

**BEFORE THE STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF KANSAS**

In the Matter of the Application of NextEra)
Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC for a)
Siting Permit for the Construction of a 345) Docket No. 23-NETE-____-____
kV Transmission Line Through Coffey,)
Anderson, Allen, Bourbon, and Crawford)
Counties, Kansas.)

**DIRECT TESTIMONY OF JACQUELYN BLAKLEY,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ASSET EXECUTION,
NEXTERA ENERGY TRANSMISSION, LLC**

ON BEHALF OF

NEXTERA ENERGY TRANSMISSION SOUTHWEST, LLC

Docket No. 23-NETE-____-____

JANUARY 24, 2023

Contents

I. Introduction..... 3

II. Double-Circuiting Evaluation..... 4

 A. Double Circuit Alignments..... 9

 B. Building within the NEET Southwest ROW 10

 C. Building the Double Circuit Option in Evergy ROW..... 11

III. Conclusion 12

1 **I. INTRODUCTION**

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

4 A. My name is Jacquelyn Blakley. My business address is 700 Universe Boulevard,
5 Juno Beach, Florida 33408.

6 **Q. By whom are you employed and in what capacity?**

7 A. I am employed by NextEra Energy Transmission, LLC (“NEET”) as Executive
8 Director of Asset Execution. NEET is an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of NextEra Energy,
9 Inc. (“NextEra Energy”). In my role at NEET, my responsibilities include leading corporate efforts
10 to execute regulated and contracted power transmission and related assets in the United States.

11 **Q. On whose behalf are you testifying?**

12 A. I am testifying on behalf of NextEra Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC (“NEET
13 Southwest”).

14 **Q. What is your educational and professional background?**

15 A. I have over 28 years of experience in design, contract development and negotiation,
16 construction, operations, and project management for some of the largest energy corporations –
17 Exxon, Entergy, Southern Company and NEET. I hold a Bachelor of Science from the University
18 of Alabama and am a certified Project Management Professional.

19 **Q. Has this direct testimony been prepared by you or under your direct**
20 **supervision?**

21 A. Yes, it has.

22 **Q. Have you previously provided testimony before the Kansas Corporation**
23 **Commission (“KCC” or “Commission”) or any other regulatory commission?**

24 A. No, I have not.

1 **Q. Do you sponsor any exhibits in support of NEET Southwest’s application?**

2 A. Yes. I sponsor Exhibit JB-1, which is a Report addressing the double-circuit option
3 that I discuss in detail in this testimony. This Report was prepared under my direct supervision,
4 along with NEET Southwest witness Daniel Mayers.

5 **Q. What is the purpose of your direct testimony?**

6 A. The purpose of my testimony is to support NEET Southwest’s Application for a
7 Transmission Line Siting Permit. In particular, my testimony provides information relating to
8 NEET Southwest’s investigation and coordination with Evergy regarding the feasibility and
9 practicality of double-circuiting a portion of the Wolf Creek to Blackberry 345 kV Transmission
10 Line Project (the “Project”) with Evergy’s existing Marmaton-EDE 161 kV Line (the “Evergy 161
11 kV Line”) (referred to as the “Double Circuit Option”).

12 **II. DOUBLE-CIRCUITING EVALUATION**

13
14 **Q. Please explain the co-location option that NEET Southwest has evaluated.**

15 A. In the Commission’s August 29, 2022 Order on Application for Certificate of
16 Convenience and Necessity (“CCN Order”),¹ the Commission directed NEET Southwest and
17 Evergy to comprehensively review the option to double-circuit approximately 25 miles of the
18 Project with a portion of the “Evergy 161 kV Line”, which Evergy has advised that it anticipates
19 rebuilding in the next five to ten years due to its age and condition. Specifically, the Commission
20 requested NEET Southwest and Evergy to consider:

21 1) Detailed cost estimates of the cost to double circuit this portion of the line;
22

¹ *In the Matter of the Application of NextEra Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Transact the Business of a Public Utility in the State of Kansas*, Docket No. 22-NETE-419-COC (Aug. 29, 2022) (“CCN Order”).

- 1 2) Cost sharing arrangements/agreements between NEET Southwest and Evergy
2 pertaining to the upgrade costs and all aspects of operation and maintenance of
3 this double-circuited portion of the line;
4
5 3) Easement sharing agreements and operations and maintenance (“O&M”)
6 responsibility sharing agreements for the double circuit portion of the line;
7
8 4) Any revisions to construction timelines (of either standalone project) necessary
9 to accommodate Evergy or NEET Southwest's construction schedule for this
10 portion of the line; and
11
12 5) Any engineering analysis necessary to determine construction standards for this
13 portion of the line.²
14

15 **Q. Has NEET Southwest completed an assessment of the double circuit option?**

16 A. Yes. Attached as Exhibit JB-1 is a Report that NEET Southwest has prepared
17 reviewing the double-circuiting option. Although I am the primary sponsor of Exhibit JB-1, it was
18 prepared in collaboration with the Engineering and Construction (“E&C”) group, as overseen by
19 Daniel Mayers, and the Development Group, as overseen by Becky Walding and myself.

20 **Q. Could you provide a high-level summary of the Report?**

21 A. Yes. At a high level, our analysis and coordination with Evergy and SPP has led us
22 to conclude that the Double Circuit Option would cause between a 12- to 45-month schedule delay
23 to the Project’s originally proposed in-service date. This would reduce the production cost savings
24 to be realized from the Project by approximately \$14.5 million on average for every 12 months of
25 delay. In addition, Evergy has advised that, due to the age and condition of Evergy’s 161 kV Line,
26 it has identified the line as a potential candidate for rebuild, but that the exact timing of the rebuild
27 is still unknown. Evergy has advised that its current planned completion date is December 31,
28 2030, so the full Double Circuit Option (with both the 345 kV and 161 kV lines co-located on
29 shared structures) would not be able to be completed until at least the fourth quarter of 2030.

² CCN Order at ¶ 98.

1 Cost of construction for constructing a double-circuited line utilizing Evergy’s design
2 specifications (and primarily steel monopoles) would cost between \$79.5 and \$91.5 million (for
3 both the NEET Southwest and Evergy portions), or an increase of \$10.7 to \$22.7 million over the
4 base scenario of building the lines as separate facilities (*i.e.*, NEET Southwest’s and Evergy’s
5 estimates which total \$68.8 million).

6 If the Double Circuit Option were constructed using NEET Southwest’s design
7 specifications (using primarily concrete monopoles), NEET Southwest estimates the costs of the
8 Double Circuit Option would be approximately \$67.0 million; however, Evergy has advised NEET
9 Southwest that it would only accept a design that uses concrete monopoles for the 161 kV Line
10 that meets Evergy’s design specifications. In particular, and as Mr. Mayers testifies in more detail,
11 there are certain aspects of NEET Southwest’s concrete pole design that Evergy expressed should
12 be modified to meet Evergy’s specifications for the 161 kV Line. NEET Southwest expects that
13 any coordinated design criteria for concrete monopoles would increase the costs of this option
14 significantly.

15 Finally, NEET Southwest understands that, if ordered by the Commission, the Double
16 Circuit Option would need to be evaluated by the Southwest Power Pool, Inc. (“SPP”) under its
17 Business Practice Manuals (“BPM”), and potentially restudied by SPP, a process which could add
18 over a year to the Project’s schedule. In addition, the Double Circuit Option would require the
19 utilities to redesign this portion of their respective projects and agree to a number of mutually
20 acceptable agreements (likely adding additional delays and cost). There may be other monetary
21 and non-monetary complications, including complexity and potential delay in acquiring real estate
22 rights to any shared right of way (“ROW”), additional environmental permitting requirements and
23 associated delays, and complications relating to future operation and maintenance of the lines. In

1 sum, because of the expected impacts to project costs, economic benefits, and delay, NEET
2 Southwest believes that this would not be a reasonable alternative.

3 **Q. How did NEET Southwest evaluate this Double Circuit Option?**

4 A. Consistent with the Settlement Agreement in the CCN docket and the
5 Commission's direction in the CCN Order, NEET Southwest and its subject-matter experts and
6 consultants performed a comprehensive evaluation of the potential double circuit options.
7 Specifically, as Mr. Mayers also explains, NEET Southwest engaged its Engineer of Record for
8 the WCB Project, Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. ("Burns & McDonnell"), to
9 perform an engineering analysis of the potential to co-locate the lines, and NEET Southwest's
10 internal engineers and Burns & McDonnell developed conceptual engineering designs for potential
11 double circuit alignments under different potential alignments. During the parties' coordination
12 process, Evergy requested that any Double Circuit Option meet Evergy's design specifications.
13 NEET Southwest's engineers also evaluated building the Double Circuit Option in NEET
14 Southwest's ROW utilizing NEET Southwest's original design specifications. NEET Southwest
15 then used Burns & McDonnell's engineering analyses to prepare preliminary cost estimates.

16 In addition, NEET Southwest engaged Doyle Land Services to evaluate potential ROW
17 costs, as well as utilized internal and external legal counsel, internal environmental, engineering,
18 regulatory affairs, and operations personnel to evaluate the various aspects of the double circuit
19 options.

20 **Q. How did NEET Southwest engage with Evergy?**

21 A. NEET Southwest worked extensively with Evergy to gather information and to
22 review and analyze the double circuit options. NEET Southwest and Evergy engaged
23 approximately 14 separate meetings to discuss items such as engineering design specifications,

1 reliability, routing, real estate agreements and condemnation, economic impacts, landowner
2 impacts, cost, schedule, and O&M activities.

3 **Q. Did NEET Southwest coordinate with any other parties?**

4 A. Yes. NEET Southwest also met with SPP staff in order to discuss the double-
5 circuiting and additional analysis that may be required from SPP. Specifically, SPP advised NEET
6 Southwest that: (1) the SPP Board will be required to adjust the date by which regulatory approvals
7 for the WCB Project are to be obtained, which was originally identified by SPP as January 1,
8 2023;³ and (2) if the Double Circuit Option is adopted by the Commission, SPP OATT Business
9 Practice Manual 7060 would require SPP to perform a technical evaluation of whether that
10 constitutes a “change in scope” to the SPP Notification to Construct (“NTC”) that would
11 necessitate an ultimate restudy of the Project.⁴ SPP advised that its technical evaluation could be
12 performed relatively quickly (based on other workload and available resources) if the changes to
13 the Project are not significant. If SPP’s technical evaluation determines that the Double Circuit
14 Option represents a “change in scope” that requires restudy, SPP advised that it could request
15 approval from its Board to perform an off-cycle study or, if the Board did not approve an off-cycle
16 study, SPP would be required to restudy any scope change through its 2024 ITP evaluation.

17 Finally, NEET Southwest and Evergy met with KCC Staff to provide updates on the
18 analysis and evaluation, as required by the CCN Order.

