

DOCKETED

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Project Title:	Blythe Solar Power Project - Compliance
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Filer:	Mary Dyas
Organization:	Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission
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AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION RIVERSIDE COUNTY



October 2, 2013

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Mr. Frank McMenimen, Project Manager
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Palm Springs Field Office
1201 Bird Center Drive
Palm Springs CA 92262-8001

RE: Blythe Solar Power Project – Notice of Intent to Prepare Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. McMenimen:

Thank you for providing the Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) with a copy of the Bureau of Land Management's Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement to analyze the site-specific impacts of the proposed amendment that would modify the technology and reduce the size of the project. In 2010, ALUC reviewed the original proposal that was then under consideration by the California Energy Commission (CEC) and evaluated several areas of concern with regard to the Blythe Solar Power Project, and whether current, existing information was sufficient to determine whether that project may individually, or cumulatively, pose hazards to flight; and/or be consistent with the criteria of the Blythe Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan. A copy of ALUC's letter to the California Energy Commission dated July 14, 2010 is attached, for your convenience.

The Commission's concerns with that project included glint/glare, transmission (gen-tie) line routing and height, thermal plumes, fire risk associated with the heat transfer fluid, evaporative basins, and electrical interference. On a generalized basis, ALUC welcomes the proposed change in technology, as the potential for thermal plumes (resulting from the use of an air cooled condenser) is eliminated, as well as the use of a flammable heat transfer fluid. The number and size of evaporative basins is reduced in the amended project.

At this time, we have only seen a reduction of a generalized layout plan (with notes that are not easily legible at the reduced scale). We would like an opportunity to view a larger, more legible exhibit of the project layout.

The applicant is requesting to be able to select "the specific combination of technologies" (single-axis tracking, fixed-axis tilt, or a combination of the two) "prior to construction." As Abdel-Karim Abulabon noted in his Soil and Water Resources assessment for the California Energy Commission, "the orientation and technique for collection of the sun's energy, as well as the number of panels and supports may be different." (California Energy Commission Staff Assessment, Part A, page 4.9-8) While we would anticipate that the switch from solar thermal to photovoltaic technology would result in lesser glint/glare impacts, significant design changes to the locations and/or orientation of solar arrays (including whether the panels are tracking or fixed-axis, since tracking panels may produce glare while in, or while transiting to, the "stow" position) could potentially affect the locations where (and the times when) hazardous glare would

occur.

In our review of solar photovoltaic projects, we have requested glint/glare analyses, and the results have often indicated that the impacts vary by season. We would recommend that the analysis address morning and afternoon glare at each equinox and solstice. Special attention should be given to any portions of the array located within 1,500 feet on either side of the extended north-south runway centerline or below flight paths necessitated in order for aircraft to avoid overflight of the Blythe Power Plant. These factors were addressed in the California Energy Commission's review of the original project. The request to allow selection of technology prior to construction should not be granted unless the glint and glare analysis specifically addresses all of the technologies under consideration.

ALUC's concerns regarding glint/glare, the transmission line, and electrical interference were ultimately addressed through project design and/or CEC conditions of approval, and we hope that the revised project design will maintain the previously established mitigation measures to the extent that they remain applicable.

ALUC remains concerned that the cumulative glint and glare effects of the multiple solar power plant projects may affect the usability of Blythe Airport.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the amended project and look forward to working with both the Bureau of Land Management and the California Energy Commission as this project proceeds through the evaluation process. ALUC reserves the right to issue additional comments as the project moves forward, in order to ensure that all potentially significant impacts upon the safety of air navigation are mitigated. We would like to receive a CD copy of the Environmental Impact Statement upon its release, and would like to remain on your-mailing list for subsequent notifications.

Finally, while ALUC has no official jurisdiction over the development of this project on federal land, we would appreciate an opportunity to formally review the amended project in an advisory capacity at a public hearing through the ALUC application process. Projects submitted by October 30 and determined to be complete would be eligible for consideration at ALUC's meeting on December 12, 2013 in La Quinta. If you have any questions, please contact John Guerin, ALUC Principal Planner, at (951) 955-0982.

