



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

New Mexico State Office
301 Dinosaur Trail
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502



In Reply Refer To:
2800 (9320)
NM-114438
AZA-35058

November 28, 2014

Dear Reader:

Attached for your review and comment is the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project Mitigation Proposal. The BLM has prepared this document in consultation with cooperating agencies and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

The proposed SunZia Southwest Transmission Project would include two 500-kilovolt transmission lines, substations, and ancillary facilities that would be located on federal, state, and private lands between central New Mexico and central Arizona. After the publication of the Final EIS for the project in June 2013, the Department of Defense (DOD) proposed mitigation measures to minimize impacts on military readiness and operations along the Preferred Alternative route identified in the Final EIS. One of the proposed measures in DOD's Mitigation Proposal is the proposed burial of 3 segments of the transmission line totaling 5 miles in an area north of White Sands Missile Range known as the Northern Call-Up Area (NCUA).

BLM is utilizing this EA to examine whether the environmental impacts associated with the burial component of the Mitigation Proposal requires BLM to supplement the Final EIS, i.e., whether the Mitigation Proposal is considered a substantial change in the Preferred Alternative route or represents significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns that differ from those disclosed and analyzed in the Final EIS.

The BLM has reached a preliminary Finding of No New Significant Impact (FONNSI), as the analysis in the EA supports a conclusion that the Mitigation Proposal is not a substantial change from the Preferred Alternative and would not have new impacts significantly different from those analyzed for the Preferred Alternative in the SunZia Final EIS. Based on these findings, the BLM would intend to proceed with the Preferred Alternative identified in the SunZia Final EIS as modified by the Mitigation Proposal. A draft unsigned FONNSI is attached to the EA for review.

The BLM encourages the public to provide information and comments pertaining to the analysis presented in the EA. Of particular interest is the analysis and comparison of the impacts associated with the Mitigation Proposal to those already analyzed in the Final EIS.

Comments will be accepted on the EA until December 28, 2014. Comments may be submitted electronically at: NMSunZiaProject@blm.gov. Comments may also be submitted by mail to: Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office, Attention: SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, P.O. Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115. Please note that only those comments that relate to the Mitigation Proposal will be considered by the BLM as part of this comment period.

Before including your address, phone number, email 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 your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Copies of the EA are available for public inspection on the BLM website at <http://www.blm.gov/nm/sunzia>. Copies are also available for public inspection at the following BLM locations:

- New Mexico State Office, 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87502
- Socorro Field Office, 901 S. Highway 85, Socorro, NM 87801

Thank you for your continued interest in the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project. For additional information or clarification regarding the EA or the Project, please contact Adrian Garcia, telephone 505-954-2199; address 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, NM 87502; email agarcia@blm.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jesse J. Juen". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Jesse J. Juen
State Director