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## News Release

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Contact: Adam Fetcher (202) 208-6416

### **Secretary Salazar Approves Renewable Energy Projects in California, Oregon**

*Projects advance solar, wind energy development on public lands; Will deliver power for 112,500 homes, support over 600 jobs and generate millions in local tax revenue*

**WASHINGTON DC** - Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced the approval of two renewable energy projects that further advance President Obama's initiative for a rapid and responsible move to utility-scale production of renewable energy. The projects – a solar plant in California and a wind farm in Oregon – will be built on private lands and will use power lines that cross public lands to connect to their respective power grids. When built, the projects will deliver 379 megawatts of power - or enough to power 112,500 homes - and help support over 600 jobs through construction and operations.

“Today’s projects are the 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> renewable energy projects that Interior has advanced in just the last two years,” Secretary Salazar said. “As we continue to move thoughtfully and quickly toward a clean energy future, these projects are strengthening local economies by generating good jobs and reliable power.”

In California, the Centinela Solar Energy Project is a 275-megawatt solar energy power plant that will connect via a 230-kilovolt transmission line to the existing San Diego Gas & Electric Imperial Valley Substation. The solar plant will be located on 2,067 acres of previously disturbed private land near El Centro, California. Interior approved the right-of-way for 19 acres for the power line on public land, and Imperial County gave a green-light to the solar power plant on December 27, 2011. The project would support at least 367 jobs, generate more than \$30 million in tax revenue over the life of the project, and deliver enough electricity to power about 82,500 homes. For a fact sheet on the project, click [here](#). Click [here](#) for a map.

In Oregon, the North Steens Transmission Line Project is a 44-mile, 230-kilovolt power line that will carry power from a proposed wind power project on the north side of Steens Mountain in Harney County to Harney Electric Cooperative's existing electrical transmission grid. The wind project, proposed on private land near Diamond, Oregon, would generate 104 megawatts, enough to power about 30,000 homes. The project would support 235 jobs and generate \$4.5 million in

local tax revenue of the life of the project. For a fact sheet on the project, click [here](#). Click [here](#) for a map.

Today's announcements follow a series of solar, wind, geothermal and transmission facility approvals resulting from Interior's renewable energy program that has focused the Department's resources to prioritize and process existing applications in a coordinated, focused manner with full environmental analysis and public review.

In the past two years, Salazar has used this approach to approve 27 major renewable energy projects, or the transmission and roads associated with them, on public lands. When constructed, the projects are expected to create over 12,500 construction and operational jobs and produce nearly 6,600 megawatts of energy, enough to power 2.3 million American homes. These projects include 16 utility-scale solar energy facilities, four wind projects and seven geothermal plants.

Both the projects approved today underwent extensive environmental review and reflect strong efforts to mitigate potential environmental impacts, such as requiring funding for the acquisition of 80 acres of additional habitat for the flat-tailed horned lizard in California, and requirements that minimize audio and visual impacts from the Oregon project.

"Land stewardship is an important part of any energy project, including renewables," said Bureau of Land Management Director Bob Abbey, whose agency worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, state and local agencies, members of the environmental and conservation communities, interested stakeholders, and the companies to minimize the projects' potential impacts to resources. "We use these lands now, but it is also important to make decisions that help ensure future generations get to use and benefit from these resources just as we do."

Because the development on private land is connected to the federal Right of Way for the transmission lines and cannot proceed without Interior approval, the Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment had to consider the impacts of the projects' entire generation and transmission, including the components located on private lands.

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