



Green groups sue US agencies over Western transmission corridors

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A coalition of environmental groups has sued several US federal agencies over recently established power transmission corridors in 11 Western states.

The groups said in a statement Tuesday that the corridors benefit fossil-fueled generation and want the government to shift the corridors to link renewable zones to Western markets, according to the suit filed in the US District Court for the Northern District of California in San Francisco.

"The West-wide corridors perpetuate the coal infrastructure that must become obsolete very soon if we are to avoid the worst effects of climate change," said Amy Atwood, public lands energy director at the Center for Biological Diversity and a lead attorney in the suit.

The federal Energy Policy Act of 2005 required federal agencies to designate corridors for oil, gas and hydrogen pipelines, and electricity transmission and distribution facilities on federal lands in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. The US Bureau of Land Management and Department of Energy failed to consider reasonable alternatives or consider the environmental effects of designating in mid-January nearly 6,000 miles of energy corridors in the West, the suit said.

The suit argues that the federal agencies violated the energy policy act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

The suit was filed against the Department of Interior and Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, the BLM and BLM Director Mike Pool, the Department of Agriculture and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, the US Forest Service and Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell and the DOE and DOE Secretary Steven Chu.