

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION**

505 VAN NESS AVENUE

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



**To:** State Clearinghouse, Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Property Owners, & Interested Parties

**From:** Connie Chen, CPUC Project Manager

**Subject:** NOTICE OF PREPARATION (NOP) OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT (EIR) AND NOTICE OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL WORKSHOP AND SCOPING MEETING FOR THE PRINEVILLE TO RENO FIBER OPTIC PROJECT PROPOSED BY ZAYO GROUP, LLC

**Date:** March 8, 2021

**Description of the Project**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the State of California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is preparing an EIR for the Project identified below and is requesting comments on the scope and content of the EIR. Zayo Group, LLC, a California telephone corporation, in its CPUC application (A.20-10-008), filed on October 1, 2020, seeks to modify its Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) in connection with its proposed construction and operation of an underground fiber optic network from Prineville, Oregon, to Reno, Nevada, spanning 433.8 miles. The portion of the project that crosses California would extend 193.9 miles across portions of Modoc, Lassen, and Sierra counties. Along the majority of the route, conduit to house the new fiber optic cable would be buried using a combination of plowing or trenching construction techniques. Alternatively, horizontal directional drilling would be used to cross water bodies and roads, and where necessary to avoid existing infrastructure or biological or cultural resources. For some water- or road-crossing locations, the conduit may be affixed to the side or underside of bridges. Ancillary equipment would be installed at three small buildings that would serve as amplifier sites (ILAs). Fiberglass vaults would be installed flush to the ground along the running line to provide maintenance access and at splice locations.

According to the applicant, the purpose of this Project is to improve the quality of rural broadband in south-central Oregon, northeastern California, and northwestern Nevada, and to make affordable broadband internet services available to currently underserved communities in these areas.

The CPUC is the lead agency under CEQA and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is the federal lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which will be conducted separately from the CEQA process.

**Location of the Project**

The Project would be located along US 395 within the right-of-way managed by Caltrans in Modoc, Lassen, and Sierra counties. The running line generally follows United States Highway 395 (US 395) but also county roads between the communities of Standish and Buntingville in Lassen County, where it follows Standish Buntingville Road (Lassen County Road A3) for 7.35 miles and Cummings Road for 1.15 miles before returning to the right-of-way parallel to US 395. See the attached figure.

## **Issues to be Addressed in the EIR**

It has been determined that an EIR is required because the Project could result in potentially significant impacts to environmental resources. The EIR will identify the potentially significant environmental effects of the Project, including those resulting from construction, operation, and maintenance of the Project. The EIR will also discuss and analyze a reasonable range of alternatives to the Project, including a No Project alternative scenario, and alternatives to the Project that could attain most of its basic objectives while avoiding or reducing any of its significant environmental effects.

In its PEA, Zayo Group, LLC, identified a number of alternatives that will be considered by the CPUC's EIR team and potentially carried forward for full analysis in the EIR. Other alternatives may be added to the analysis based on input received during the 30-day scoping period following issuance of this NOP, or by the EIR team in response to potentially significant environmental impacts identified during the EIR process.

Specific areas of analysis to be addressed in the EIR include: aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, utilities and service systems, and energy conservation. Where feasible, mitigation measures will be recommended to avoid or reduce potentially significant impacts. The EIR will also address potential cumulative impacts of the Project, considered together with past, other current, and reasonably foreseeable future projects in the area.

Information to be included in the EIR will be based, in part, on input and comments received during the scoping period. Decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies under CEQA, property owners, and members of the public will also have an opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR once it is issued. Additional information about the environmental review process for the Project as well as electronic copies of Zayo Group, LLC's CPCN Application and Proponent's Environmental Assessment can be found on the CPUC's website for the Project at: <https://www.cpuc.ca.gov/environment/info/ecorp/prineville/index.html>

## **Public Scoping Period for this Notice of Preparation**

State law mandates a 30-day time limit after the date of the NOP for the scoping period. The scoping period for this Project begins on March 8, 2021 and closes at 5:00 p.m. on April 8, 2021. Please include a name, organization (if applicable), mailing address, and e-mail address of a contact person for all future notification related to this process. Public comments will become part of the public record and will be published in a Scoping Report.

Please send your comments to:

**Anne Surdzial, AICP**  
**ECORP Consulting, Inc.**  
**215 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street**  
**Redlands, CA 92374**  
**ZayoFiberOptic@ca-advantage.com**  
**(909) 307-0056 fax**

## Scoping Meeting

For the public and regulatory agencies to have an opportunity to obtain information and submit comments on the scope of the EIR for the Project, a meeting will be held during the EIR scoping period. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting will be held virtually. The meeting will be held on:

