

Fall River Electric Cooperative, Inc.

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April 27, 2026

Teton County BOCC
150 Courthouse Dr
Driggs, ID 83422

Dear Commissioners:

Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative (Fall River) is appealing the Board's denial of our special use permit application and respectfully submit this letter to request reconsideration by the Board of the recent decision regarding the special use permit for construction and operation of a Residential Substation located at Parcel RP04N45E143701 – 5.0 acres, known to Fall River as the Midway Residential Substation.

Fall River has taken a thorough and proactive approach to review the concerns outlined and have made meaningful efforts to address each of the factors that contributed to the denial. We believe the additional information and actions presented herein provide a clearer and more complete understanding of the project's merits and alignment with County standards. Accordingly, we ask that the County reevaluate this matter in light of these updates and the demonstrated commitment to meeting all applicable requirements.

Our request for reconsideration will address the Board's denial based on the criteria found in LDC § 3-5-10 and § 4-8(E)(1), -(5), and -(6).

LDC § 3-5-10: The proposed residential substation utilizes a lot size greater than the minimum required and a Type B (Option 2) buffer with a chain-link fence around the Residential Substation perimeter. Additionally, to maintain vegetation vitality, a well is proposed to provide irrigation to the trees and shrubs utilized in the buffer. The buffering plan proposed is detailed in Attachment 1.

LDC § 4-8(E)(1): Fall River owns both the subject parcel and the parcel to the north for a total of 10 acres. The proposed Residential Substation sits on the south parcel adjacent to county road 3500 South, with the fenced area utilizing approximately 1.25 acres. This siting minimizes impact with wildlife as the area to the north is more conducive to wildlife movement, and the perimeter fencing minimizes wildlife encounters within the Residential Substation. Additionally, current

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plans have 80% of the total property remaining in the existing natural vegetative state. The general site plan for the Residential Substation layout on the subject property is shown in Attachment 2. The site improvements will match existing grades of neighboring parcels and allow for rainwater and snow melt runoff to conform to existing natural drainages and remain within the proponent's property. Additionally, equipment that holds oil will sit within an oil containment system.

Access to the Residential Substation will be off County Road 3500 South as shown on the Site Plan drawing, and parking will be contained between the vegetative buffer and the substation perimeter fence and limited to company vehicles and/or equipment.

LDC § 4-8(E)(5): Residential Substations, such as this, are designed with community integration in mind. The proposed Residential Substation location was selected based on the growth in the Victor and Driggs areas and the need to balance the electrical distribution system while providing reliable power to the residents of Teton County. Currently, the distribution system being fed by the Residential Substation in Victor and the transmission substation in Driggs are at a capacity level that will not support additional electrical growth or an extreme weather event, which can lead to unplanned extended outages.

Residential Substations typically have a low profile. The proposed Residential Substation height will not exceed 17-feet above final grade, which is less than an average two-story home, and the existing adjacent transmission line has a height of 56-feet above grade.

Additionally, this site was selected due to its proximity to the existing Bonneville Power Administration transmission line, eliminating the need for extensive power line easements to build additional transmission lines to the Residential Substation.

The proposed Residential Substation is located such that it is setback from the county road with a vegetation buffer around the perimeter mitigating visual and acoustic impacts to the neighbors and those passing by on the county road. Additionally, with newer equipment technologies and relatively smaller size electrical equipment that is used in Residential Substations, combined with the addition of sound dampening panels, it is anticipated that acoustical impacts will be no more than what currently exists at the property boundaries. (Attachment 3, Page 3 & 8)

There have been many studies by multiple organizations on the effects of power lines and substations in relation to the health of the human body. All studies have shown that there is no conclusive evidence that the electromagnetic field produced by power lines and substations have a definite link to negative human health effects. (Attachment 4) Additionally, Fall River requested MD Acoustics to complete an EMF study of a similar substation, which show readings below what is typically seen inside a residential home. (Attachment 5)

Residential Substations are unmanned facilities, meaning company personnel will only be on site to perform their duties, which include monthly inspections, annual preventative maintenance, and whenever required due to unplanned events. Typically, visits will be during normal work hours.

LDC § 4-8(E)(6): Residential Substations are designed with community integration and compatibility in mind, which reduces perceived negative impacts to the community and those who reside closest to the facility. Teton County recognizes these substations are not only compatible but essential in residential settings. RN5 zoning smartly incorporates substations as an appropriate facility in a residential environment. In general, substations support long-term property value by providing reliable power which increases the ability for the residents of Teton County and the Cooperative's members to grow, build, and live comfortably.

To further reduce these perceived negative impacts, it is proposed to have a vegetation buffer around all four sides of the substation, maintain approximately 80% of the total Cooperative owned land at the project site in the existing natural vegetative state, and convert existing overhead distribution lines along County Road 3500 South to underground. Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative always strives to be a good neighbor and will be visiting with and listening to the neighbors to maintain positive relationships and provide added value to the neighborhood.

Fall River is prepared to discuss this re-consideration at the May 25 Board of County Commissioner's meeting and will provide our presentation documents by May 18.

Sincerely,



Bryan Case, CEO/GM
Fall River Rural Electric Cooperative

Attachment(s)

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