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NEED FOR IMPROVED COORDINATION OF TRANSMISSION LINE CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES OF THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION AND THE BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION, DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

The Bureau and the Administration have adopted different practices in constructing tower footings without fully evaluating alternative methods of construction. Our review showed that, because of these different practices, there have been substantial differences between the amounts which the Bureau and the Administration have agreed to pay for the construction of tower footings. For example, we found that the Bureau specified the use of concrete pad footings on 473 miles of transmission lines under conditions that it appears would have permitted the use of steel footings, such as those generally constructed by the Administration, and that the prices of the concrete pad footings were about \$492,500 more than the average prices of steel footings of equal or greater structural strength constructed by the Administration.

In addition to differences in practices relating to construction of tower footings, we noted or were advised of other differences between the transmission line construction practices of the Bureau and the Administration, such as the extent of soil testing, weight of towers used, size of conductors, size and number of insulators used, use of overhead ground wires, and use of Government-furnished materials. Although the Office of the Assistant Secretary, Water and Power Development, Department of the Interior, is responsible for the direction and supervision of the Bureau and the Administration, an official of this Office advised us that the Office has not required coordination of transmission line construction practices and has not reviewed or evaluated the differences in the construction practices of the two agencies.

We believe that the results of our review indicate a need for centralized coordination to provide reasonable assurance that, when improved systems or techniques—in terms of either efficiency or economy—are developed, they will be promptly implemented by all the agencies which can benefit from their use. The Department did not agree that centralized coordination is needed and its views are recognized in the report.

We are recommending that the Secretary of the Interior reconsider the Department's position and require that a study be made to determine the full extent of the differences between the transmission line construction practices of the Bureau and the Administration and the potential for effecting savings by the adoption of more uniform practices. We are recommending further that this study be used as the basis for determining the degree of coordination necessary and practicable to effect the potential savings and for developing procedures to implement such coordination.