³ NEET Southwest submitted a request to SPP to modify the NTC on December 21, 2022.

⁴ SPP Business Practice Manual 7060, at <https://www.spp.org/documents/63847/spp%20oatt%20business%20practices%2020210120.pdf> (last visited Dec. 20, 2020). BPM 7060, § 6 addresses modifications to NTCs.

1 A. **DOUBLE CIRCUIT ALIGNMENTS**

2 **Q. Please describe the potential different alignments for the Double Circuit**
3 **Option.**

4 A. NEET Southwest reviewed alignments for the Double Circuit Option either in
5 NEET Southwest’s right of way (“ROW”) or in Evergy’s existing ROW. If the Double Circuit
6 Option was built in NEET Southwest’s ROW, it would consist of the Double Circuit Option being
7 installed in new NEET Southwest 150-foot ROW, located generally adjacent to the existing
8 Evergy 161 kV Line ROW. This ROW is the same as in NEET Southwest’s current Proposed
9 Route, and thus, NEET Southwest is already in the process of negotiating and securing voluntary
10 easement option agreements for this section of the ROW.⁵ At a high level, this would consist of
11 constructing 25.2 miles of double-circuit 345 kV/161 kV transmission line installed on weathering
12 steel monopoles placed on drilled shaft foundations. NEET Southwest evaluated constructing the
13 Double Circuit Option in its ROW using both Evergy’s and NEET Southwest’s design
14 specifications.

15 NEET Southwest also evaluated whether the Double Circuit Option could be constructed
16 within Evergy’s existing 161 kV Line ROW, which would consist of installing 23.8 miles of
17 double-circuit 345 kV/161 kV transmission line on weathering steel monopoles placed on drilled
18 shaft foundations located in Evergy’s existing ROW for the existing 161 kV Line, which Evergy
19 confirmed is 75-100 feet along this 25-mile segment. NEET Southwest would expect that the
20 double circuit line would be located in the center of the expanded 150-foot ROW, offset by
21 approximately 10 feet from where the current Evergy 161 kV Line is located.

⁵ This 25-mile section of the WCB Project would cross 80 parcels in Allen, Bourbon, and Crawford counties. As of January 10, 2023, NEET Southwest has obtained voluntary easement option agreements for 41 parcels, or approximately 310 acres out of a total 494 total acres along this segment.

1 **B. BUILDING WITHIN THE NEET SOUTHWEST ROW**

2
3 **Q. What were your overall conclusions regarding the NEET SW ROW Alignment**
4 **Option?**

5 A. Constructing the Double Circuit Option in NEET Southwest’s ROW would impact
6 the costs, schedule, and economic benefits of the Project. In summary, impacts of this option
7 include:

- 8 • If built using Evergy’s design specifications, combined NEET Southwest and Evergy
9 construction costs of approximately \$79.5 million (for the 25.2-mile segments of the
10 Project and the 161 kV Line), or approximately \$10.7 million more than the Base
11 Proposal;
- 12 • If built using NEET Southwest’s design specifications, combined NEET Southwest and
13 Evergy construction costs of approximately \$67.0 million;
- 14 • An in-service date for the Project ranging from the first quarter of 2026 to the first
15 quarter of 2027, depending upon how quickly SPP’s evaluation process and the parties’
16 joint land acquisition efforts could occur, with Evergy’s 161 kV Line not being
17 completed until the fourth quarter of 2030; and
- 18 • A resulting decrease in production cost benefits of the Project of approximately \$14.5
19 million to \$29 million on average, depending upon the actual in-service date.⁶
20

21 **Q. How would implementing this option affect NEET Southwest’s ability to**
22 **complete the Project, as certificated?**
23

24 A. If the Commission requires NEET Southwest to construct the Double Circuit
25 Option in NEET Southwest’s ROW, that would extend the schedule for the Project by a minimum
26 of approximately 12 months and up to 24 months, meaning the Project would be placed into service
27 no earlier than the first quarter of 2026 and as late as the first quarter of 2027. Additional time
28
29

⁶ NEET Southwest assumed a reduction in production cost benefits of approximately \$14.5 million for every 12 months that the Project is delayed beyond NEET Southwest’s originally proposed in-service date of January 1, 2025.

1 would be required for NEET Southwest and Evergy to redesign and reengineer both the Project
2 and the 161 kV Line as a double-circuit facility, to negotiate and enter into final coordination and
3 joint use agreements with Evergy, to obtain additional environmental permits as described below,
4 and to obtain necessary SPP review of the changes to the Project’s scope. Additional time also
5 may be required for SPP to complete additional review and analysis. In order to meet a first quarter
6 2026 in-service date, SPP would need to complete its analysis by Q3 2023.

7 NEET Southwest also expects that the Double Circuit Option would require additional time
8 to complete land acquisition efforts, as discussed in further detail in the Report. A 12-month delay
9 in the in-service date of the Project would eliminate the \$14.5 million in production cost savings
10 associated with NEET Southwest’s originally proposed January 2025 in-service date for its
11 Proposed Route.

12 **Q. Is it possible that the delay could be longer?**

13 A. Yes. The first quarter of 2026 is the earliest possible in-service date NEET
14 Southwest expects for building the Double Circuit Option in the NEET Southwest ROW.
15 However, it may not be possible for SPP to complete the restudy off-cycle, meaning SPP would
16 have to restudy the Project as part of the 2024 Integrated Transmission Planning study cycle, which
17 will not be completed until October 2024. This would result in additional delays, possibly
18 extending to the first quarter of 2027. Joint land acquisition efforts also may cause delays, as there
19 is a lack of precedent in Kansas for two different entities co-owning ROW.

20 **C. BUILDING THE DOUBLE CIRCUIT OPTION IN EVERGY ROW**

21 **Q. What were your overall conclusions regarding building the Double Circuit**
22 **Option in Evergy’s existing ROW?**

23 A. Constructing the Double Circuit Option in the existing Evergy 161 kV Line ROW
24 would create even further schedule delay. Evergy informed NEET Southwest that it has identified

1 its 161 kV Line as a potential candidate for rebuild based on its age and condition, but that the
2 exact timing of any rebuild is still unknown. Evergy has advised that its current planned
3 completion date is December 30, 2030. Therefore, constructing the Double Circuit Option in
4 Evergy's ROW would delay the start of NEET Southwest's construction until September 2025 (if
5 SPP is able to evaluate the need for a restudy quickly) or 2026 (if SPP requires a full restudy
6 through the 2024 ITP study process). Constructing in Evergy's ROW also would require a
7 significantly longer construction period, as NEET Southwest would be limited to constructing the
8 Double Circuit Option during times that Evergy takes its 161 kV Line out of service due to Evergy
9 safety requirements that the construction work not occur while the 161 kV Line is energized. In
10 summary impacts of this option include:

- 11 • Combined NEET Southwest and Evergy construction costs of approximately \$91.5
12 million (for the 25-mile segment of the Project and the 161 kV Line), or
13 approximately \$22.7 million more costs than the Base Proposal;
14
- 15 • An in-service date for the Project ranging from the first quarter of 2027 to the third
16 quarter of 2028, depending upon how quickly SPP's evaluation, joint land acquisition
17 efforts, and other design and procurement activities can occur; as noted above, the
18 rebuild of the Evergy 161 kV Line would not be completed until the fourth quarter of
19 2030; and
20
- 21 • A resulting decrease in production cost benefits of the Project of approximately \$29
22 million to \$43.5 million, depending upon the Project's actual in-service date.
23

24 **III. CONCLUSION**

25 **Q. Has NEET Southwest comprehensively studied the Double Circuit Option as**
26 **requested by the Commission?**

27 A. Yes, it has. We have worked together with our consultants, Evergy, SPP, and Staff
28 to expeditiously and comprehensively evaluate this option. As summarized in this Direct
29 Testimony and detailed in Exhibit JB-1, we have considered all of the factors that the Commission
30 directed us to consider in the CCN Order, and more. As a result of our comprehensive analysis,

1 we have concluded that the schedule impacts and resulting higher costs to customers mean that the
2 Double Circuit Option is not a reasonable alternative.

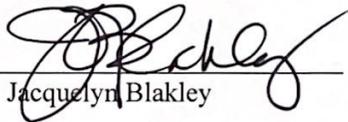
3 **Q. Does that conclude your testimony?**

4 **A.** Yes, it does.

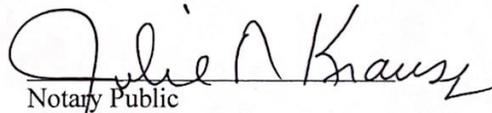
VERIFICATION

STATE OF FLORIDA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF PALM BEACH)

I, Jacquelyn Blakley, being duly sworn, on oath state that I am Executive Director of Asset Execution of NextEra Energy Transmission, LLC, and that I have read the foregoing testimony and know the contents thereof, and that the facts set forth therein are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

By: 
Jacquelyn Blakley

The foregoing pleading was subscribed and sworn to before me this 13th day of January, 2023.


Notary Public

My Commission Expires:



EXHIBIT JB-1

Public

Redacted sections of this Exhibit have been marked Confidential as containing confidential business information and trade secrets.

Double Circuit Report

NextEra Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC

I. Introduction and Overview

In the Kansas Corporation Commission’s (“Commission” or “KCC”) August 29, 2022 Order on Application for Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (“CCN Order”),¹ the Commission directed NEET Southwest to comprehensively review the option to double circuit approximately 25 miles of the Wolf Creek to Blackberry 345 kV Transmission Line Project (the “WCB Project”), or approximately 26 percent of the total distance of the WCB Project, with a portion of Evergy’s existing Marmaton-EDE 161 kV Line (the “Evergy 161 kV Line”) that Evergy anticipates rebuilding in the next five to ten years.

The Commission directed NEET Southwest and Evergy to work together “expeditiously” and “comprehensively” to evaluate this alternative and specifically to “consider at least (but not limited to) the following factors in this evaluation:” (1) Detailed cost estimates of the cost to double circuit this portion of the line; (2) Cost sharing arrangements/agreements between NEET Southwest and Evergy pertaining to the upgrade costs and all aspects of operation and maintenance of this double-circuited portion of the line; (3) Easement sharing agreements and operations and maintenance (“O&M”) responsibility sharing agreements for the double circuit portion of the line; (4) Any revisions to construction timelines (of either standalone project) necessary to accommodate Evergy or NEET Southwest’s construction schedule for this portion of the line; and (5) Any engineering analysis necessary to determine construction standards for this portion of the line.²

NEET Southwest appreciates the Commission’s interest in evaluating a Double Circuit Option. Consistent with the Commission’s orders, NEET Southwest engaged in a robust and comprehensive analysis of the potential for a Double Circuit Option, including analyzing different potential alignments and coordinating with Evergy and obtaining feedback from the Southwest Power Pool, Inc. (“SPP”) and Commission Staff. NEET Southwest also appreciates the cooperation and coordination that Evergy provided throughout the evaluation process and the feedback and assistance from SPP and Commission Staff.