Sincerely,

RIVERSIDE COUNTY AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION



Edward C. Cooper, Director

JJG:IG:bks

Attachment: Letter to California Energy Commission dated July 14, 2010

cc: **Mary Dyas, California Energy Commission ***
Simon Housman, ALUC Chairman
Chad Wilshire, Riverside County EDA – Aviation Division
Robert Eppers, California Pilots Association
ALUC Staff



**AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION
RIVERSIDE COUNTY**

July 14, 2010

CHAIR
Simon Housman
Rancho Mirage
VICE CHAIRMAN
Rod Ballance
Riverside

California Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission
Attn.: Alan Solomon, Staff Project Manager
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento CA 95814

COMMISSIONERS

Arthur Butler
Riverside

RE: Blythe Solar Power Project

Robin Lowe
Hemet

File No.: ZAP1006BL10

Related File No.: 09-AFC-06

John Lyon
Riverside

APN: Multiple

Glen Holmes
Hemet

Dear Mr. Solomon:

Greg Pettis
Cathedral City

The Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission (ALUC) evaluated several areas of concern, as itemized below, with regard to the Blythe Solar Power Project, and whether current, existing information was sufficient to determine that the project may individually, or cumulatively, pose hazards to flight; and/or be consistent with the criteria of the Blythe Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan.

STAFF

Director
Ed Cooper

ALUC had continued its consideration of this matter from its regularly scheduled meeting of June 10, 2010 to a special meeting on July 6, 2010 with the expectation that the supplemental reports from Ricondo and Associates, ordered by California Energy Commission (CEC) staff, would be available for ALUC review in its deliberations. Unfortunately, CEC staff advised ALUC staff that the reports would in fact not be available for public review in time for ALUC's consideration on July 6. Therefore, ALUC is issuing its recommendations and findings with the understanding that its determinations are made without benefit of access to these reports.

John Guerin
Russell Brady
Barbara Santos

ALUC proceeded to consider these issues of concern based on the information provided by the applicant and published reports from the California Energy Commission staff and consultants available at the time of its consideration. As the project is proposed to be located on federal land and is, therefore, not within the official jurisdiction of ALUC, a determination of consistency or inconsistency was not required, and no vote was taken. These findings and recommendations are offered as advisory comments to the California Energy Commission. (The Riverside County Airport Land Use Commission looks forward to receiving copies of the supplemental reports from Ricondo and Associates when they are available.)

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Open Area

Countywide land use compatibility criteria require that a minimum of 10% of land area in Airport Compatibility Zone D consist of open land as defined in Policy 4.2.4 of the Riverside County Airport Land Use Compatibility Plan Countywide Policies. The applicant submitted a diagram

demonstrating that 94.4 percent of the portion of the project within Zone D would remain as open land. The information submitted is sufficient to determine consistency with Zone D criteria.

Electrical Interference

The electromagnetic signal/noise emanating from the operation of electrical equipment of the project will be at base frequency 60 hertz with less intense higher frequencies from harmonics. The applicant team has provided information indicating that gap noise and corona noise associated with the transmission line and the conductors will not result in interference with the use of the Blythe VORTAC signal or with communications at frequencies used by pilots to communicate with the airport and with other aircraft in the area.

The information provided by the applicant is satisfactory to determine no hazard to flight. The following design/operational considerations are suggested to be included:

The project shall not include any use that would generate electrical interference that may be detrimental to the operation of aircraft and/or aircraft instrumentation. In the event that any incidence of electrical interference affecting the safety of air navigation occurs as a result of project operation, the permittee shall be required to take all measures necessary to eliminate such interference.

Thermal Plumes

Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of availability of the Ricondo and Associates report. ALUC staff noted that the results of the thermal plume analysis prepared by William Walters for the California Energy Commission and the computational fluid dynamics model prepared by Howard Balentine and AECOM did not coincide regarding the heights at which vertical velocities exceeding 4.3 meters per second could be experienced. The applicant team's consultant, Douglas Moss of AeroPacific Consultants (with Howard Balentine of AECOM also present), conducted a series of 38 flyovers of an air cooled condenser in Primm, Nevada on June 2, 2010. ALUC Chairman Simon Housman advised that he had a concern regarding the note in the report from Messrs. Moss and Balentine regarding a momentary stall warning that occurred on two of the flights when the aircraft passed through the plume 500 feet above the ACC in landing configuration. The Chairman noted that he would have a concern if the plume were located inside the traffic pattern, in that the normal reaction of a pilot to a stall warning would be to push the nose of the aircraft down to try to accelerate. However, based on the information provided, which indicates that the power block would be outside the traffic pattern, given this location and distance from the runways, the pilot would be at a sufficient altitude and there would be sufficient distance available for a pilot who reacted in such a manner to be able to correct the error.

The consensus of the Commission is that, based on the information available to the Commission, the thermal plumes will not constitute a hazard to flight, due to the location of the project and its current distance from the flight paths for Blythe Airport.

