

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	02-AFC-01C
Project Title:	Sonoran Energy Project (formerly Blythe Energy Project Phase II) - Compliance
TN #:	207014
Document Title:	Traffic and Transportation - Record of Conversation re Blythe Airport and TRANS-9
Description:	Sonoran Energy Project - Traffic and Transportation - Record of Conversation re Blythe Airport and TRANS-9
Filer:	Mary Dyas
Organization:	California Energy Commission
Submitter Role:	Commission Staff
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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
REPORT OF CONVERSATION Page 1 of 2



Energy Facilities Siting Division

FILE: 02-AFC-1C

PROJECT TITLE: Sonoran Energy Project

<input type="checkbox"/> Telephone		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Meeting Location: City of Riverside – Administration Building
NAME: Ed Cooper	DATE: 10/28/15; 11/19/15	TIME: 1:00 PM
WITH:	Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (RCALUC) Staff and Airports Manager	
SUBJECT:	Sonoran Energy Project (SEP)	

COMMENTS: Jim Adams and Mike Baron (Energy Commission staff) met with Ed Cooper (Director, RCALUC staff), John Guerin (Principal Planner, RCALUC staff), and Daryl Shippy (Airports Manager – County of Riverside Economic Development Agency) to discuss the current SEP. Agendas for the meeting and figures generated by Energy Commission staff of the Blythe Airport showing the current Blythe Power Plant, and location of SEP were distributed to Riverside County staff.

Pursuant to questions by Mr. Adams, RCALUC staff said the Instrument Landing System Approach to Runway 26 at the Blythe Airport has been permanently disconnected, and the Airport Weather Observing System is up and running, though it is owned and operated by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). There is also an FAA UNICOM Advisory frequency available to pilots in the local area.

RCALUC staff expressed concern about more power plants being sited near the Blythe Airport. The RCALUC staff indicated there are more projects than the Energy Commission is currently aware of. Mr. Adams requested that they provide the Energy Commission with a list of such projects and advised RCALUC staff that a natural gas-fired project called Irish Energy may be submitted to the Energy Commission. Mr. Cooper acknowledged that the SEP is a revised version of the Blythe II project which has already been approved by the Energy Commission. He stated his concern for a potential cumulative impact on aviation operations (thermal plumes) from the SEP project plus the existing Blythe facility and requested Energy Commission analysis. There is a general concern that water ponds associated with power plants will have impacts on bird populations. Mr. Cooper also stated a belief that alternative sites for SEP should be identified. In addition, PV projects are being proposed all around the Blythe Airport general area; with Riverside County reviewing 30 proposals in the last couple of years. In the long term (20-30 years), population increases in eastern Riverside County and potential emergency response to an earthquake may increase operations at the Blythe Airport. The viability of the airport may be threatened by continuous energy developments.

There was a discussion about Condition of Certification **TRANS-9** contained in the December 2005 Energy Commission Decision in the Blythe II proceeding. Condition of Certification **TRANS-9** requires "The Project Owner shall not commence construction of BEP (Blythe) II until the following are accomplished: 1. A remark is placed on the Airport's Automated Surface Observing System, or equivalent broadcast, advising pilots to avoid low altitude of the power plant; 2. The VFR traffic pattern to Runway 26 is changed from left-hand turns to right hand-turns; and 3. A runway, other than Runway 26, is designated as the primary calm wind runway."



Mr. Shippy said the FAA is reluctant to change traffic patterns and he is opposed to designating Runway 35 as the calm wind runway. Mr. Adams recalled that an FAA representative had attended an Energy Commission staff facilitated meeting on July 19, 2005 and proposed additional corrective measures. These corrective measures were later incorporated into **TRANS-9**. Mr. Shippy believes the FAA representative did not have the authority to approve a change in the Blythe Airport traffic pattern which would require a more rigorous review by the appropriate FAA officials. Mr. Adams requested a meeting with the appropriate FAA officials to discuss **TRANS-9** and Blythe Airport operations.

Mr. Cooper said the RCALUC meets once a month and the SEP project will be discussed at the November meeting. He anticipates a letter from the County of Riverside Board of Supervisors will be sent within a couple of weeks to Energy Commission staff explaining in more detail the concerns raised at our meeting. Mr. Shippy will also send a letter from the County of Riverside Economic Development Agency regarding his concerns and the increased traffic (military operations) at Blythe Airport.

In a subsequent phone conversation with Mr. Adams on November 19, 2015, Mr. Shippy said he had a meeting with FAA representatives in Los Angeles and raised the issue of Blythe Airport operations and **TRANS-9**. Mr. Shippy will arrange a meeting with the FAA sometime within the next couple of months.

cc:	Signed:  12/14/15
	Name: James Adams

**California Energy Commission – Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission
Staff Meeting Regarding Existing/Proposed Power Plants in the
Blythe Airport General Area**

October 28, 2015

Blythe Airport Operations

- Status of Instrument Landing System (ILS) Approach to Runway 26
- Airport Weather Observing System (AWOS) Status
- Other Issues

Power Plants

- Blythe Power Plant – Operational since July 15, 2003
 - Located about a mile east and on the extended centerline of Runway 26
- Sonoran Energy Project (formerly Blythe II)
 - Energy Commission approved the project in December 2005
 - Condition of Certification **TRANS-9** notes “The Project Owner shall not commence construction of BEP (Blythe) II until the following are accomplished: 1. A remark is placed on the Airport’s Automated Surface Observing System, or equivalent broadcast, advising pilots to avoid low altitude of the power plant; 2. The VFR traffic pattern to Runway 26 is changed from left-hand turns to right hand-turns; and 3. A runway, other than Runway 26, is designated as the primary calm wind runway.
 - AltaGas – Sonoran Energy Inc. submitted Petition to Amend (PTA) the project to be called Sonoran Energy Project
 - The project would be located south and adjacent to existing Blythe Power Plant
 - Implementing **TRANS-9**
- Irish Energy Project – AltaGas will submit an Application for Certification in December 2015, project would be located north and adjacent to the Blythe Power Plant
- Palen Solar Power Project – Located 40 miles west of Blythe Airport, North of I-10
 - Energy Commission approved the project in December 2010
 - Project Owner (Abengoa) is changing the project technology from power tower to solar trough with storage capabilities – The PTA will be submitted on or before December 22, 2015

Existing and Proposed Power Plants in the Blythe Airport General Area
Left-Hand Traffic Pattern for Runway 26