After careful evaluation, and as described in more detail below, co-locating the WCB Project with Evergy’s 161 kV Line is expected to result in delay to the WCB Project’s in-service date and to increase the schedule risk and uncertainty associated with the WCB Project, due primarily to the additional complexity of coordinating between two utilities with different design criteria such that additional coordinated design work that would still need to be performed if the Commission orders the utilities to construct the Double Circuit Option, additional time expected and uncertainty associated with acquiring land rights for the Double Circuit Option, and the

¹ *In the Matter of the Application of NextEra Energy Transmission Southwest, LLC for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Transact the Business of a Public Utility in the State of Kansas*, Docket No. 22-NETE-419-COC (Aug. 29, 2022) (“CCN Order”).

² CCN Order at ¶ 98.

potential additional time needed and uncertainty associated with further evaluation of the WCB Project by SPP under the SPP Open Access Transmission Tariff (“OATT”) and Business Practice Manuals (“BPM”). These delays in the WCB Project’s in-service date would be expected to reduce the production cost benefits to SPP customers from the WCB Project by approximately \$14.5 million on average for each 12 months of delay.

It is important to note that the additional steps and coordination with external stakeholders necessary to build the Double Circuit Option increase the uncertainty of the schedule and thereby the risk of unanticipated complications, including further potential delay and increased costs. In addition, the estimated costs of the Double Circuit Option would vary, based upon whether the Double Circuit Option would be built in NEET Southwest’s or Evergy’s right of way (“ROW”) and which design specifications would be used. NEET Southwest estimates the following impacts from the Double Circuit Option as compared to the base scenario of each utility building the WCB Project and the Evergy 161 kV Line as two separate, single-circuit facilities (the “Base Proposal”):

	Base Option No Co-Location	Co-Locate NEET Southwest ROW ³ (Evergy Design Criteria) ⁴	Co-Locate NEET Southwest ROW (NEET Southwest Design Criteria)	Co-Locate Evergy ROW ⁵ (Evergy Design Criteria)
Construction Costs	\$68.8 MM ⁶	\$79.5 MM	\$67.0 MM	\$91.5 MM
Target In-Service Date for WCB Project	Jan. 1, 2025	Q1 2026 – Q1 2027 (for WCB Project) Q4 2030 (for full Double Circuit Option)	Q1 2026 – Q1 2027 (for WCB Project) Q4 2030 (for full Double Circuit Option)	Q1 2027 – Q3 2028 (for WCB Project) Q4 2030 (for full Double Circuit Option)
Production Cost Impacts	NEET Southwest proposal resulted in \$14.5 million in production cost savings from early in-service date	(\$14.5 MM to \$29 MM) ⁷	(\$14.5 MM to \$29 MM)	(\$29 MM to \$43.5 MM)

³ Under this scenario, NEET Southwest evaluated building the WCB Project and the Evergy 161 kV Line in NEET Southwest’s ROW, which generally parallels Evergy’s existing 161 kV Line ROW.

⁴ NEET Southwest and Evergy coordinated on design specifications that would incorporate Evergy design specifications, *e.g.*, utilizing weathering steel monopoles and drilled shaft foundations. Confidential Appendix A to this report provides a summary of the various design specifications for each scenario.

⁵ Under this scenario, NEET Southwest evaluated building the WCB Project and the Evergy 161 kV Line in Evergy’s existing 161 kV Line ROW using Evergy’s design criteria.

⁶ This total includes (1) NEET Southwest’s estimated costs for the 25-mile section of the WCB Project, and (2) Evergy’s estimates costs for rebuilding this section of the Evergy 161 kV Line. Evergy provided the cost estimates and assumptions for the Evergy 161 kV Line as part of the Base Proposal.

⁷ Expected reduction in production cost savings.

In summary, NEET Southwest does not recommend that the Commission adopt the Double Circuit Option, because it will result in significant complexity, delay, and increased costs and will minimize or eliminate some of the economic benefits of the WCB Project that the Commission identified in granting NEET Southwest's Certificate of Convenience and Necessity ("CCN"). It also does not appear that the Double Circuit Option will provide a substantial benefit to landowners, at least in the near term; given Evergy's current project schedule for the rebuild of the 161 kV Line, which Evergy currently does not expect to complete until December 31, 2030, having one double circuit line along this 25-mile segment will not occur for at least several years after the WCB Project's in-service date, and the utilities will be required to obtain new right of way ("ROW") from all landowners along this section. Accordingly, in NEET Southwest's evaluation, the potential benefits of the Double Circuit Option are significantly outweighed by the costs and complexities. NEET Southwest also is concerned that the Double Circuit Option could lead to significant opposition or challenge to the WCB Project through the SPP stakeholder process or before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC").

II. Background on the Project and on Evergy's Marmaton-EDE 161 kV Line

a. Background on the Wolf Creek-Blackberry Project

The WCB Project was identified by SPP in its 2019 Integrated Transmission Plan ("ITP") Assessment as required to address multiple needs identified in the 2019 Integrated Transmission Planning ("ITP") process, including "an economic need to increase the transmission capability and relieve transmission congestion from western Kansas east to SPP load centers."⁸ Specifically, the WCB Project will connect the Wolf Creek Substation in Coffey County, Kansas, owned by Evergy and also interconnected to the Wolf Creek Nuclear Generating Station, with the Blackberry Substation in Jasper County, Missouri, owned by Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc ("AECI"). SPP's studies determined that the WCB Project is needed to relieve "historic and projected congestion" on the transmission system in this area, resolve "declining transient stability margins at the Wolf Creek nuclear plant", address historic outages on existing transmission lines within the region, and relieve overloads on the Wolf Creek 345/69 kV transformer.⁹ The Commission recognized many of these benefits in granting NEET Southwest's application for a CCN for the WCB Project.¹⁰

SPP designated the WCB Project as a Competitive Upgrade that was eligible for competitive bidding pursuant to the SPP TOSP under Attachment Y of the SPP Open Access Transmission Tariff ("SPP Tariff").¹¹ SPP issued its Request for Proposals ("RFP") for Qualified RFP Participants to submit bids for the WCB Project. NEET Southwest submitted a bid and was

⁸ CCN Order at ¶ 1.

⁹ 2019 Integrated Transmission Planning Assessment Report, Southwest Power Pool (Nov. 6, 2019) at Section 4.1.1.1, p. 52.

¹⁰ *See, for example*, CCN Order at ¶¶ 23-26.

¹¹ SPP Open Access Transmission Tariff, Sixth Revised Vol. No. 1, Attachment Y (Transmission Owner Designation Process) (effective Mar. 30, 2014).

ultimately selected by SPP's Independent Expert Panel ("IEP"). Among other things, the IEP recommended NEET Southwest's proposal due to its "very substantial savings to SPP customers" as well as a guaranteed schedule.¹² On October 26, 2021, the SPP Board voted to approve the IEP's recommendation of NEET Southwest as the Designated Transmission Owner for the WCB Project, and SPP issued a Notification to Construct the WCB Project to NEET Southwest.

On February 28, 2022, NEET Southwest submitted its application for a CCN to the Commission in Docket No. 22-NETE-419-COC. During the proceeding, Commission Staff reviewed NEET Southwest's application and recognized a number of significant benefits, both of the WCB Project in general and of NEET Southwest's application in particular. In its Report & Recommendation ("Staff's R&R"), Staff contended "that the WC-BB Project will have a positive impact on consumers in Kansas, and that ratepayer benefits from the project can be quantified."¹³ Staff also highlighted the benefits of NEET Southwest's competitive proposal, stating that "Staff views this CCN request by NEET-SW to be supportive of the benefits that can be achieved when interstate transmission construction and ownership is opened up to competitive bidding", which Staff identified to include "comprehensive and robust cost containment measures."¹⁴

In the CCN proceeding, parties negotiated and ultimately entered into a non-unanimous settlement agreement ("CCN Settlement Agreement") under which the settling parties agreed that the Commission should issue NEET Southwest a CCN for the WCB Project, subject to certain conditions. The Commission approved the CCN Settlement Agreement in the CCN Order issued August 29, 2022. In the CCN Order, the Commission found "that the [WCB Project] will have a beneficial effect on customers by lowering overall energy costs, removing inefficiency, relieving transmission congestion, and improving the reliability of the transmission system."¹⁵

Specifically, the Commission determined that the WCB Project will provide benefits by "levelizing" Locational Marginal Prices ("LMP") in the region, "causing prices that are lower to rise and those that are higher will come down."¹⁶ The Commission cited SPP's studies and Commission Staff testimony that the WCB Project would "allow[] system bulk power transfers to continue to flow east to major SPP load centers", which "will help to levelize system LMPs, low generator LMPs in the west and high load LMPs in the east, and overall system congestion while providing market efficiencies and benefits to ratepayers and transmission customers."¹⁷ The Commission found that SPP's studies had shown that the WCB Project will result in benefits by

¹² Transmission Provider Public Report, Industry Expert Panel (Oct. 12, 2021) at p. 46, filed in Docket No. 22-NETE-419-COC, Exhibit BW-5 to Direct Testimony of Becky Walding (Feb. 28, 2022).

¹³ Commission Staff's Report and Recommendation, filed in Docket No. 22-NETE-419-COC, at 10 (May 17, 2022) ("Staff R&R")

¹⁴ Staff R&R at 12-13.

¹⁵ CCN Order at ¶ 22.

¹⁶ CCN Order at ¶ 17.

¹⁷ CCN Order at ¶ 21 (citing Commission Staff Witness Justin Grady's testimony and the SPP 2019 ITP Assessment).