Transmission Line/Gen-Tie Line

The 230 kV transmission line generally crosses southerly from the main project site across Compatibility Zones E, D, and C (and originally within B1) perpendicular to runway 8/26 before turning westerly to its connection with the SCE substation. The maximum height of the transmission poles would not exceed 145 feet in height. Poles would not exceed a height of ninety (90) feet in Zone D (except for three poles at a height of 120 feet) and seventy (70) feet in Zone C.

Undergrounding of transmission lines is preferable in Airport Influence Areas, but the applicant team noted that undergrounding a 230kV line would be prohibitively expensive and counter-productive to project objectives because “dissipation of heat from the power line into the surrounding dry sands would seriously reduce the amount of power able to be transmitted along the underground segment of the transmission line during the hottest days of the summer, precisely the time of the peak summer load on the California power grid.”

In response to concerns that the transmission lines at their originally proposed location would constitute a hazard to flight, the applicant team agreed to amend the transmission line route so as to avoid traversing Airport Compatibility Zone B1. As amended, the transmission line would intersect the extended runway centerline approximately 5,560 feet westerly of the ultimate westerly terminus of Runway 8-26.

At the July 6 meeting, Chairman Housman reiterated his position that the cumulative level of hazards facing pilots operating in the vicinity of Blythe Airport would be lessened by siting the transmission line at a location closer to the McCoy Mountains. In this way, the terrain would remain the primary constraint, and the transmission lines would not be an additional factor of concern. He suggested a location 7,548 feet westerly of the ultimate runway terminus. However, this location would result in a higher absolute elevation of the transmission lines and towers. This proposal was discussed by the Commission. It was acknowledged that there is a trade-off between distance and elevation. After considerable discussion and input from the applicant and from Mr. Moss, the Commission determined that the proposed location constituted a reasonable compromise between distance from runway and lowest absolute altitude, in light of the non-aviation complications that could result from selection of the more westerly location (desert wash, possible Desert Tortoise habitat location, possible private ownership), and agreed not to request further changes to the location of the lines.

At this time, as the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has not completed its review of the proposed pole locations, there is not sufficient information to indicate that there would not be a hazard to flight. However, provided that the FAA issues Determinations of No Hazard to Air Navigation for each structure, it is the opinion of the Commission that the relocation of the transmission line so as not to traverse Airport Compatibility Zone B1 and the installation of visibility balls in accordance with the applicable FAA Advisory Circular on the segments of the transmission line within Airport Compatibility Zones C and D would mitigate hazards to flight to an acceptable level.

In addition to the line relocation outside Zone B1, the Commission recommends the following measure for safety:

In order to enhance visibility and pilot awareness, “spherical obstruction balls” (in accordance with FAA Advisory Circular 7-/7460-2 series) shall be placed on the wires of the new transmission line(s) located within Airport Compatibility Zones C and D. Such balls shall be in addition to any lighting that may be required by the Federal Aviation Administration pursuant to its aeronautical studies of the proposed pole locations.

Glint/Glare

The potential for reflectivity, glint, or glare, has been the central issue of concern for solar arrays such as the Blythe Solar Power Project. At the May 13 hearing, ALUC asked the project representative whether it would be possible – and, if so, at what times of day and seasons of the year – for reflection or glint from any element of the solar array to intersect Runway 26 or its centerline extended easterly at a height of 1,000 feet or less above ground level. (The concern relates to the potential for a flash or beam of light that would affect a pilot on a final approach to a landing on that runway – coming from the east and making a westbound landing.)

The applicant team contracted with Mr. Douglas Moss of AeroPacific Consulting to conduct an overflight of the Kramer Junction parabolic trough solar facility. Mr. Howard Balentine of AECOM accompanied Mr. Moss on the flight. Mr. Moss testified at the June hearing and indicated that, while there would be some reflection towards aircraft flying overhead, it would not be of such intensity as to interfere with aircraft operations or distract a pilot such that he/she would be unable to perform his/her duties. He concluded that the glint/glare characteristics of the solar array would not present a significant hazard to aviation.

For this area, the Commission again expressed concerns regarding the lack of availability of the Ricondo and Associates report. The additional information anticipated from the pending study commissioned by the CEC regarding glare would provide a more informed determination on the impacts of glare posing hazard to flight. Based on the information available, the Commission concluded that, while the project would result in reflection of sunlight visible from aircraft, the location of the solar collectors and their distance from the runways may mitigate the impacts of glint and glare such that they would not pose a significant hazard to flight.

The following design/operational considerations are suggested:

Any outdoor lighting installed shall be hooded or shielded to prevent either the spillage of lumens or reflection into the sky.

The project shall not include steady or flashing lights of red, white, green, or amber colors directed toward aircraft, other than FAA-approved obstruction lighting.

