

**Notice of Public Meeting for a  
Proposed Supplemental  
Environmental Impact Statement & Supplemental Environmental Impact Report  
for the Palen Solar PV Project**

**Date:** June 15, 2016

**To:** Interested Parties

**From:** Bureau of Land Management  
Palm Springs South Coast Field Office  
1201 Bird Center Drive  
Palm Springs, CA 92262

**Project Title:** Palen Solar PV (SCH#2011054002)

**Project Location:** The proposed Palen Solar PV Project is located in eastern Riverside County on land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The 4,200-acre site lies north of the I-10 freeway, approximately 10 miles east of the Community of Desert Center to the northeast of the Corn Springs Road freeway exit. County Assessor parcel numbers for the solar PV project site are:

- |             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| ■ 810110021 | ■ 810110022 |
| ■ 810110023 | ■ 810110026 |
| ■ 810110027 | ■ 810110028 |
| ■ 810110029 | ■ 810190003 |
| ■ 810190004 | ■ 810170001 |

A transmission interconnection would cross additional parcels between the site and the existing Red Bluff substation.

**Project Description:** The California Energy Commission (CEC) previously approved, and the BLM previously prepared a Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for, development of the project using thermal solar trough technology. A subsequent proposal to develop the project using thermal solar power tower technology was withdrawn before final approval. EDF Renewable Energy now proposes to construct and operate the project as a 500 megawatt (MW) solar photovoltaic (PV) electric generating facility with associated infrastructure on the approximately 4,200-acre project site. The project would maximize its solar generation capacity by using a single-axis tracking system that allows PV panels to track the sun over the course of the day while minimizing visibility by maintaining a panel height of 18 feet or less. The facility would include 200 power blocks with an electrical generating capacity of 2.5 MW each, an electrical switchyard, a common facilities area, a temporary construction laydown area, access roads, and a single circuit 230 kV generation tie-line electric transmission line extending from the project electricity switchyard to the Red Bluff Substation.

Because the project is subject to both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and has previously undergone review under both statutes, a combined Supplemental EIS/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared. Scoping is not required for a Supplemental EIS/EIR. However, because EDF Renewable Energy seeks to convert the project from solar thermal technology to solar PV technology, the BLM is giving agencies and the public an opportunity to provide input as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the Supplemental EIS/EIR. All comments must be received on or before July 18, 2016.

In addition to offering the opportunity to submit written comments, the BLM will hold a public meeting to discuss the proposed project, the environmental process, and to provide agency representatives, individuals, and other interested parties an opportunity to make oral comments regarding the scope of the Supplemental EIS/EIR. The public meeting will be held at the time and place indicated below.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Palen Solar PV Project Public Meeting</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date: Wednesday, June 29, 2016</b> <b>Time: 3:30 pm to 5:30 pm</b> <b>Location: Palm Springs City Hall</b> <b>3200 E. Tahquitz Canyon Way</b> <b>Palm Springs, CA 92262</b></p>

Attached is a copy of the known issues to be included in the Supplemental Draft EIS/EIR. Please send your questions and comments to Frank McMenimen, BLM Project Manager, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262, telephone 760-833-7150, email [fmcmenimen@blm.gov](mailto:fmcmenimen@blm.gov).

Sincerely,

Bureau of Land Management  
Palm Springs Field Office

## Notice of Public Meeting – Attachment A

### Environmental Topics to be addressed

A Supplemental EIS/EIR will be prepared to address the conversion of the project from solar thermal to solar PV technology. Supplemental review will likely focus on an analysis of water resources due to drought conditions arising since review of the solar trough technology proposal. However, the Supplemental EIS/EIR will incorporate and update where necessary all resources topic discussions of the previous reviews to create a single, standalone document that provides the reader an accessible and comprehensive assessment of the environmental impacts of the solar PV project. As such, the EIS/EIR will involve research, analysis, and study of the following environmental topics:

- Air Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Lands and Realty
- Multiple Use Classes
- Paleontological Resources
- Recreation
- Soil Resources
- Transportation and Public Access
- Visual Resources
- Wildland Fire Ecology
- Global Climate Change
- Environmental Justice
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Public Health and Safety
- Social and Economic Impacts
- Special Designations
- Vegetation Resources
- Water Resources
- Wildlife Resources

In addition, the Supplemental EIR aspects of the joint Supplemental EIS/EIR will include all topical areas required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), including, but not limited to, cumulative impacts, alternatives to the proposed Project, and growth-inducing impacts. For each resource topic, environmental impacts relating to construction, operations, and decommissioning phases of the project will be identified; however, the level of analysis to be included may vary based on the complexity of the issues, public and agency input to this notice of public meeting, and the change in technology of the project.