“reducing market price disparity, ‘levelizing wholesale energy prices by 21% on average.’”¹⁸ The Commission explained further that “[b]y alleviating energy congestion and allocating cheaper energy to the surrounding region, generators are encouraged to generate more electricity at cheaper overall costs, thereby lowering the net cost of electricity for the entire region.”¹⁹ The Commission also cited Staff Witness Justin Grady’s testimony that “removing inefficiency and removing congestion and spreading out low cost power to as much of the State as possible is a beneficial thing. Levelization also means a reduction in overall energy costs for the entire region.”²⁰ This evidence led the Commission to find that the WCB Project provided benefits to Kansas customers and supported the finding by the Commission that the WCB Project is in the public interest of the State of Kansas.

b. Background on Evergy 161 kV Line

Evergy’s 161 kV Line is the Marmaton-EDE 161 kV Line, which is a 42-mile, single-circuit, 161 kV transmission line that was originally constructed in 1965. Due to the age and condition of the line, Evergy has identified it as a potential candidate for rebuild, but Evergy has advised NEET Southwest that the exact timing of this rebuild is still unknown. The line is primarily used to provide power to southeast Kansas and in particular, the City of Pittsburg, Kansas. The Jayhawk Wind Farm, a 195 MW wind generation facility in Bourbon and Crawford counties, is connected to the 161 kV Line between the Marmaton and Franklin substations. The costs of the 161 kV Line are recovered from the Evergy Kansas Central Zone. As will be discussed in more detail below, Evergy plans to rebuild this line due to its age and condition, with construction currently anticipated to occur in the next five to ten years. At this time, Evergy plans to complete the rebuild of the 161 kV Line by December 31, 2030.

c. Double Circuit Option

In Staff’s R&R in the CCN proceeding, Staff noted that approximately 25 miles of the WCB Project’s overall route would parallel the Evergy 161 kV Line and asked the parties to consider whether the two transmission lines could be co-located and built as a double circuit transmission line. Staff stated:

One possible solution for minimizing the encumbrance of the landscape would be to require the two transmission lines to be constructed as a double circuit system where the transmission operators share a common set of structures or poles.... [I]f the Commission approves the proposed CCN, Staff recommends the Commission require NEET-SW to address the option of building the

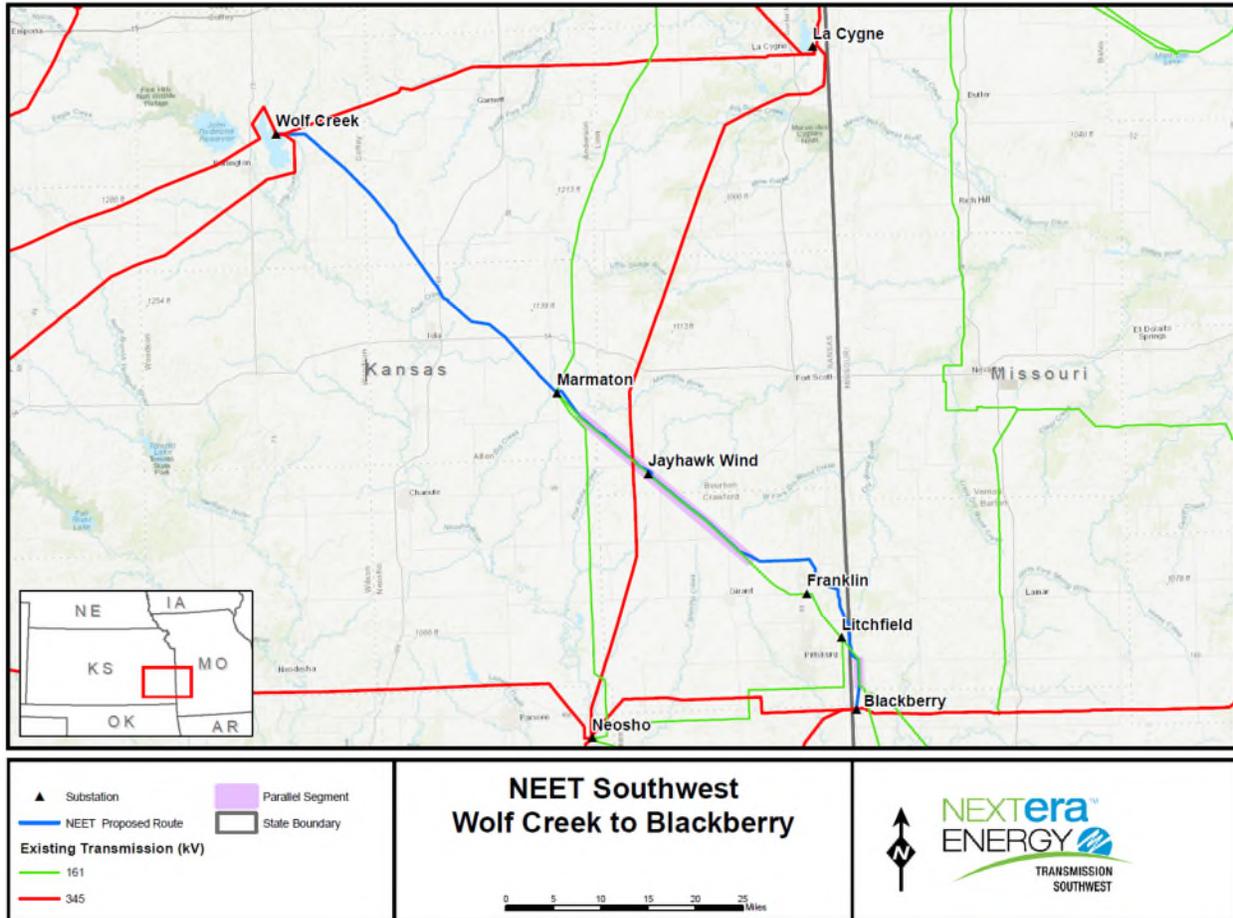
¹⁸ CCN Order at ¶ 17 (citing Commission Staff Witness Grady’s testimony in support of the CCN Settlement Agreement).

¹⁹ CCN Order at ¶ 18.

²⁰ CCN Order at ¶ 19.

proposed line as a double circuit line in it[s] subsequent line siting application.²¹

A high-level map showing the 25-mile segment that Staff recommended be considered for co-location is provided below:



In the CCN Settlement Agreement, the parties agreed that NEET Southwest would “consider and address” this option as part of its line siting application, “subject to receiving necessary approvals for a change in project scope from SPP and necessary agreements from Eversource.”²² In its CCN Order, the Commission provided additional direction to NEET Southwest and Eversource and modified this settlement term as follows:

[T]he Commission conditions approval of the Settlement Agreement and the grant of the CCN hereunder upon compliance by NEET Southwest and Eversource to coordinate, cooperate, and jointly evaluate the technical and financial feasibility of the option of double circuiting this 25 mile portion of the [WCB Project], and to

²¹ Staff R&R at 22-23.

²² CCN Settlement Agreement at ¶ 10(d).

file the results of said evaluation with the Commission as part of the line siting docket to be filed pursuant to K.S.A. 66-1,177, et seq....

As discussed above, the Commission desires a comprehensive evaluation of this double circuit option, as it appears to have the potential to reduce total costs, landowner encumbrances, and environmental impacts along the preliminary route of this line. Accordingly, NEET Southwest and Evergy shall consider at least (but not limited to) the following factors in this evaluation: 1) Detailed cost estimates of the cost to double circuit this portion of the line; 2) Cost sharing arrangements/agreements between NEET Southwest and Evergy pertaining to the upgrade costs and all aspects of operation and maintenance of this double-circuited portion of the line; 3) Easement sharing agreements and O&M responsibility sharing agreements for the double circuit portion of the line; 4) Any revisions to construction timelines (of either standalone project) necessary to accommodate Evergy or NEET Southwest's construction schedule for this portion of the line; and 5) Any engineering analysis necessary to determine construction standards for this portion of the line. To be clear, the timelines for approval of a line siting docket as provided by K.S.A. 66-1,178(b) shall not begin to toll until the NEET Southwest has filed a comprehensive evaluation of the option to double-circuit this portion.

Accordingly, the Commission directs Evergy and NEET Southwest to collaboratively work together in good faith, including but not limited to sharing internal information and resources, to fully consider, study, and evaluate the double circuit option in a timely manner. The results of such review must be presented for consideration as part of an evaluation of the proper route for the NEET Southwest's line siting filing. The Commission finds this condition necessary to protect the rights of all interested parties and those of the general public pursuant to K.S.A. 66-1,180.²³

Following this order, on September 13, 2022, Evergy filed a Petition for Reconsideration ("Evergy PFR"), seeking to clarify the scope of its obligations under the CCN Order. Evergy noted that, while "Evergy accepted the obligation to collaborate with NEET Southwest to allow NEET Southwest to consider and address as part of its line siting proceeding the double circuit option[,]...[t]he responsibility for the Project, as well as the evidentiary basis upon which a future siting application would be filed, remained solely with NEET Southwest."²⁴ Evergy then explained that its "understanding of its commitment to participate in a good faith assessment of the double circuit option would include Evergy providing NEET Southwest with Evergy's engineering standards and jointly assessing impacts to cost, landowners, operations and maintenance, construction schedules, reliability, and availability of the lines for this option."²⁵ To

²³ CCN Order at ¶¶ 97-99.

²⁴ Evergy PFR at 3.

²⁵ *Id.*

the extent that the Commission declined to provide Evergy's requested clarification, Evergy sought reconsideration of the CCN Order, asserting:

This is not Evergy's project; Evergy is only an intervenor in this proceeding and would only be an intervenor in a subsequent line siting proceeding. If the Order is intended to cast Evergy into the role of *de facto* partner to NEET Southwest or impose upon Evergy an obligation to create and/or present evidentiary proof to support NEET Southwest's certificate or siting permit, Evergy objects to that aspect of the Order....²⁶

On September 29, 2022, the Commission issued an order in response to Evergy's PFR and confirmed: "The Commission finds that Evergy's understanding of its obligations to participate in good faith as described in Section II of its PFR is accurate."²⁷ Therefore, the Commission stated it did not find a need to address Evergy's request for reconsideration.²⁸

III. Description of NEET Southwest's Evaluation Process

Consistent with the Settlement Agreement and the Commission's direction in the CCN Order, NEET Southwest and its subject-matter experts ("SME") and consultants performed a comprehensive evaluation of the potential Double Circuit Option. Specifically, NEET Southwest engaged its Engineer of Record for the WCB Project, Burns & McDonnell Engineering Company, Inc. ("Burns & McDonnell"), to perform an engineering analysis of the potential to co-locate the lines, and NEET Southwest's internal engineers and Burns & McDonnell developed conceptual engineering designs for potential double circuit alignments. NEET Southwest then utilized Burns & McDonnell's engineering analysis to prepare preliminary cost estimates. In addition, NEET Southwest engaged Doyle Land Services ("Doyle") to evaluate potential ROW costs, as well as utilized internal and external legal counsel, internal environmental, engineering, regulatory affairs, and operations personnel to evaluate the various aspects of the Double Circuit Option.

NEET Southwest also engaged extensively with Evergy to gather information and to review and analyze the Double Circuit Option. NEET Southwest and Evergy engaged in at least fourteen separate meetings to discuss items such as engineering design specifications, reliability, routing, real estate agreements and condemnation, economic impacts, landowner impacts, cost, cost allocation, schedule, and O&M activities.

NEET Southwest also met with SPP staff in order to discuss the Double Circuit Option and additional analysis that may be required from SPP. In addition, NEET Southwest and Evergy met with KCC Staff to provide updates on the analysis and evaluation, as required by the CCN Order.²⁹

²⁶ *Id.* at 4.

²⁷ 22-NETE-419-COC, Order on Evergy's September 13, 2022 Petition for Reconsideration at ¶¶ 5, 8 (issued Sept. 29, 2022) ("Order on Evergy PFR") at ¶ 9.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ CCN Order at ¶ 97.

