

**United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

**MCCOY SOLAR ENERGY PROJECT**

**DRAFT  
PLAN AMENDMENT AND  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**



Volume 1 of 2

**May 2012**  
**CACA #048728**

DOI Control #: DES 12-21  
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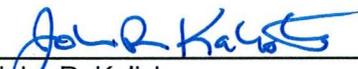
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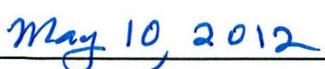
**Draft Plan Amendment / EIS  
for the  
McCoy Solar Energy Project**

For the

**Palm Springs – South Coast Field Office**  
Palm Springs, California

**May 2012**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
John R. Kalish  
Field Manager

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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**United States Department of the Interior  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**

Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office  
1201 Bird Center Drive  
Palm Springs, CA 92262-8001  
(760) 833-7100 Fax (760) 833-7199



*Visit us on the Internet at  
[www.blm.gov/ca/palmsprings/](http://www.blm.gov/ca/palmsprings/)*

*In Reply Refer To:*  
CACA 048728

May 10, 2012

Dear Reader:

I am pleased to announce the availability of the Draft Plan Amendment (PA) to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan, 1980, as amended (CDCA Plan), and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the McCoy Solar Energy Project (MSEP). McCoy Solar, LLC (Applicant) is proposing to develop an up to 750-megawatt (MW) solar energy plant in Riverside County, California.

The enclosed Draft PA/EIS analyzes six alternatives, including: (1) amendment of the CDCA Plan and grant to the Applicant of a right-of-way (ROW) for the project as proposed; (2) amendment of the CDCA Plan and grant to the Applicant of a ROW for a modified version of its project, developing only 250 MW; (3) granting to the Applicant of a ROW for either a reconfigured central or western generation transmission (gen-tie) line and access road route; (4) taking No Action, in which case the Applicant's ROW application would be denied and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would not amend the CDCA Plan; (5) denial of the ROW application and amendment of the CDCA Plan to identify the project application area as suitable for any type of solar energy development; and (6) denial of the ROW application and amendment of the CDCA Plan to identify the Project application area as unsuitable for any type of solar energy development.

The Draft PA/EIS has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires federal agencies to take a hard look at the potential environmental consequences of their decisions, and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), which establishes the land management authority of the BLM and provides guidance for how to manage the public lands under its jurisdiction. The document has been sent to members of the public who requested a copy and to pertinent local, state, tribal, and federal government entities.

Riverside County (County) has discretionary authority to issue a conditional use permit and public use permit for portions of the project. The County participated in the development of this document as a PA/EIS/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) toward satisfying the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with respect to its decision-making authority. However, when the County returned the Applicant's conditional use permit application in March 2012, the BLM elected to bifurcate the environmental review process. The County would need to comply with CEQA before approving a public use permit or a conditional use permit for the project. The County may rely on this Draft PA/EIS in accordance with CEQA to document the analysis of potential environmental impacts that could result from its approval of permits for the project.

The Draft PA/EIS will be circulated for a 90-day public comment period. All comments must be postmarked no later than 90 days from the date the Notice of Availability for the Draft PA/EIS published in the Federal Register by the Environmental Protection Agency. Comments may be sent to Jeff Childers, Project Manager, by mail: 22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA, 92553; phone: (951) 697-5308; or email: [jchilders@blm.gov](mailto:jchilders@blm.gov). Public meetings will be held in Blythe and Palm Springs, California, to provide clarification of the project design and alternatives, describe the impacts and mitigation measures, and accept written public comments. Please see BLM's web page at [http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/Solar\\_Projects/McCoy.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/Solar_Projects/McCoy.html) for information about the location, date, and time of these meetings. All substantive issues raised during the comment period will be considered and responded to, and modifications based on these comments may be made in the Final PA/EIS.

Additional hard copies or CD-ROM versions of the Draft PA/EIS may be obtained by contacting the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office. The document also will be available on the Internet at: [http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/Solar\\_Projects/McCoy.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings/Solar_Projects/McCoy.html).

