

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Environmental Assessment for Infrastructure Components: Phase I Haul Road and Facilities, West Sinclair Rail Facility, and Road Rock Quarry

Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project



The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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INTRODUCTION

The environmental assessment (EA) analysis shows that the action alternative would have no significant effects beyond those already analyzed and disclosed in the Chokecherry and Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project (CCSM) and Approved Visual Resource Management Plan Amendment Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD), approved October 9, 2012, to which this EA is tiered, and conforms with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Rawlins Field Office (RFO) Resource Management Plan (RMP) and ROD, approved December 24, 2008.

Following the Tiering Procedures as described in Appendix C of the CCSM Project ROD, BLM concluded that there may be some impacts from the facilities proposed in the infrastructure site-specific plans of development that may not have been analyzed or sufficiently analyzed in the CCSM Project FEIS, and therefore this EA was prepared. The CCSM Project FEIS analyzed and disclosed environmental impacts, including significant impacts to some environmental resources. The EA screened the site-specific plans of development, including the Road Rock Quarry which was not analyzed in the CCSM Project FEIS, against the analysis conducted in the CCSM Project FEIS to determine if there were any additional or new environmental impacts that were not previously analyzed and disclosed and whether or not these impacts were significant. The EA incorporated the analysis contained in the CCSM Project FEIS and the decision in the CCSM Project ROD.

The Quarry is not analyzed in the CCSM Project FEIS (BLM 2012b); however, it decreases the number of train and truck trips disclosed in the CCSM Project FEIS (BLM 2012b) originating from offsite quarries to supply the CCSM Project with road base aggregate. This reduces the net impacts and as such I have determined that there would be no new significant impacts created by the Road Rock Quarry.

I have determined that the Proposed Action will not cause significant impacts to the human environment beyond those previously described in the CCSM Project FEIS. No new significant impacts were disclosed during completion of the environmental analysis for this EA; therefore, an EIS is not required. The Proposed Action, which incorporates the all of the environmental constraints, applicant committed measures and mitigation measures contained in Appendix D to the CCSM Project ROD, as well as all of the conditions of the ROD, would not create any additional significant effects (above and beyond those already disclosed in the CCSM Project FEIS), which would have sufficient context and intensity, as defined in section 7.3 of the BLM National Environmental Policy Act Handbook (Manual H-1790-1, page 70), to be considered significant. Chapter 4 of the EA describes the impacts of the Proposed Action on the applicable resources and sets for the reasons, with respect to each resource, that the Proposed Action would either have no significant impacts or no new significant impacts beyond the scope and intensity of the impacts analyzed in the CCSM Project FEIS.

This finding is based on my consideration of the Council on Environmental Quality's criteria for significance (40 CFR 1508.27), both with regard to the context and to the intensity of impacts

described in the EA and supporting documents. The Interdisciplinary Team checklist attached as Appendix B to the EA and the analysis in Chapter 4 provide detail on the expected impacts of the separate elements of the Proposed Action on the resources present in the Project Area and the reasons why those impacts are either not significant or are within the range of impacts previously analyzed in the CCSM Project FEIS.

CONTEXT

The project identifies site-specific actions involving 1,429 acres of initial surface disturbance and 364 acres of long-term surface disturbance on public, state, and private lands in Carbon County, Wyoming. Power Company of Wyoming LLC (PCW) has applied for right-of-way grants for the construction, operation, maintenance, and decommissioning of the three infrastructure components comprising the Phase I Haul Road and Facilities, the West Sinclair Rail Facility, and the Road Rock Quarry.

INTENSITY

The considerations listed in 40 CFR 1508.27(b) (1-10) were used to evaluate the intensity of the effects described in the EA:

1. There would be no new significant effects as a result of approving the Proposed Action beyond those already disclosed in the CCSM Project FEIS as discussed in detail in the EA. See the discussions in Chapter 4 of the EA for the analysis of the impacts of the Proposed Action on the respective resources described. The Proposed Action would result in both beneficial and adverse impacts.
2. The public's health and safety would not be significantly affected (see Section 4.2.9 and 4.2.15 of the EA). There would be no new adverse social or economic effects beyond those disclosed in the CCSM Project FEIS (see Section 4.2.7).
3. Neither the Rawlins RMP review nor interdisciplinary review found any new unique characteristics in the geographic area or ecologically critical areas which would be adversely affected, beyond those disclosed in the CCSM Project FEIS (see Appendix B).
4. The effects of the Proposed Action are not highly controversial and are within the scope and scale of effects analyzed in the CCSM Project FEIS.
5. The effects of constructing, operating and maintaining the Proposed Action, as described in the EA, are well known. There would not be a high uncertainty of the effects, nor any new unique or unknown risks not previously discussed in the CCSM Project FEIS.
6. This proposal does not set a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
7. Though the Proposed Action is related to the wind energy development project analyzed in the CCSM Project FEIS, this proposal is not related to other actions with individually insignificant

but cumulatively significant effects beyond those that were not considered in the CCSM Project FEIS.

8. The proposal will not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places in a manner or degree beyond that disclosed in the CCSM Project FEIS (see Sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.11 of the EA).

9. There would be no new effects to habitat for threatened or endangered species beyond those disclosed in the CCSM Project FEIS. Construction timing restrictions, design features and additional mitigation measures (including the requirements in the CCSM Project ROD for U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurrence with Avian Protection Plans and Eagle Conservation Plans) would minimize or prevent adverse effects to other wildlife species and their habitat (see Sections 4.2.13 and 4.2.14 of the EA).

10. Approving the Proposed Action would not violate any Federal, State, or local laws or regulations imposed for the protection of the environment.

For the reasons set forth above and as explained in the EA, I have concluded that the Proposed Action will have no new significant impacts on the human environment that were not adequately disclosed in the CCSM Project FEIS.

Dennis J. Carpenter
Field Manager, RFO

Date