IV. SPP Evaluation of the Double Circuit Option

During NEET Southwest’s coordination with SPP, SPP advised NEET Southwest that: (1) the SPP Board will be required to adjust the date by which regulatory approvals for the WCB Project are to be obtained, which is identified as January 1, 2023 in the Notification to Construct (“NTC”) that SPP issued to NEET Southwest;³⁰ and (2) if the Double Circuit Option is adopted by the Commission, SPP Business Practice Manual (“BPM”) 7060 would require SPP to perform a technical evaluation of whether that constitutes a “change in scope” to the NTC that would necessitate a restudy of the WCB Project.³¹ SPP advised that its technical evaluation could be performed relatively quickly (based on other workload and available resources) if the changes to the Project are not significant. Section 6.6 of BPM 7060 identifies “changes in scope” as including, but not being limited to changes in:

- Topology, including routing changes and interconnection point changes
- Operating characteristics
- Changes in load
- Changes in generation
- Changes in local planning criteria
- Modeling errors
- Unavoidable need for modifications in distribution.

This section further requires that any changes in scope must:

- Provide comparable or improved level of electrical performance
- Not cause adverse impact to Service Agreements or other contractually committed service sold under the SPP OATT, and
- Not render sold firm transmission service undeliverable.

Section 6.7 of BPM 7060 further provides that modifications to NTCs may be required due to required changes in project schedule. This section of the BPM also provides that the following items are “not expected to cause a change in an NTC/NTC-[Conditions] due to the fact that time delays associated with these causes are handled through a mitigation plan or re-dispatch option, as appropriate:”

- Not enough time to complete a project based on SPP’s Need Date, and
- Unforeseen delays such as
 - Regulatory
 - Siting
 - Construction
 - Equipment delivery

³⁰ NEET Southwest submitted a request to SPP to modify the NTC on December 21, 2022.

³¹ SPP Business Practice Manual 7060, at <https://www.spp.org/documents/63847/spp%20oatt%20business%20practices%2020210120.pdf> (last visited Dec. 20, 2020). BPM 7060, § 6 addresses modifications to NTCs.

If SPP's technical evaluation determines that the Double Circuit Option represents a "change in scope" that requires restudy of the WCB Project, SPP advised that it could request approval from its Board to perform an off-cycle study or, if the Board did not approve an off-cycle study, SPP would be required to restudy any scope change through its 2024 ITP evaluation. In the event that the WCB Project is evaluated through the 2024 ITP process, such evaluation would not be completed until October 2024.

This potential further evaluation creates uncertainty with the potential in-service date for the Double Circuit Option. If SPP determines that the Double Circuit Option constitutes a change in scope, that a restudy is required, and that such restudy will go through the 2024 ITP process that must be approved by the SPP Board, that would delay NEET Southwest's ability to finalize procurement, land acquisition, and construction start for this section of the WCB Project. As discussed in more detail below, such a scenario would result in significant delays in the in-service date of the WCB Project. In the 2024 ITP process, SPP will determine what is the best project to serve the identified needs. This could include continuing with the WCB project, a rescoping or even a cancellation of the WCB project. If SPP is asked to consider a double circuit WCB Project, cost allocation between a zonal and a regional project is expected to be a concern for stakeholders as discussed in further detail below.

V. Description of the Double Circuit Option

As described above, NEET Southwest engaged Burns & McDonnell to prepare conceptual engineering design inputs for the Double Circuit Option, which NEET Southwest's internal Engineering and Construction team used to prepare cost and schedule estimates and to evaluate the Double Circuit Option. During the parties' coordination process, Evergy requested that any Double Circuit Option utilize Evergy design specifications and standards for the 161 kV portion of the Double Circuit Option. In general, Evergy expressed a preference for steel monopoles, as it currently does not own or maintain concrete monopoles, and NEET Southwest and Burns & McDonnell developed coordinated design criteria, which met Evergy's provided specifications for the options utilizing steel monopoles. A summary of the specifications for the various different options is provided as Confidential Appendix A to this report.

In addition, to provide a more cost-effective option, NEET Southwest also evaluated the Double Circuit Option in NEET Southwest's ROW using NEET Southwest's design specifications, a summary of which also is included in Confidential Appendix A. However, Evergy has advised NEET Southwest that it does not agree with certain aspects of NEET Southwest's design specifications. If NEET Southwest and Evergy developed coordinated design specifications for concrete monopoles, that would be expected to increase the cost of that option, as discussed in more detail below.

A summary of the various potential alignments is provided below.

a. Building the Double Circuit Option in NEET Southwest’s ROW Using the Evergy Design Criteria (Steel Monopoles)

At a high level, this alignment would consist of constructing 25.2 miles of double-circuit 345 kV/161 kV transmission line installed on weathering steel monopoles in the new NEET Southwest 150-foot ROW, located generally adjacent to the existing Evergy 161 kV Line ROW. This ROW is the same as in NEET Southwest’s current Proposed Route, and NEET Southwest is already in the process of negotiating and securing voluntary easement option agreements for this section of the ROW.³² NEET Southwest assumed that:

- NEET Southwest would construct and own the steel pole structures, which would generally consist of weathering steel monopoles that would be 120-175 feet high with an average pole height of 155 feet above ground. The steel pole specification was provided by Evergy. Ownership and cost division between NEET Southwest and Evergy has yet to be determined.
- The steel poles would be constructed on drilled shaft foundations, and average span lengths would be approximately 900 feet, in order to meet the Evergy design specifications.
- NEET Southwest would install and own the 345 kV wire, which would consist of double-bundled 1590 kcmil “Falcon” ACSS/TW (horizontal bundle), as well as two OPGW wires. Ownership and cost division of the OPGW wires between NEET Southwest and Evergy has yet to be determined but would likely own one wire each.
- NEET Southwest would install and Evergy would own the 161 kV wire, which NEET Southwest assumed would be double-bundled 795 kcmil “Drake” ACSR (horizontal bundle).
- Both the 345 kV and 161 kV circuits would be supported by glass suspension insulators on arms.

A diagram of Burns & McDonnell’s conceptual engineering design and example structure drawings for this alignment are provided in Confidential Appendix B.

As will be described in more detail throughout this report, constructing the Double Circuit Option in NEET Southwest’s ROW would impact the costs, schedule, and economic benefits of the WCB Project. In summary, NEET Southwest estimates:

- Combined NEET Southwest and Evergy construction costs of approximately \$79.5 million (for the 25.2-mile segments of the WCB Project and the 161 kV Line), or approximately \$10.7 million more than the Base Proposal;

³² This 25-mile section of the WCB Project would cross 80 parcels in Allen, Bourbon, and Crawford counties. ***

- An in-service date for the WCB Project ranging from the first quarter of 2026 to the first quarter of 2027, depending upon how quickly SPP's evaluation process and the parties' joint land acquisition efforts could occur;
- An in-service date for the full Double Circuit Option (including Evergy's rebuilt 161 kV Line) in the fourth quarter of 2030, based upon Evergy's currently projected schedule for its rebuild project; and
- A resulting decrease in production cost benefits of the WCB Project of approximately \$14.5 million to \$29 million on average, depending upon the actual in-service date.³³

b. Building the Double Circuit Option in NEET Southwest's ROW Using NEET Southwest Specifications (Concrete Monopoles)

For comparison, NEET Southwest also evaluated building the Double Circuit Option in NEET Southwest's ROW using NEET Southwest's original design specifications for the WCB Project, primarily using concrete monopoles. Evergy advised NEET Southwest that this design does not meet Evergy's design specifications for the 161 kV portion of the Double Circuit Option. However, for comparison purposes, NEET Southwest assumed that:

- NEET Southwest would construct and own the concrete monopole structures, which would range from 105 to 115 feet high above ground (the total pole lengths would be 130 to 140 feet with a 25-foot embedded foundation).
- The concrete monopoles would be direct embedded, and average span lengths would be approximately 650 feet.
- NEET Southwest would install and own the 345 kV wire, which would consist of double-bundled 1590 kcmil "Falcon" ACSS/TW (horizontal bundle), as well as two OPGW wires. Ownership and cost division of the OPGW wires between NEET Southwest and Evergy has yet to be determined, but each utility would likely own one wire each.
- NEET Southwest would install and Evergy would own the 161 kV wire, which NEET Southwest assumed would be double-bundled 795 kcmil "Drake" ACSR (horizontal bundle).
- Both the 345 kV and 161 kV circuits would be supported primarily by polymer braced post insulators with polymer suspension and dead-end insulators where needed.

A conceptual engineering diagram and example structure drawings for this alignment are provided in Confidential Appendix B.

Utilizing NEET Southwest's design specifications for the Double Circuit Option in NEET Southwest's ROW would result in lower combined project costs but would still be expected to result in schedule delay and increased uncertainty. As noted above, this potential design utilizes

³³ NEET Southwest assumed a reduction in production cost benefits of approximately \$14.5 million for every 12 months that the WCB Project is delayed beyond NEET Southwest's originally proposed in-service date of January 1, 2025.

NEET Southwest's original project design specifications and does not include all of Evergy's design specifications for the 161 kV line. NEET Southwest estimates:

- Combined NEET Southwest and Evergy construction costs of approximately \$67.0 million (for the 25-mile segment of the WCB Project and the Evergy 161 kV Line), which is just slightly less than the Base Proposal costs of \$68.8 million;
- An in-service date for the WCB Project ranging from the first quarter of 2026 to the first quarter of 2027, depending on the time needed for SPP's evaluation process and the parties' joint land acquisition efforts;
- An in-service date for the full Double Circuit Option (including Evergy's rebuilt 161 kV Line) in the fourth quarter of 2030, based upon Evergy's currently projected schedule for its rebuild project; and
- A resulting decrease in production cost benefits of the WCB Project of approximately \$14.5 million to \$29 million on average, depending upon the actual in-service date.³⁴

At the time this report was finalized, Evergy has advised NEET Southwest that because not all of the Evergy 161 kV standards were incorporated into this design, Evergy is unable to support this option. In particular, there are certain aspects of NEET Southwest's concrete pole design that Evergy expressed should be modified, including the use of davit arms and suspension insulators, self-supporting structures for angle structures, tension limits on the 161 kV circuit, and the type of shield wire utilized. NEET Southwest expects that any coordinated design criteria for concrete monopoles would increase the costs of this option.

c. Building the Double Circuit Option in Evergy's Existing ROW Using Evergy Design Criteria (Steel Monopoles)

NEET Southwest's team also evaluated whether it would be feasible to co-locate the WCB Project within the existing Evergy 161 kV Line ROW. Constructing the Double Circuit Option within Evergy's existing ROW would consist of installing 23.8 miles of double-circuit 345 kV/161 kV transmission line on weathering steel monopoles placed on drilled shaft foundations located in Evergy's existing ROW for the existing 161 kV Line, which Evergy confirmed is 75-100 feet along this 25-mile segment. NEET Southwest would expect that the double circuit line would be centered along the eastern leg of Evergy's existing 161 kV H-frame structures, with the new structures offset by approximately 10 feet from the existing Evergy structures.

