



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Phoenix District
21605 North 7th Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85027
www.blm.gov/az/



In Reply Refer To:
2800 (P000)
AZ-040-09-5101-ER-A240
AZA-34187

Dear Interested Party:

The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) gives notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to address potential effects of a proposed project by Boulevard Associates, LLC to construct and operate an electrical generating facility, using concentrated solar thermal (CST) power. The proposed project would require a right-of-way (ROW) grant for construction, operation, and maintenance of the solar thermal power plant and related facilities. The power plant is known as the Sonoran Solar Energy Project (Project).

Boulevard Associates, LLC has applied to the BLM for a right-of-way permit in order to construct the Project on Federally managed lands south of the town of Buckeye, in Maricopa County, Arizona. The Project would be located in the Little Rainbow Valley, east of State Route 85, and require approximately 4,000 acres.

Boulevard Associates, LLC is proposing to construct a CST power plant to provide up to 375 megawatts (MW) of solar thermal electrical generation with options for natural gas backup and/or thermal storage capabilities. The Project would be made up of one or more power blocks. Each power block would be located near the center of its respective solar field and would contain multiple feedwater heaters, steam generators, steam superheaters, and feedwater pumps.

The facility is expected to operate for approximately 30 years and would connect to the electrical grid at the existing Jojoba Substation using a newly-constructed, 3-4 mile, 500 kilovolt (kV) tie-line. If any upgrades to the Jojoba Substation would be required as a result of this Project, those upgrades would be included in the EIS analysis and ROW grant. The transmission line and other related facilities that would be developed specifically for this Project would also be included in the EIS analysis and the ROW grant as appropriate.

Agency Jurisdiction, Roles and Responsibilities

Under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the BLM is responsible for processing requests for ROWs to authorize proposed renewable energy projects, the associated transmission lines, and other related facilities on lands it manages. The

BLM must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, to ensure that environmental impacts associated with construction, operation, and decommissioning would be identified, analyzed, and considered during the application process. NEPA compliance for solar thermal power plant projects would be accomplished through coordination with the State of Arizona (e.g., Arizona Corporation Commission), other Federal agencies (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), public participation, environmental analysis, and the preparation of draft and final EISs. The EIS must also comply with all other applicable laws, Executive Orders, regulations, and direction. The EIS will provide the basis for the Record of Decision, signed by the BLM Phoenix District Manager, on whether to issue the ROW grant.

BLM offices potentially affected by the proposed action include the Phoenix District, Lower Sonoran Field Office in Arizona. More than 20 Federal, State, and local agencies have been invited to participate in the project as cooperating agencies.

How You Can Participate

The BLM encourages you to send us your comments concerning the project as proposed, issues to consider in the environmental analysis, possible mitigation measures, and any other information relevant to the proposed action. There are two ways to provide your comments:

1. Attend the public scoping meetings and let the BLM know your concerns, questions, and issues; or
2. Provide written comments in response to this scoping letter.

Public Scoping Meetings

The BLM will hold public meetings to obtain input on potential impacts, alternatives, and mitigation. To provide the public an opportunity to review the proposal and project information, the BLM expects to hold at least one public meeting, and information about that meeting will be announced through the local newspapers, local television and radio stations, and the BLM Web site at least 15 days prior to the event. BLM staff and project proponents will be available to explain project details, gather information from interested individuals or groups, and answer questions about the project.

Provide Written Comments

You are invited to take this opportunity to provide us with comments, issues, concerns, and/or recommendations on the proposed project.

Comments may be submitted by either of the following methods:

- Mail: Use first-class postage and be sure to include your name, any organization you represent, and a return address to: Sonoran Solar Energy Project, ATTN: Joe Incardine, National Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, Phoenix District, Lower Sonoran Field Office, 21605 North 7th Avenue, Phoenix, Arizona 85027-2929
- Electronic Mail: Include your name, any organization you represent, and return address in the e-mail message to: sonoransolar@blm.gov

Comments need to be received by **August 10, 2009**.

For More Information

Information on the application and associated resource reports are available at:
<http://www.blm.gov/az/st/en.html>

If you have questions about this Project, you may contact BLM representative Joe Incardine, National Project Manager, at 801-524-3833.

Freedom of Information Act Considerations

Your input is important and will be considered in the environmental analysis process. Based on the issues identified, the BLM will decide the appropriate level of environmental analysis and documentation. All comment submittals must include the commenter's name and street address. Comments, including the names and addresses, will be available for public inspection at the above offices during its business hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except Federal holidays. Before including your address, telephone number, e-mail address, or any other personal identifying information in your comment, please be advised that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be publicly available at any time. While you can request your personal identifying information be withheld from public review, we cannot guarantee that we can do so.

Any persons wanting to be added to a mailing list of interested parties can call or write to the BLM as described in this notice. Additional public meetings may be conducted throughout the process to keep the public informed of the progress of the EIS.

We hope you will join us at one of the scoping meetings listed above.

Sincerely,



Teresa A. Raml
District Manager