



July 24, 2025

United States Forest Service
Attn: Joshua Baker
3232 West Nursey Road
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815

Mr. Baker,

Northern Lights, Inc. (NLI) is a non-profit electric cooperative, with over 24,000 metered accounts serving north Idaho, northwest Montana and a small portion of Washington. Within the Katkee Fuels proposed project area, NLI has two sections of power lines and relies on a transmission powerline owned by Bonneville Power Administration, also within the project area. **Overall, NLI supports the project effort proposed to reduce fuels within this area of the Idaho Panhandle National Forests.**

As part of this project, NLI encourages the USFS to consider expanding upon the treatments, beyond NLI's special use permit right-of-way width, by considering an expanded border zone along power line corridors within the project area.

This would create a potential energy corridor that could be used as a feature to help fire crews gain tactical advantage over an advancing fire. This also gives the powerline a better chance of surviving wildfire. Given that crown fires can produce flame lengths significantly longer than the height of the trees, NLI requests complete removal of crown fuels within 2 tree lengths (or 200') of the powerlines.

One of the segments of powerline within the project area provides power to the communications site at Black Mountain. There are several users that have electric service from NLI at this communication site including public safety providers and several cell phone providers. It is in the interest of public safety to protect the power line providing power to this site as much as feasible.

NLI encourages the USFS or its contractors to reach out to NLI prior to implementation in the areas around NLI powerlines. NLI can explore assisting in tree removals that are near energized powerlines since this requires specialized skills and experience.



Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project. NLI encourages the USFS to explore future border zones in future fuels reduction projects in other areas and NLI is willing to work with the USFS to develop a solution that benefits many users' groups.

If you require further information, please don't hesitate to contact me directly at kristin.burge@nli.coop.

Sincerely,

Kristin Burge
Engineering & Operations Manager
Northern Lights Inc.