In order to extend the existing ROW to the 150 feet required to accommodate the 345 kV circuit, NEET Southwest would need to acquire additional ROW, generally on either side of the existing Evergy ROW. In this alignment, NEET Southwest assumed that:

- NEET Southwest would install and own the weathering steel monopole structures, which would be 120-170 feet high with an average pole height of 145 feet above ground. The

³⁴ NEET Southwest assumed a reduction in production cost benefits of approximately \$14.5 million for every 12 months that the WCB Project is delayed beyond NEET Southwest's originally proposed in-service date of January 1, 2025.

steel pole specification was provided by Evergy. Ownership and cost division between NEET Southwest and Evergy has yet to be determined.

- The steel poles would be constructed on drilled shaft foundations, and average span lengths would be approximately 600-650 feet as directed by Evergy's design specifications.
- NEET Southwest would install and own the 345 kV wires, which would consist of double-bundled 1590 kcmil "Falcon" ACSS/TW (horizontal bundle) and install two OPGW wires. Ownership and cost division of the OPGW wires between NEET Southwest and Evergy has yet to be determined, but each utility would likely own one wire each.
- NEET Southwest would install and Evergy would own the 161 kV wire, which NEET Southwest assumed would be double-bundled 795 kcmil "Drake" ACSR (horizontal bundle).
- Both the 345 kV and 161 kV circuits will be supported by glass suspension insulators on arms.
- This option assumes that the drilled shaft foundations are installed while the 161 kV Line remains in-service to minimize outage requirements.

A diagram of Burns & McDonnell's conceptual engineering design and example structure drawings for this alignment are provided in Confidential Appendix B.

For a number of reasons, constructing the Double Circuit Option within Evergy's ROW would lead to even further schedule delay and reduced economic benefits for the WCB Project, and therefore is not a reasonable alternative. First, constructing the Double Circuit Option in Evergy's ROW is expected to require a significantly longer construction period, because NEET Southwest would be limited to constructing the Double Circuit Option during off-peak periods when Evergy takes its 161 kV Line out of service due to safety requirements. Evergy has advised that its outage windows would occur in September to June timeframes. Depending upon the amount of time it takes for SPP to evaluate the Double Circuit Option (with SPP's evaluation potentially not being concluded until October 2024 if SPP requires the WCB Project to go through a full restudy through the 2024 ITP process), and based on other design, engineering, land acquisition, and procurement activities, NEET Southwest estimates that it would not be able to begin construction within Evergy's ROW until 2025 at the earliest and as late as September 2026. For these reasons, NEET Southwest expects that building the Double Circuit Option in Evergy's ROW would delay the in-service date of the WCB Project until the first quarter of 2027 through potentially as late as the third quarter of 2028. Constructing the Double Circuit Option in Evergy's ROW also would be expected to further increase construction costs, as NEET Southwest expects that its construction crews would be required to mobilize and demobilize multiple times to accommodate Evergy's outage windows and potentially outage recalls.

In sum, NEET Southwest estimates:

- Combined NEET Southwest and Evergy construction costs of approximately \$91.5 million (for the 25-mile segment of the WCB Project and the 161 kV Line), or approximately \$22.7 million more costs than the Base Proposal;

- An in-service date for the WCB Project ranging from the first quarter of 2027 to the third quarter of 2028, depending upon how quickly SPP’s evaluation, joint land acquisition efforts, and other design and procurement activities can occur;
- An in-service date for the full Double Circuit Option (including Evergy’s rebuilt 161 kV Line) in the fourth quarter of 2030, based upon Evergy’s currently projected schedule for its rebuild project; and
- A resulting decrease in production cost benefits of the WCB Project of approximately \$29 million to \$43.5 million, depending upon the actual in-service date.

IV. Cost Estimates

After Burns & McDonnell developed the technical specifications, NEET Southwest’s internal estimating team prepared cost estimates for the different alignments and different utility specifications. These cost estimates are provided below.

	Base Option No Co-Location	Co-Locate NEET Southwest ROW (Evergy Design Criteria for Double Circuit)	Co-Locate NEET Southwest ROW (NEET Southwest Design Criteria for Double Circuit)	Co-Locate Evergy ROW (Evergy Design Criteria for Double Circuit)
Scope	NEET SW and Evergy single circuit lines in separate (adjacent) ROWs	Construct double-circuit line along NEET SW’s new 150’ ROW, using Evergy design criteria (steel poles, drilled shaft foundations, glass insulators)	Construct double-circuit line along NEET SW’s new 150’ ROW, using original NEET SW specifications (concrete monopoles, direct embedded foundations, polymer insulators)	Construct double-circuit line along Evergy’s existing ROW (expanded to 150’), using Evergy design criteria (steel poles, drilled shaft foundations, glass insulators)
Construction Costs	\$68.8 MM	\$79.5 MM	\$67.0 MM	\$91.5 MM

For reference, NEET Southwest also is providing the cost estimate for the Base Proposal (which consists of NEET Southwest and Evergy each constructing their respective projects as single-circuit projects on adjacent ROWs). These cost estimates incorporate a budgetary cost estimate provided by Evergy for the rebuild of this section of its 161 kV Line.

Scope	Base Options Evergy Rebuild & NEET SW New 345kV	NEET Southwest Base	Evergy Base
Labor	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***
Material	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***
Engineering	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***
Right-of-Way	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***
Contingency	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***	*** [REDACTED] ***
Total Costs	\$68.8 MM	\$30.6 MM	\$38.2 MM

Confidential Appendix C to this report provides more detailed cost estimates for the different alignments.

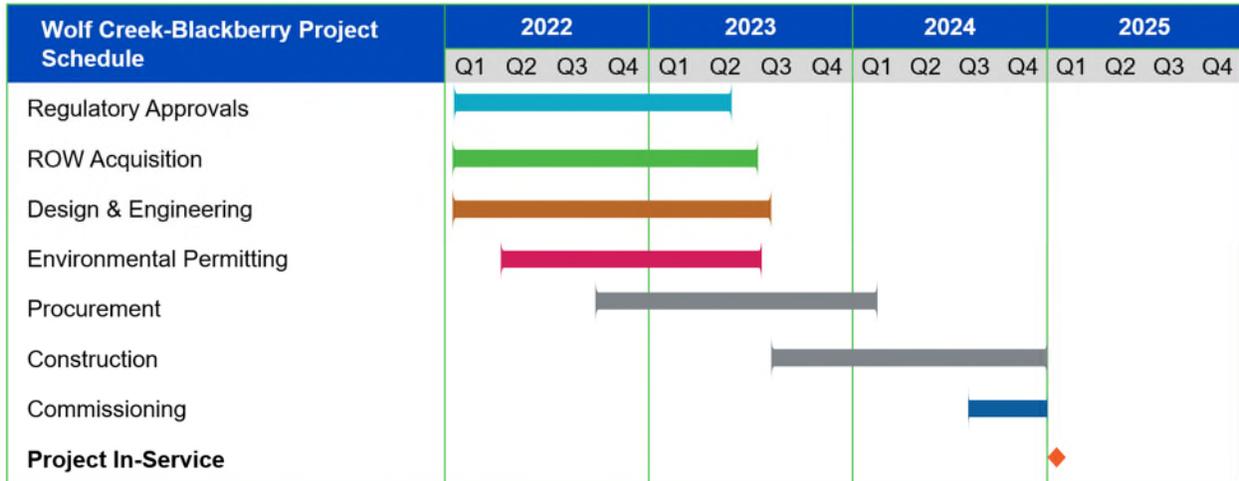
V. Construction Schedule Impacts

A. Current Projected Project Schedules

i. WCB Project

In its Request for Proposals for the Project, SPP identified a project need date of January 1, 2026. In its bid to SPP, NEET Southwest proposed an in-service date of January 1, 2025, a full 365 days sooner than SPP’s identified need date. Doing so provides SPP ratepayers with approximately \$14.5 million economic benefits in present value production cost savings to SPP ratepayers.

To achieve this January 1, 2025 in-service date, NEET Southwest’s high-level construction schedule for the WCB Project is as follows:



ii. Evergy 161 kV Line

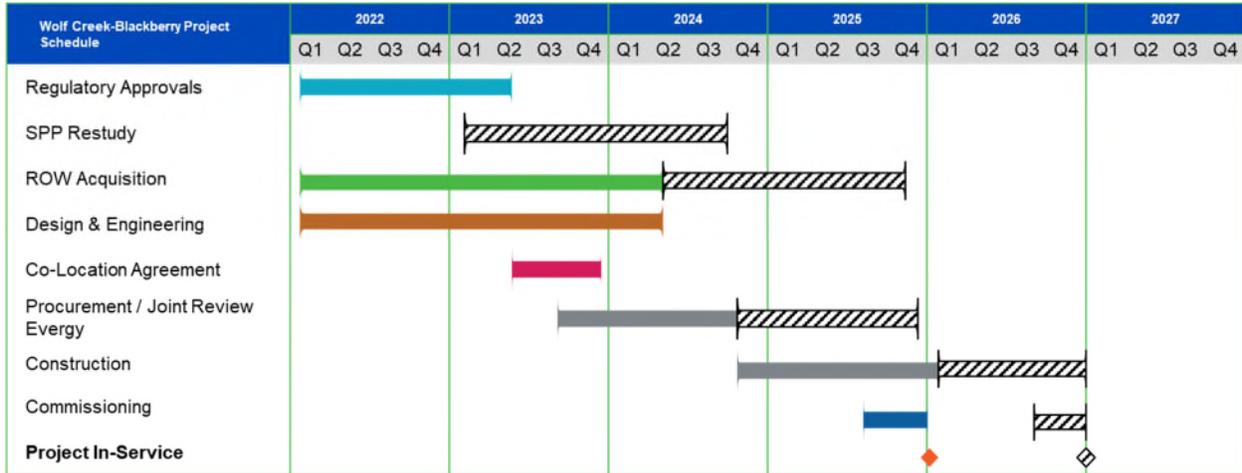
Evergy has advised NEET Southwest that it currently plans to rebuild the 161 kV Line in segments, allowing it to take sections of the line out of service at a time in order to minimize outages and disruptions to the 250 MVA of load it is capable of serving and the 190 MW of generation that is interconnected to the line. Evergy currently plans first to rebuild the Marmaton-Jayhawk segment, taking this section out of service in January 2025 and placing it back into service in June 2025. Evergy then expects to take the Jayhawk-Franklin line out of service in January 2030 and place it back into service in June 2030. Evergy has informed NEET Southwest that, when it takes the 161 kV line out of service, it will include recall time to allow it to place the line back in service in case of a need on the Evergy system. Evergy’s schedule is tentative and could be further delayed depending on the varying needs on the overall Evergy system.

