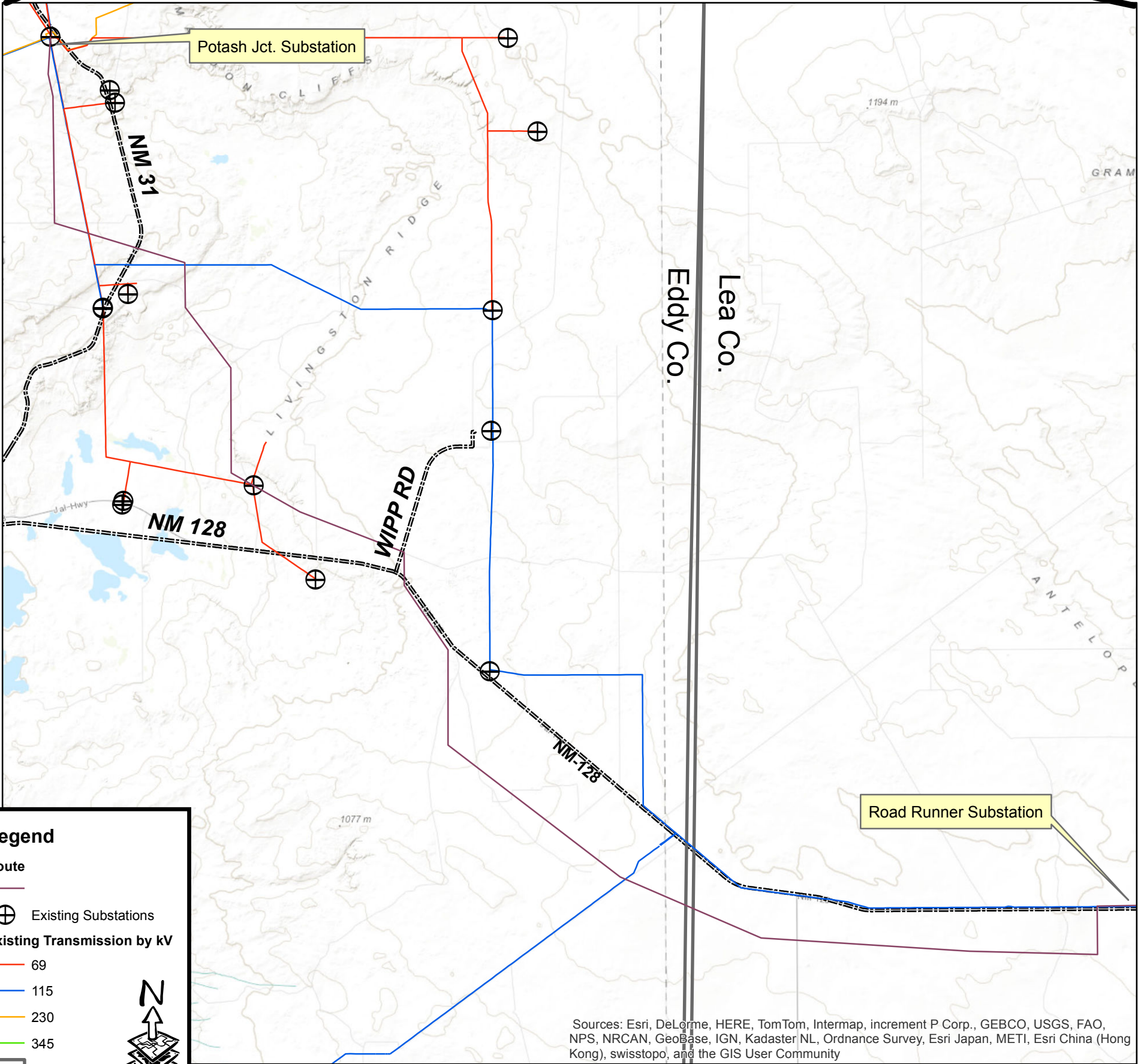
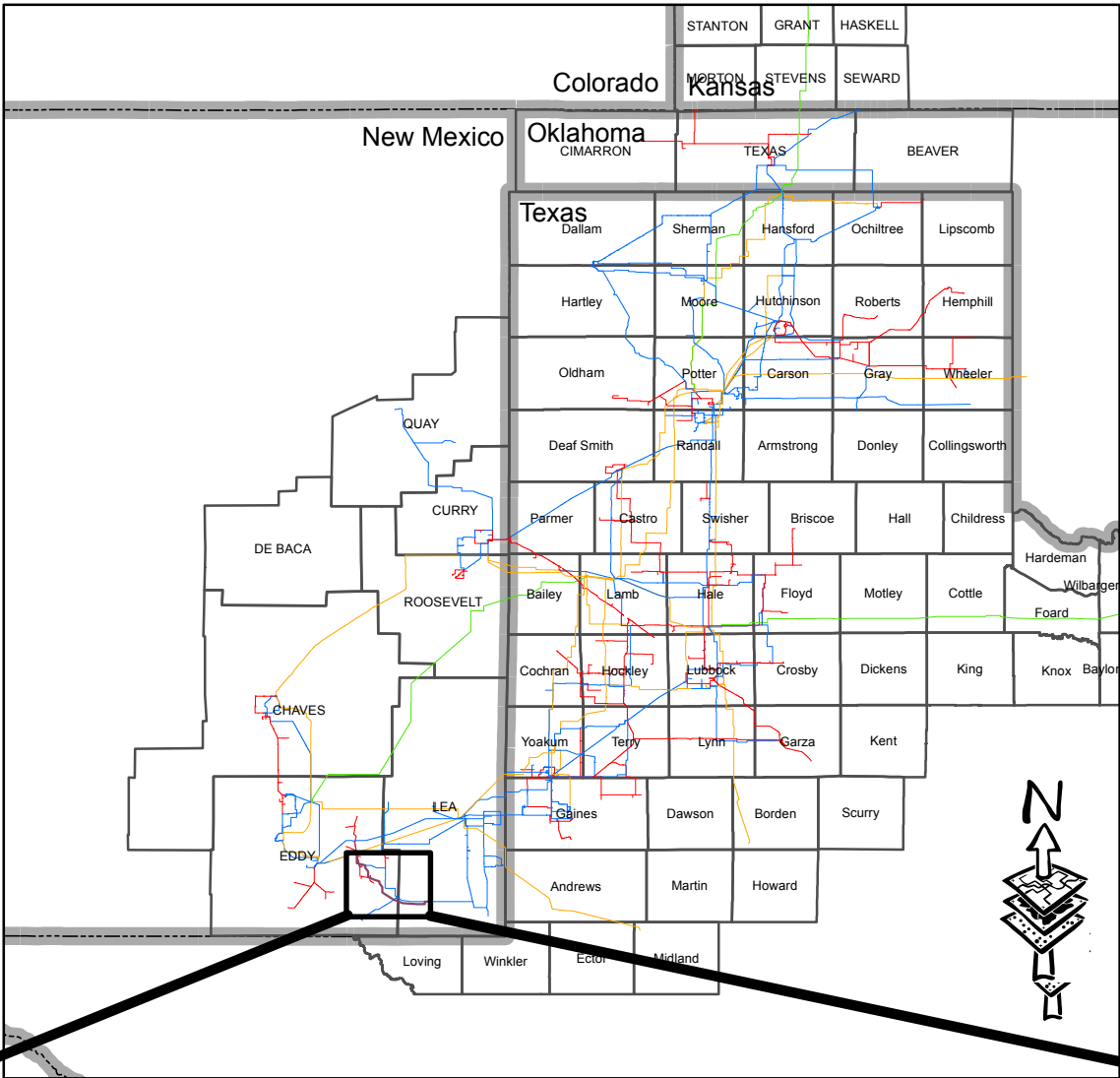
SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO before me this 15<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2014.

  
Notary Public, State of Texas  
My Commission Expires: 11/19/15



Potash to Roadrunner

Attachement SGM-1



Legend

Route

Existing Substations

⊕

Existing Transmission by kV

69

115

230

345

County

Major\_Roads