We are pleased to provide this copy of the MSEP Draft PA/EIS for your review and extend our appreciation for your cooperation and assistance during this process. We look forward to your continued participation.

Sincerely,



John Kalish  
Field Manager

## *Attachment 1*

### **Protest Regulations**

[CITE: 43CFR1610.5-2]

TITLE 43--PUBLIC LANDS: INTERIOR CHAPTER II--BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR PART 1600--PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING--Table of Contents Subpart 1610--Resource Management Planning Sec. 1610.5-2 Protest procedures.

(a) Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of a resource management plan may protest such approval or amendment. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.

(1) The protest shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Director. The protest shall be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency published the notice of receipt of the final environmental impact statement containing the plan or amendment in the Federal Register. For an amendment not requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement, the protest shall be filed within 30 days of the publication of the notice of its effective date.

(2) The protest shall contain:

(i) The name, mailing address, telephone number and interest of the person filing the protest;

(ii) A statement of the issue or issues being protested;

(iii) A statement of the part or parts of the plan or amendment being protested;

(iv) A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and

(v) A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong.

(3) The Director shall promptly render a decision on the protest.

(b) The decision shall be in writing and shall set forth the reasons for the decision. The decision shall be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

Attachment 2

**Resource Management Plan Protest  
Critical Item Checklist**

**The following items *must* be included to constitute a valid protest  
whether using this optional format, or a narrative letter.  
(43 CFR 1610.5-2)**

BLM's practice is to make comments, including names and home addresses of respondents, available for public review. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, be advised that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold from public review your personal identifying information, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations and businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

**Resource Management Plan (RMP) or Amendment (RMPA) being protested:**

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Phone Number: ( )**

**Your interest in filing this protest (how will you be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of this plan?):**

**Issue or issues being protested:**

**Statement of the part or parts of the plan being protested:**

**Attach copies of all documents addressing the issue(s) that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party, OR an indication of the date the issue(s) were discussed for the record.**

**Date(s):**

**A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong:**

**California Desert District**  
**McCoy Solar Energy Project**  
**Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement**

Lead Agency: Bureau of Land Management (BLM)  
California Desert District (CDD)  
Moreno Valley, California

For further information, contact:  
Jeff Childers, Project Manager  
California Desert District  
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos  
Moreno Valley, CA, 92553

**Abstract**

This Draft Plan Amendment/Environmental Impact Statement (PA/EIS) addresses the possible United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approval of an amendment to the *California Desert Conservation Area Plan of 1980, as amended* (CDCA Plan) to allow for solar energy-related use of specified property and of a right-of-way (ROW) grant to lease land managed by the BLM for construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of a solar electricity generation facility. The enclosed Draft PA/EIS analyzes six alternatives, including: (1) amendment of the CDCA Plan and grant to the Applicant of a right-of-way (ROW) for the project as proposed; (2) amendment of the CDCA Plan and grant to the Applicant of a ROW for a modified version of its project, developing only 250 MW; (3) granting to the Applicant of a ROW for either a reconfigured central or western generation transmission (gen-tie) line and access road route; (4) taking No Action, in which case the Applicant's ROW application would be denied and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) would not amend the CDCA Plan; (5) denial of the ROW application and amendment of the CDCA Plan to identify the project application area as suitable for any type of solar energy development; and (6) denial of the ROW application and amendment of the CDCA Plan to identify the Project application area as unsuitable for any type of solar energy development..

Chapter 2 discusses the proposed McCoy Solar Energy Project (MSEP) (up to 750 MW with a ROW grant of approximately 7,700 acres) and the alternatives described above. Chapter 3 describes the existing conditions on and in the vicinity of the project application area. Chapter 4 describes the potential environmental impacts expected under each of the alternatives.

The Field Manager of the Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office has the authority for site management of future activities related to the ROW grant and is the BLM Authorized Officer for this PA/EIS.

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