B. Construction Schedule Impacts of the Double Circuit Option

i. Building the Double Circuit Option in the NEET Southwest ROW

Building the Double Circuit Option would have significant schedule impacts, for a number of reasons. To construct the Double Circuit Option within NEET Southwest’s ROW (whether using Evergy’s or NEET Southwest’s design criteria), NEET Southwest expects that would extend the schedule for the WCB Project by a minimum of approximately 12 to 24 months, depending primarily on the length of time needed for SPP to restudy the WCB Project and for NEET Southwest and Evergy to jointly acquire necessary rights to the shared ROW. Additional time also would be required for NEET Southwest and Evergy to redesign and reengineer both the WCB Project and the 161 kV Line as a double-circuit facility, to negotiate and enter into final coordination and joint use agreements, and to obtain additional permits from the Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Water Resources, as described below. It is important to note that all of these additional steps and required coordination with Evergy and other external stakeholders increase the uncertainty of the schedule and therefore increase the risk of unanticipated complications, further potential delay, and increased costs. Based upon this additional time that would be required to complete these additional steps, NEET Southwest would

expect the WCB Project built in NEET Southwest’s ROW to be placed into service sometime between the first quarter of 2026 and first quarter of 2027, and, based upon Evergy’s current project schedule for the 161 kV Line, the full Double Circuit Option would not be in service until the fourth quarter of 2030.



This later in-service date for the WCB Project would eliminate the \$14.5 million in production cost savings associated with NEET Southwest’s originally proposed January 2025 in-service date for its Proposed Route and would potentially further reduce the economic benefits of the WCB Project (by an estimated \$14.5 million for every 12 months the WCB Project is delayed).

ii. Building the Double Circuit Option in the Evergy ROW

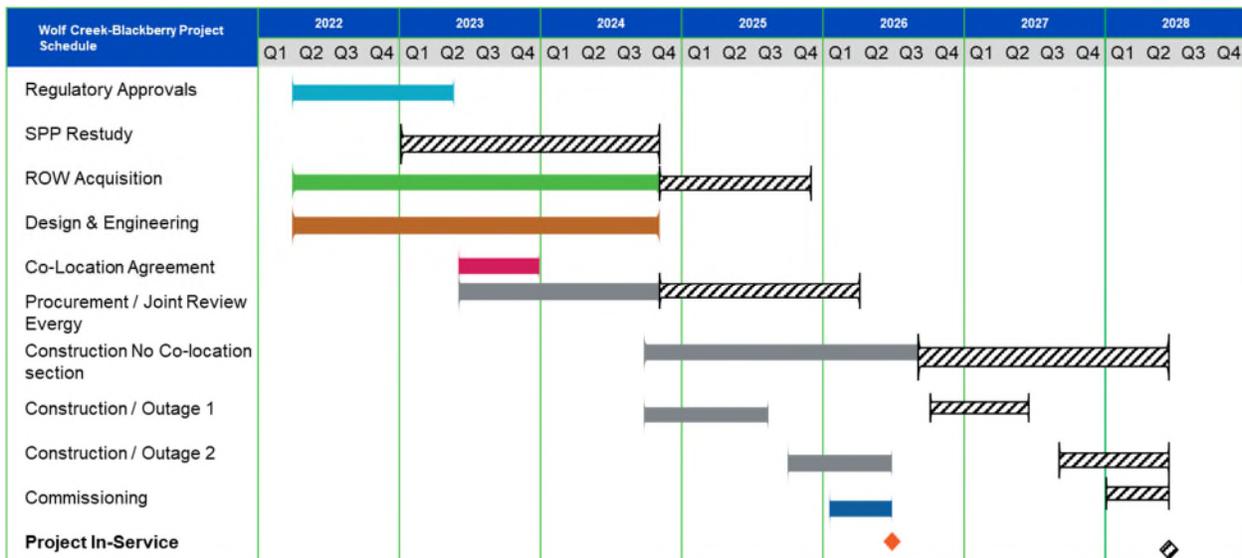
Utilizing the existing Evergy ROW would create even further schedule delay to the WCB Project. In addition to the additional schedule items noted above for the NEET Southwest ROW, building the co-located project in Evergy’s existing ROW would mean that NEET Southwest would be unable to begin construction on this section of the WCB Project until 2025 at the earliest, based upon Evergy’s current construction schedule for its rebuild, and potentially as late as September 2026, depending upon how long SPP takes to evaluate and potentially restudy the WCB Project. This would delay NEET Southwest’s construction start date for this portion of the WCB Project by up to 18 months. Evergy has advised that it does not expect to be able to expedite this construction start date because it does not yet have funds allocated for the rebuild project.

In addition, building the Double Circuit Option in Evergy’s ROW, with its existing 161 kV Line still in service, would require NEET Southwest to construct the WCB Project in at least two separate mobilizations, during off-peak periods (September to June) when Evergy could take its existing 161 kV Line out of service. Constructing the new double-circuit line in Evergy’s ROW while Evergy’s 161 kV Line is in service was not determined to be a safe or reliable construction option by either Evergy or NEET Southwest. This is expected to require at least two construction mobilizations and demobilizations, which would lengthen NEET Southwest’s construction schedule by approximately 16 months, based on the current outage schedule, with the actual construction timeline dependent upon how many mobilizations ultimately would be required. Evergy also has explained that it may need to recall the 161 kV Line from outages during its

construction schedule, which adds uncertainty to this construction timeline. NEET Southwest also would require additional time to obtain Lidar data for the expanded ROW and would require additional permits from the Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Water Resources, as discussed below.

For these reasons, NEET Southwest would expect construction of the Double Circuit Option in the Evergy ROW to result in a minimum approximately 24-month schedule delay to the WCB Project’s originally proposed in-service date, for an expected in-service date for the WCB Project of the first quarter of 2027. To the extent that a full SPP restudy is required and the results of that are not available until October 2024, NEET Southwest expects that would push the in-service date of the WCB Project until the third quarter of 2028. These delays result in a further reduction to the production cost savings from the WCB Project.

Also, as noted above, because Evergy does not expect to rebuild the Jayhawk-Franklin section of the 161 kV Line until December 2030, the in-service date for the full Double Circuit Option would not occur until the fourth quarter of 2030.



VI. Cost Sharing Arrangements and Agreements Pertaining to Upgrade Costs and O&M Costs

The Commission's CCN Order also directed NEET Southwest and Evergy to address cost sharing arrangements and agreements for upgrade costs and O&M costs. The parties agreed that each utility would be responsible for the costs of the facilities, equipment, and ROW that it owns. As described above, ultimate ownership of the Double Circuit Option project facilities would need to be negotiated and agreed to by NEET Southwest and Evergy as part of any cost sharing arrangement.

It is important to note that the WCB Project is a regionally allocated project under the SPP OATT, meaning the costs of the WCB Project will be allocated across the entire SPP region, with Kansas customers paying approximately 16 percent of the WCB Project's costs. The Evergy 161 kV Line rebuild project is a zonally allocated project, the costs of which will be allocated exclusively to customers in the Evergy Kansas Central zone. If the Commission selects the Double Circuit Option, NEET Southwest is concerned that may result in the shifting of costs of the Evergy 161 kV Line from a zonal allocation to Evergy customers to a regional allocation to the entire SPP footprint and customers. NEET Southwest expects that SPP stakeholders may object to this, potentially leading them to challenge the WCB Project at SPP or at FERC, leading to litigation and associated delays, costs, and possible project cancellation.

In addition, each utility will submit its ultimate costs to FERC for inclusion in each utility's respective Transmission Formula Rate. NEET Southwest and Evergy believe it would be an issue of first impression at FERC to have a regionally allocated and a zonally allocated project located on shared structures, which could result in costly litigation with interested parties regarding how costs are divided between the two utilities and which costs are allocated zonally vs. regionally.

Specifically with respect to O&M, the parties agreed that NEET Southwest would be responsible for all operations and maintenance of the poles, the 345 kV conductor, and all components associated with the 345 kV conductor, while Evergy would be responsible for operations and maintenance of the 161 kV conductor and components associated with the 161 kV conductor. Each utility would continue to confirm its compliance with various O&M and NERC requirements. The parties expect that ROW maintenance costs (such as vegetation management costs) would be split by Evergy and NEET Southwest for the shared 25-mile section, and any O&M agreement will provide a mechanism for how NEET Southwest and Evergy will determine the most appropriate O&M option for this work.

VII. Land Acquisition and Easement Sharing Agreements

As directed by the CCN Order, NEET Southwest and Evergy discussed how land would be acquired and easements would be shared under a Double Circuit Option. Both parties agreed that each utility would need to acquire its own rights to the shared ROW in order to have the necessary rights to access the respective facilities.

To execute the Double Circuit Option using the NEET Southwest ROW, NEET Southwest would acquire the ROW in its currently contemplated ROW, located adjacent to the existing

Evergy 161 kV Line ROW.³⁵ NEET Southwest would then anticipate transferring rights to the ROW to Evergy.

To execute the Double Circuit Option using the Evergy ROW, NEET Southwest and/or Evergy would need to acquire 50 feet of additional ROW, as the existing Evergy 161 kV Line uses 100 feet of ROW and the Double Circuit Option requires 150 feet of ROW. Accordingly, the Double Circuit Option using the Evergy ROW would require renegotiating easements along the entire co-located line.

To the extent that the new ROW could not be obtained voluntarily, and eminent domain would be necessary to obtain the ROW, Evergy and NEET Southwest discussed whether both utilities would need to separately condemn parcels, in order for each utility to acquire the necessary land rights. Kansas statutes allow public utilities to transfer property taken by eminent domain to the extent that the property continues to be used for the operation of facilities necessary for the provision of utility services. However, the Kansas eminent domain statutes also require the “purpose of the taking” to be defined at the outset of the condemnation proceeding. NEET Southwest has not identified any co-located transmission projects owned by two different entities in Kansas, and thus, there is no precedent that NEET Southwest could identify for how Kansas courts would view this requirement and thus a lack of certainty as to whether one or two separate condemnation proceedings would be required. This uncertainty increases the risk of schedule delay for the Double Circuit Option.