**Air Resources.** The proposed Project site is located in the Mojave Desert Air Basin, and air emissions are regulated by the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD). The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the consistency determination from the previous CEQA documents with regard to regional and local air quality plans and evaluate and quantify the short-term and long-term sources of air pollutants generated by the changed Project, including mobile, stationary, and area source emissions.

**Global Climate Change.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the analysis regarding climate change and greenhouse gas emissions from the previous solar technologies proposed at this location and revise the analysis as needed. In particular, the previous technologies included the use of natural gas whereas the PV technology does not.

**Cultural Resources.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous analysis regarding cultural and historical resources and update it based on the PV technology. The Supplemental EIS/EIR will include additional consultation with Native Americans and other interested parties.

**Environmental Justice.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous analysis regarding environmental justice based on the PV technology and revise the analysis as needed.

**Lands and Realty.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous analysis regarding land use. The Project is located on BLM-administered land; the Supplemental EIS/EIR will review and update any BLM Land Use Management Plans as appropriate.

**Mineral Resources.** The previously prepared environmental documents determined there would be no impacts to mineral resources. The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous analysis regarding this determination.

**Multiple Use Classes.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous analysis regarding Multiple Use Classes and will revise the analysis as needed. The Supplemental EIS/EIR will describe any new circumstances based on changed planning designations for this region.

**Noise.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous noise impacts and determine if the changed project construction and operations noise levels would be within the levels previously described and will update this analysis as necessary.

**Paleontological Resources.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding the occurrence of paleontological (fossil) resources and will determine if the effects of the revised project change the previous determinations and update the analysis as necessary.

**Public Health and Safety.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous analysis regarding potential hazards to public health and safety and update these as appropriate based on the revised technologies. Certain hazardous materials, such as the heat transfer fluid required for the solar trough technology, would no longer be required for the PV technology. Any hazardous materials pertinent to the solar PV technology will be reviewed to assess potential impacts.

**Recreation.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding recreation facilities in the region and update the analysis as necessary.

**Social and Economic Impacts.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding social and economic impacts in the region and update the analysis as necessary.

**Soil Resources.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding impacts to soil resources and update the analysis as necessary. The revised project would be located entirely within the footprint of the previously approved solar trough project.

**Special Designations.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous analysis regarding Special Designations and will revise the analysis as needed. The Supplemental EIS/EIR will describe any new circumstances based on the changed special designations for this region.

**Transportation and Public Access.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding impacts to transportation and public access and update the analysis as necessary. Any changes in truck traffic or workforce will be considered.

**Vegetation Resources.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding vegetation resources on the project site and update the analysis as necessary. The analysis will consider any changes in circumstances at the site since the previous CEQA and NEPA documents.

**Visual Resources.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding impacts to visual resources and update the analysis as necessary. The profile of the PV technology is shorter and less reflective than the previously proposed technologies (solar trough and solar power tower technologies). New photo simulations from key viewpoints will be provided to assist in the evaluation and to determine the effect of changes in technology.

**Water Resources.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding water resources in the region and update the analysis as necessary. The Supplemental EIS/EIR will consider the ongoing drought in California and analyze any effects of the project based on these changes.

**Wildland Fire Ecology.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding wildland fire ecology and update the analysis as necessary.

**Wildlife Resources.** The Supplemental EIS/EIR will review the previous information regarding wildlife resources on the project site and update the analysis as necessary. The analysis will consider any changes in circumstances at the site since the previous CEQA and NEPA documents.