

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
TGP COYOTE CANYON UTILIZATION PROJECT  
IN CHURCHILL COUNTY, NEVADA**

**Environmental Assessment  
DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2011-0001-EA  
Dixie Valley Participating Area NVN-43282X  
and Geothermal Lease NVN-86892**

**INTRODUCTION**

TGP Dixie Development Company LLC (TGP) proposed to construct a 70 MW geothermal power plant and associated production/injections wells, pipelines, and support facilities in Dixie Valley in Churchill County, Nevada. Their utilization plan involves the Dixie Valley Participating Area NVN-43282X comprised of the following federal leases: NVN-17283A, NVN-17282, NVN-61705, NVN-61707, and an adjacent federal lease NVN-86892. This Coyote Canyon utilization plan area is entirely on federal leases managed by the BLM Carson City Stillwater Field Office. Power generated by the plant would be delivered to the existing transmission line via a short tie-in line from the power plant.

The purpose of the proposed action is to develop the geothermal resource within the TGP Coyote Canyon lease area in response to EO 13212, which directs the BLM in a timely manner to support efforts to increase energy production from federal minerals, while preserving the health of public lands.

This EA, DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2011-0001-EA, evaluates the impacts on the natural and human environment that could result from implementation of this geothermal development project on federal land. The impact analysis in the EA characterizes the potential for impacts for each resource in the project area. The determination of environmental risk is resource-specific and is based on a number of factors, including the presence and extent of resources within the proposed lease section, the extent of resources in the surrounding area, and the quality of existing data.

**PLAN CONFORMANCE AND CONSISTENCY**

The Proposed Action has been reviewed for conformance with the Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (2001) and is found to be consistent with current BLM policies, plans and programs. The proposed action is consistent with Churchill County ordinances, policies and plans.

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT DETERMINATION**

Based on the analysis of the TGP Coyote Canyon Utilization Project, environmental assessment DOI-BLM-NV-C010-2011-0001-EA, I have determined that the action will not have a significant effect on the human environment and an environmental impact statement (EIS) will not be prepared. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

**Context:**

The proposed power plant and associated production/injections wells, pipelines, and support facilities development of the federal geothermal resources will produce renewable energy that may exist in the project area. BLM approves the projects under the Conditions of Approval attached hereto as Exhibit B.

**Intensity:**

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations includes the following ten considerations for evaluating intensity:

1) *Impacts that may be both beneficial and adverse.*

None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed any known threshold of significance, either beneficial or adverse. The Proposed Action is geothermal resource development consisting of construction of a geothermal power plant and associated production/injections wells, pipelines, and support facilities and their associated activity as described in the EA, as well as reclamation of these disturbances if these structures are not developed.

2) *The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety:*

The Proposed Action is to construct a power plant and associated production/injections wells, pipelines, and support facilities and development of the geothermal resources for electrical generation in the project area analyzed in the EA. It is reasonable to expect further resource exploration and development if the company determines the geothermal resource can generate additional power and any future activities which could affect public health or safety but those types of activities would be subject to further environmental analysis when considered. These types of issues could be addressed through conditions of approval for further exploration and development actions as determined by federal and state agencies.

3) *Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farm lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.*

There are no park lands, prime farm lands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas in or near the sites proposed. BLM has considered the Area of Potential Effect (APE) relative to cultural resources and historic properties, providing oversight for a full inventory of the project area. Based on the cultural inventory, BLM determined that historic properties are present in the APE and TGP shall avoid these sites. BLM conducted reasonable and good faith government-to-government consultation with the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe. Through this process, BLM determined that impacts would be negligible for the proposed exploration drilling project relative to cultural resources in proximity to the APE. The Nevada State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) has concurred with these determinations and procedures.

4) *The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.*

The effects of the Proposed Action on the human or natural environment were determined to be negligible. Development for geothermal resources and its potential effects on resources in this project area has been analyzed in this EA.

5) *The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.*

The Proposed Action is not unique or unusual. The action described in the EA is power plant construction and associated production/injections wells, pipelines, and support facilities to develop the geothermal resource. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. Public comment has been minimal.

6) *The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or presents a decision in principle about a future consideration.*

As additional development of energy generation facilities is proposed on a geothermal lease, an environmental analysis maybe warranted to assess impacts resulting from these types of projects. The progression of the project from leasing to exploration to development is customary and expected. It is reasonable to expect further resource exploration and development if the company determines the geothermal resource can generate additional power and any future activities which could affect public health or safety but those types of activities would be subject to further environmental analysis when considered.

7) *Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.*

Resource values, as identified in this EA, were evaluated for cumulative impacts and determined that cumulative impacts would be negligible for the proposed exploration project. Subsequent actions for geothermal resource development would be evaluated for cumulative impacts in associated environmental analysis that may be warranted and would be addressed through mitigation of the proposed future action and through development of conditions of approval.

8) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.*

As described in the EA, the project will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or other objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.

9) *The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under ESA of 1973.*

As described in the EA, no known threatened or endangered species or critical habitat has been identified in the project area considered in the EA. Any future exploration and development actions would be evaluated in a future environmental analysis for the future project.

10) *Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.*

As described in the EA, the Proposed Action does not violate any known Federal, State, or local law or requirement imposed for protection of the environment. Resource specialists from the BLM Stillwater Field Office, the State of Nevada, Churchill County, and the Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe were notified of the proposal.



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03/07/2011

Date