Summary of Potential Impacts for the Dry Lake SEZ

This is a summary of the potential impacts from solar energy development in the Dry Lake Solar Energy Zone (SEZ) and associated transmission infrastructure development derived from the analyses presented in the Draft and Final Solar PEIS (Chapter 11, Section 11.3). These impacts may be resolved through the application of the programmatic design features (i.e., required mitigation measures) described in the Final Solar PEIS (Appendix A, Section A.2.2) which include measures to avoid or minimize impacts. Only some of these will correspond to unavoidable impacts that will need to be addressed in the Regional Mitigation Plan for the Dry Lake SEZ. In some cases it will not be possible to determine whether unavoidable impacts would occur until a specific project is proposed within the SEZ and a Plan of Development has been submitted.

Potential Impacts of Solar Development in the Dry Lake SEZ:

1. Development may prevent access to public lands to the west of the SEZ.

2. Development may have a significant adverse effect on specially designated areas, especially the Desert National Wildlife Refuge (NWR), Old Spanish National Historic Trail (NHT), Arrow Canyon Wilderness Area (WA), Muddy Mountains WA, and Nellis Dunes Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA).

3. Development may adversely affect recreation.

4. Development may adversely affect military aviation activities.

5. Existing mining claims may adversely affect solar development.

6. Groundwater withdrawals for development may cause declines in groundwater elevations that can impact water availability for surface water features, vegetation, ecological habitats, regional groundwater flow paths, and other groundwater users in the basin.

7. Development may alter ephemeral stream channels that can impact flooding and debris flows during storms, groundwater recharge, ecological habitats, and riparian vegetation communities.

8. Soils may be impacted through compaction and erosion.

9. Development may adversely affect vegetation, for example, through the destruction of sensitive vegetation habitat or through establishing noxious weeds.

10. Development may adversely affect specific wildlife species or aquatic biota (especially 73 identified special-status species). If pre-disturbance surveys indicate concern for any of the 11 ESA-listed or candidate-for-listing species identified as possibly present, consultation with the USFWS on mitigation will be required.

11. Although the Solar PEIS analyses do not predict exceedance of ambient air quality monitoring standards during operations, elevated particulate levels may occur during construction or, at times, during operations. Monitoring for particulates during construction and operations should be conducted to determine whether adverse air quality impacts are occurring.

12. Development may adversely affect sensitive visual resources, specifically those identified in the Final Solar PEIS, for which development could cause moderate to strong contrasts (i.e., Desert NWR, Old Spanish NHT, Arrow Canyon WA, Muddy Mountains WA, Nellis Dunes SRMA, I-15, U.S. 93.

13. Although the Solar PEIS analyses do not predict exceedance of noise guideline levels during construction or operations, potential impacts to acoustic resources may occur. Limited monitoring should be conducted to confirm these findings.

14. Although the Solar PEIS analyses do not predict impacts to paleontological resources, potential impacts to these resources may occur.

15. Development may adversely affect cultural resources (including the Old Spanish NHT. Consultation with the Southern Paiute Tribe has identified potential concerns with respect to the cultural importance of any loss of plant and/or animal species. Other issues may be identified through consultation with affected Tribes.

16. Development may adversely affect socioeconomics (e.g., in terms of community services).

17. Development may adversely affect environmental justice for minority and/or low income populations within 50 miles of the SEZ.

18. Development may adversely affect transportation.

19. Other past, current, or reasonably foreseeable projects in the region, in conjunction with solar development in the SEZ, may result in adverse impacts to any of the resources discussed above.