

FACT SHEET

Lucerne Valley Solar Project

March 2010

Project Overview

Chevron Energy Solutions (CES), the applicant, has submitted an application to BLM for a right-of-way to develop a 45-megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) plant and associated facilities on 516 acres of federal land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The site of CES's Proposed Action is located on unincorporated land in the Mojave Desert, approximately eight miles east of Lucerne Valley. Also included in the proposal is an interconnection to an existing Southern California Edison distribution line located north of the site. In addition, CES's proposal includes an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan that would designate the proposed site as suitable for solar energy generation. The project would also reroute a portion of Zircon Road to allow its continued public use. The proposed project would be built in two phases. Phase I would be 20 MW, with construction beginning in late 2010. It would interconnect to the existing Southern California Edison (SCE) 33-kilovolt (kV) transmission line located immediately north of the site across Foothill Road and could be built without upgrading the existing line. Phase II would be contingent upon available transmission capacity and future power sales. Phase II would occur after this is completed. The major components of the Lucerne Valley Solar Project would consist of the following:

- A switchyard for meeting interconnection control, and metering requirements.
- Operations and Maintenance Building.
- Parking/laydown area.
- Access roads within the right-of-way.
- 2-mile overhead 33-kV collector system.
- Solar array.



Figure 1. Simulated aerial view of the proposed CES Lucerne Valley Solar Project

In considering CES's application, BLM has developed the following alternatives:

■ **ALTERNATIVE 1: No Action / No Plan Amendment**

The No Action Alternative assumes that the ROW application is denied; that a Lucerne Valley Solar Plant and associated facilities would not be constructed and operated; and that the CDCA Plan would not be amended.

■ **ALTERNATIVE 2: No Action with Plan Amendment**

Alternative 2 would deny the ROW application, but the CDCA Plan would be amended to classify the project site as either suitable or unsuitable for large-scale solar development.

■ **ALTERNATIVE 3: CES's Proposed Action**

This is the project as requested in CES's application.

■ **ALTERNATIVE 4: Modified Site Layout**

In response to comments received during public scoping, the BLM is analyzing an alternative that reduces impacts on visual resources. This alternative would be the same as Alternative 3, with three modifications to reduce environmental impacts:

1. Require a 50-foot setback from Santa Fe Fire Road;
2. Use natural vegetation as a screen; and,
3. Design site drainage to provide a water source for the vegetative screen if feasible through the Streambed Alteration Agreement.

To reduce the visual impacts, the minimum distance from the edge of Santa Fe Fire Road that the proposed project perimeter fence could be located (or set back) would be increased to 50 feet. The setback would remain unaltered by project construction, so the existing vegetation would serve to screen the project from nearby residents and somewhat for users of Santa Fe Fire Road. Additionally, the area immediately inside the fence line may be used to replant some native vegetation that would otherwise be removed during site preparation activities. Some of the drainage for the graded area would be redirected to flow from the site into the setback, increasing the water available to the setback vegetation and salvaged plants and trees, as well as increasing the success of plant salvage efforts.

Alternative 4 would also require amending the CDCA Plan to change the ROW designation to suitable for solar energy development. Zircon Road would also be realigned in this alternative.

■ **ALTERNATIVE 5: Smaller Project Alternative**

This alternative reduces the output of the solar power plant from 45 MW to 30 MW. It would also reduce the size of the developed area from 433 acres to 238 acres. This alternative would be developed in two phases. Phase I would be the development of the area east of Santa Fe Fire Road, similar to Phase I under Alternative 3. However, under this alternative, the area south of the relocated Zircon Road would not be developed. Energy production for Phase I would be approximately 20 MW. Phase II would be the development of the area west of Santa Fe Fire Road, and would be 120 acres and produce 10 MW of energy.

This alternative, like Alternatives 3 and 4, would require amending the CDCA Plan to change the ROW designation to suitable for solar energy development. The decision for the alignment of Zircon Road would also be realigned.

Timeline

July to August 2009	Project Scoping
July 2009 to February 2010	Prepare Draft EIS/Draft CDCA Plan Amendment
February to May 2010	Public Review of Draft EIS/ Draft CDCA Plan Amendment
June 2010 to October 2010	Final EIS/Draft CDCA Plan Amendment
Late 2010	BLM to issue decisions on Application