**March 24, 2021 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm**

**Via Zoom at**

**Webinar ID: 984 3295 1453**

**Passcode: 940151**

**or direct link at**

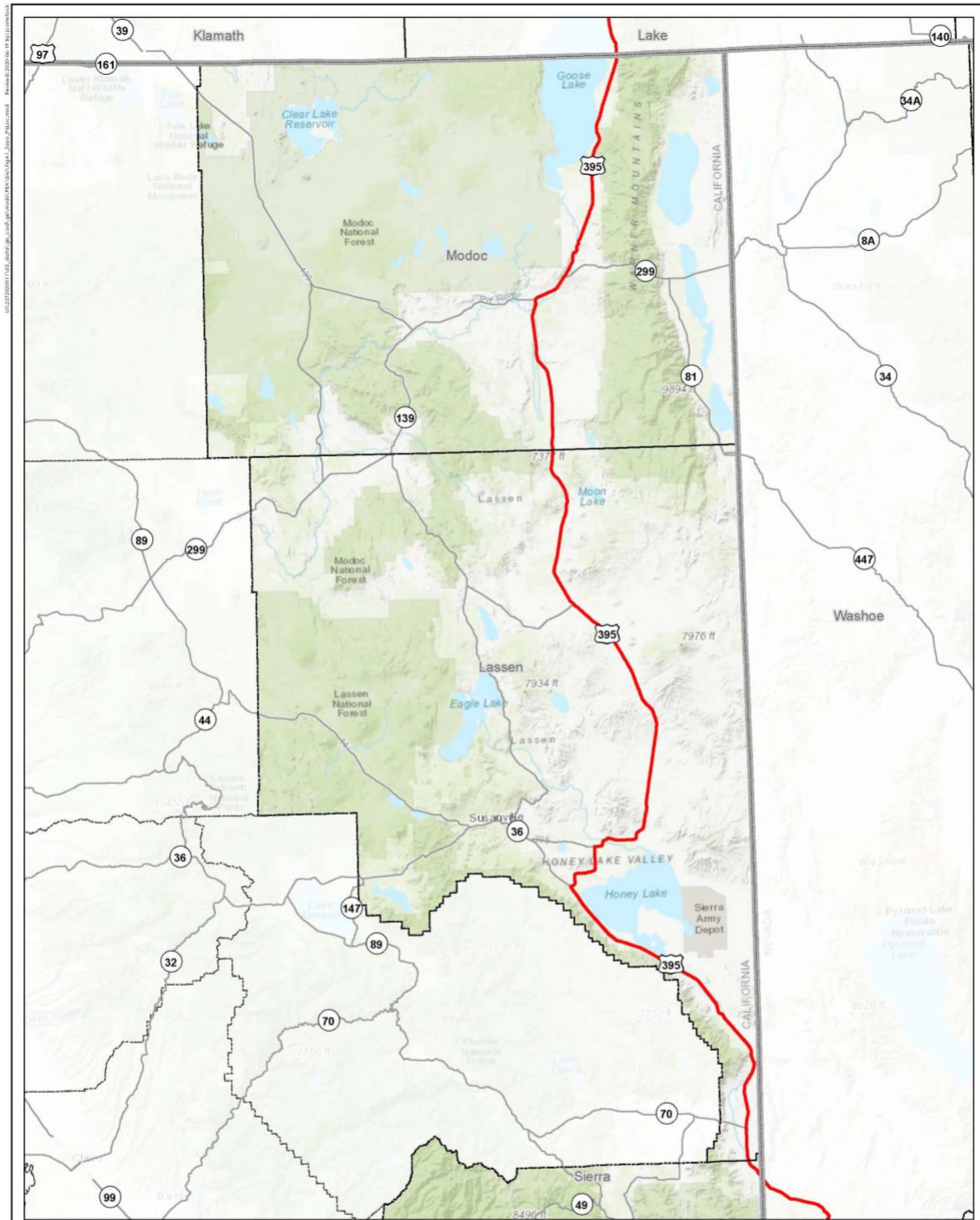
**<https://zoom.us/j/98432951453?pwd=VUdPOTBROW93Y0YxaDBkQkp3VTdDdz09>**

**or phone at**

**(669)900-9128**

The scoping meeting will start with a brief presentation providing a summary of CPUC's process for reviewing the Project application and environmental review process, an overview of the Project, and information on how members of the public can comment on the scope of the EIR. Following the presentation, interested parties will be provided an opportunity to provide comments about the Project. Written comments also may be submitted anytime during the NOP scoping period to the address, e-mail, or facsimile number provided above.

**REMINDER:** All comments will be accepted by postmark, e-mail, or facsimile through April 8, 2021. Please be sure to include your name, organization (if applicable), mailing address, and e-mail address.



- Alignment
- Highway
- County Boundary
- State Boundary



Project Location: Prineville, OR to Reno, NV  
 Prepared by JC on 2020-06-19  
 Technical Review by JV on 2020-06-19  
 Independent Review by DW on 2020-06-19

Client/Project: Zayo Fiber Optic Line—Prineville to Reno

Figure No. **3-1**

**Project Location  
 Proposed Prineville to Reno  
 Fiber Optic Line**

**Notes**  
 1. Coordinate System: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 10N  
 2. Data source: Esri 2020; CPAD 2019  
 3. Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, Garmin, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, Geobase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Swisstopo, (CC) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

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