Specifically, under Kansas condemnation law, the intended use of the ROW must be defined upfront and cannot be expanded without a further condemnation process. K.S.A. 26-502 requires the condemnation petition to include the “purpose of the taking” and the “nature of the interest to be taken” among other details. Further, the report of the appraisers must show what is taken and what the landowners part with. Kansas Courts have held that “[n]othing is taken by implication or intendment,” and “[t]he landowners may rely implicitly on the report filed [which] ... becomes the evidence and the only evidence of the [appraisers’] doings.”³⁶ Accordingly, the condemnation proceeding must contain a clear record of the intended use by Evergy and NEET Southwest. As noted above, NEET Southwest has not identified any precedent for how to make such a record. However, it may be possible for Evergy to intervene in NEET Southwest’s condemnation case and make a record of its intended use. Alternatively (or in addition), NEET Southwest and Evergy could enter into an agreement regarding the shared use of the ROW in advance and submit that agreement to the court as a record of the intended use. If a proper record of the “purpose of the taking” is made, the Kansas condemnation statutes allow public utilities to

³⁵ As noted above, NEET Southwest has already begun voluntary negotiations for easement option agreements along this 25-mile segment, and to date, has acquired options for *** [REDACTED] *** along this segment.

³⁶ *Sutton v. Frazier*, 183 Kan. 33, 45, 325 P.2d 338 (1958).

transfer interests, so long as the property is used for the operation of facilities necessary for the provision of service.³⁷

This approach of using a single condemnation proceeding for both transmission projects entails risk. NEET Southwest has not identified any similar proceedings in Kansas, and the courts could reject the approach as speculative or unfair to the landowners. An alternative approach would be dual condemnation proceedings, such that NEET Southwest and Evergy each would file its own condemnation proceeding for the necessary rights. In advance of dual condemnation proceedings, NEET Southwest and Evergy could enter into an accommodation agreement that defines the rights of each party to access and utilize the co-located ROW, so there is no confusion about whether one condemnation is superior to the other. In a scenario where dual condemnations are required, NEET Southwest believes that it is likely to add additional time to the schedule. As described above, the increased risk around land acquisition and condemnation is one of the components driving a longer construction period and later in-service date for the Double Circuit Option.

NEET Southwest also evaluated whether a Double Circuit Option could be located in Evergy's existing ROW. In this alignment, NEET Southwest would expect that Evergy would retain its rights to its existing ROW and NEET Southwest would need to acquire additional ROW to expand the existing ROW to 150 feet. NEET Southwest would expect that the double circuit line would be located in the center of the expanded 150-foot ROW, offset by approximately 10 feet from the existing Evergy 161 kV Line structures. In this scenario, NEET Southwest would have to acquire additional ROW on either side of the existing ROW to expand the total ROW out 75 feet on either side of the new centerline. Even under this arrangement, NEET Southwest and Evergy both would require their own rights to utilize the existing Evergy ROW, which would require Evergy to either transfer a portion of its existing rights to NEET Southwest (if permissible under Evergy's existing easement agreements) or NEET Southwest to negotiate separately with the landowners (and potentially condemn any landowners with which it could not reach voluntary agreement). As explained above, if NEET Southwest is required to condemn landowners to obtain this additional ROW, it expects that it could subsequently transfer those rights to Evergy, although

³⁷ In particular, K.S.A. 26-501a provides that, "The taking of private property by eminent domain for the purpose of selling, leasing or otherwise transferring such property to any private entity is prohibited except as provided in K.S.A. 26-501b, and amendments thereto."

K.S.A. 26-501b, meanwhile, provides that "On and after July 1, 2007, the taking of private property by eminent domain for the purpose of selling, leasing, or otherwise transferring such property to any private entity is authorized if the taking is: ... (b) **by any public utility**, as defined in K.S.A. 66-104, and amendments thereto, gas gathering service, as defined in K.S.A. 55-1,101, and amendments thereto, pipe-line companies, railroads and all persons and associations of persons, whether incorporated or not, operating such agencies for public use in the conveyance of persons or property within this state, but only to the extent such property is **used for the operation of facilities necessary for the provision of services** ..." (Emphasis added.)

that is not certain. This further exacerbates the risk to schedule and the length of time that ROW acquisition would be expected to take, which among the reasons that NEET Southwest expect constructing the Double Circuit Option in the Evergy ROW to take significantly longer.

As noted above, whether located in the NEET Southwest ROW or the Evergy ROW, NEET Southwest and Evergy would each need to obtain its own rights to utilize the shared ROW. The parties may require a joint pole use agreement or similar type of shared facilities or easement sharing agreement to clearly delineate the parties' rights and obligations going forward. However, there may be increased concerns about joint liability. There is no clear legal precedent regarding whether legal issues are created by two separate utilities co-locating their lines on a single structure, including joint and several liability for damages to third parties.

NEET Southwest also notes that, given the extended schedule in which Evergy estimates it plans to rebuild the 161 kV Line, even if the Commission required the Double Circuit Option, that would not meaningfully minimize impacts to landowners, at least not in the short term. As explained above, NEET Southwest and Evergy would need to obtain ROW from all landowners along the co-located section, even if the Double Circuit Option were built in Evergy's ROW, requiring NEET Southwest and Evergy to negotiate (and potentially condemn) landowners along this segment. In addition, Evergy does not intend to rebuild its line until December 2030; thus, landowners would still have two separate lines on their properties for several years between the in-service date of the WCB Project and the rebuilt Evergy 161 kV Line. Given Evergy's extended timing, it is also possible that Evergy may further delay or ultimately determine not to pursue the rebuild of its 161 kV Line. Therefore, NEET Southwest believes the landowner benefits from a Double Circuit Option may be delayed and/or minimal.

VIII. O&M Responsibility Sharing

NEET Southwest's and Evergy's operations teams evaluated the O&M responsibilities that would be necessary to implement the Double Circuit Option. In particular, the parties have identified the following O&M tasks and responsibilities that would need to be addressed in an O&M responsibility sharing agreement, and ultimately coordinated between the two utilities:

- Inspection process
- Responses to line tripping and restoration plan
- Outage coordination
- ROW maintenance (*e.g.*, roads, vegetation management, etc.)
- Safety standards

Each of these factors is discussed in further detail below.

Inspection processes. Each party will be responsible for its equipment inspection and mutually responsible for the equipment ownership interfaces. NEET Southwest and Evergy confirmed that the parties use a similar inspection strategy and family of specialized vendors to perform inspection. Once a design is finalized, the parties would negotiate a formal O&M responsibility sharing agreement, which would include agreement on work plans, work frequency, and vendor means and methods.

Responses to line tripping and a restoration plan. NEET Southwest would expect that the forced outage response and restoration practices for the WCB Project under the Double Circuit Option would follow the same practice to be used on the rest of the WCB Project. Both parties use the same family of restoration vendors. The double circuit design would be included in the overall WCB base project restoration plan. The plan will be modified based on the double circuit final design, ownership interfaces, and consultation with Evergy.

Outage coordination. For the Double Circuit Option, NEET Southwest would follow the same set of protocols that will be established and used for the WCB Project final design. Equipment planned outages will be mutually agreed between parties before submitting into the SPP outage system by the equipment owner. The same approach will apply to the following set of protocols: communication; notification of significant events; communications during emergencies; system restoration; switching tagging and lock out interface; and energization of equipment.

ROW maintenance and vegetation management. NEET Southwest assumes that obligations pertaining to the management of the ROW, either shared or individually owned, may be undertaken separately by each party. Treatment of the ROW could be undertaken by the same vendor based upon an agreed work plan between the parties' ROW management teams. However, both parties would need to separately perform and ensure compliance for their respective NERC obligations. Landowner management could potentially be coordinated but respective compliance obligations could result in duplicative and conflicting activities. The Double Circuit Option also would require establishing similar Transmission Vegetation Management Programs ("TVMP") to establish the same inspection methods, herbicidal treatment, and mechanical clearing, as well as evidence gathering that would have to be homogenized into a unique TVMP between NEET Southwest and Evergy. Because the parties would have to agree on a joint TVMP for the Double Circuit Option, this may be different from each utility's respective TVMP for all other transmission assets in their systems, which may create compliance complexities.

Safety Standards. Each party will follow its own work safety standards.

IX. Other Considerations

a. Reliability Standards Compliance and Other Reliability Considerations

NEET Southwest and Evergy collectively reviewed North American Electric Reliability Corporation ("NERC") planning and operational reliability standards to determine whether any new potential compliance impacts would be introduced due to a revised double circuit configuration of the WCB Project. While the revised configuration would require potential modification to agreements and future compliance-related analysis, neither party identified any compliance concerns or inability to satisfy reliability performance requirements. For example, a revised double circuit configuration would introduce a new "P7 Common Structure Multiple Contingency" under the NERC TPL-001 reliability standard that would otherwise not be required for analysis with separate towers. However, Evergy and NEET Southwest have reviewed this P7 event and have not identified any expected reliability violations of performance requirements under TPL-001. This assessment performed by NEET Southwest and Evergy regarding NERC

reliability standards has also been conveyed to SPP and NEET Southwest expects that SPP would also assess any potential reliability impacts, if required, as part of its technical evaluation of the Double Circuit Option.

The parties also discussed that the Double Circuit Option would require more coordination and agreements between the parties on NERC compliance including for reporting and responsibility among separate NERC Registered Entities, including EOP-004 (Event Reporting to NERC/Department of Energy) and FAC-003 (Vegetation Management) for vegetation management and ROW clearing.

b. Environmental Permitting

NEET Southwest's environmental team evaluated the Double Circuit Option for potential environmental impacts or additional environmental studies that would be required. NEET Southwest would expect that building the Double Circuit Option in NEET Southwest's ROW would not require additional wetland, species, habitat, or cultural permitting, since NEET Southwest has already factored necessary permits into its base assumptions. However, in NEET Southwest's initial review, NEET Southwest would expect the diameter of the double circuit poles to be larger than the single circuit poles. With the current pole spotting, one structure would now require a floodplain fill permit due to the increased pole diameter and additional setback threshold from the stream bank. The larger pole diameter coupled with the additional setback requirement, no longer meets the exemption criteria under the thresholds of avoiding a permit requirement. This permit was not originally required for NEET Southwest's original WCB Project bid, *i.e.*, the Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Water Resources State Floodplain Permit. This permit requires hydraulic impact analysis and base flood elevation determination and is expected to take 120 days to complete.

If the Double Circuit Option were built in Evergy's ROW, NEET Southwest would need to obtain Lidar data for this additional ROW, which would be used to perform additional waters and wetland analysis to verify if any additional field surveys are necessary. NEET Southwest also would expect to need to perform additional cultural surveys in the new ROW and additional voluntary tribal coordination. At this time, NEET Southwest would expect that its general wetland and cultural permitting approaches would remain the same and that tree-clearing would be reduced by 13.27 acres. NEET Southwest also expects there would be no additional impacts to species habitat, and therefore no additional species permitting or additional compensatory mitigation required. However, in this instance, NEET Southwest would expect that seven poles would now require a floodplain fill permit due to increased pole diameters and additional setbacks from stream banks that are over the permitting avoidance thresholds. The Kansas Department of Agriculture Division of Water Resources State Floodplain Permit requires hydraulic impact analysis and base flood elevation determination and is expected to take 180 days to complete.

Appendices A-C

Appendices A-C have been withheld as they are Confidential in their entireties.