In the event that any incidence of glint, glare, or flash affecting the safety of air navigation occurs as a result of project operation, the permittee shall be required to take all measures necessary to eliminate such glint, glare, or flash.

Evaporative Basins

The applicant proposes to utilize evaporative basins for wastewater management. Two basins, each approximately 3.5 acres in area, would be developed in each power block. As initially

proposed, the basins would constitute areas of standing water for extended periods of time – up to 24 months. An 18-month period would be required for any one basin to evaporate and be ready for use again. Federal Aviation Advisory Circular 150-5200 – 33A, Hazardous Wildlife Attractants On or Near Airports, recommends a distance of five statute miles between the farthest edge of the airport's operations area and a hazardous wildlife attractant, if the attractant could cause hazardous wildlife movement into or across the approach or departure airspace.

The information provided by the applicant is unsatisfactory to determine no hazard to flight. An analysis determining the level of an attractant the basins would present and their potential to result in an increase in bird strikes would provide the necessary information to allow for a clear determination regarding this potential hazard to flight. In lieu of such an analysis, the following design/operational considerations or mitigation measures are suggested:

Evaporation basins within the project boundary (other than those located more than five statute miles from the nearest point of any runway at Blythe Airport) shall be covered with 1.5 inch mesh netting. Such netting or other cover shall extend beyond the edge of the basin. The sides of such ponds shall be steeply graded (minimum 5:1 slope and double-lined with high density polyethylene (HDPE) in accordance with the RWQCB and CEC requirements.

Vegetation in and around the evaporation basins that would provide food or cover for bird species that would be incompatible with airport operations shall not be utilized in project landscaping. Any vegetation growing in the basins or in the immediate vicinity of the basins shall be removed periodically to prevent wildlife attraction. Landscaping shall utilize plant species that do not produce seeds, fruit, or berries. Standing water in the basins shall be managed and controlled so as not to generate or attract insects as an alternate food source that, in turn, attracts birds. Trees shall be spaced so as to prevent large expanses of contiguous canopy, when mature.

Flammable Materials/Fire Risk

The heat transfer fluid (HTF), Therminol, is a flammable substance (a mixture of 73.5% diphenyl ether and 26.5% biphenyl). Thermal solar plants have experienced fires in the past. As a fire protection and worker safety measure, isolation valves would be incorporated into the HTF piping system, and would automatically block off sections of the piping in which a loss of pressure is detected. It is our understanding that the CEC staff is proposing that the applicant install isolation valves that can be either manually or remotely activated, so that if a leak develops in a ball joint, flex-hose, or pipe, a loop could be closed (in lieu of shutting down the entire system).

The available information is satisfactory to determine no hazard to flight based on the low likelihood of a landing occurring within the project area relative to the location of the airport and the incorporation of isolation valves. Although unlikely, an aircraft impact in the solar collector fields would likely be fatal to the occupants of the aircraft and ignite the Therminol.

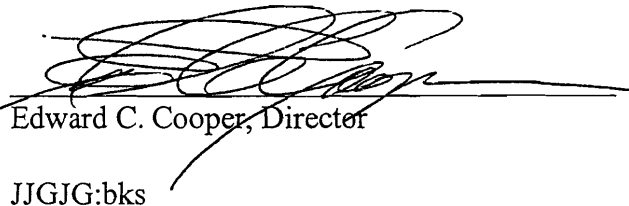
Cumulative Impacts

Information is unsatisfactory to conclusively determine no hazard to flight exists. Additional information is warranted, such as a quantitative and qualitative analysis of existing hazards (including those from already approved projects yet to be constructed) and the increase in hazards that would result from the proposed project. Without such an analysis, the specific measures listed above may mitigate the present cumulative impact. Even if the proposed project would not create a cumulative hazard to flight, there is concern that additional similar projects in the airport influence area could be the tipping point that does generate cumulative hazards to flight. The Airport Land Use Commission suggests the CEC, County of Riverside and other land use planning agencies consider cumulative impacts before proposing to site any future projects within the Blythe Airport Influence Area.

If you have any questions, please contact John Guerin, ALUC Principal Planner, at (951) 955-0982.

Sincerely,

RIVERSIDE COUNTY AIRPORT LAND USE COMMISSION



Edward C. Cooper, Director

JJGJG:bks

cc: Supervisor John Benoit
David Flores, California Energy Commission
Marie McLean, California Energy Commission
Elizabeth Ingram, Solar Millennium
Alice Harron, Solar Millennium
Howard Balentine, AECOM
Douglas Moss, AeroPacific Consultants
Elizabeth Klebaner, Adams Broadwell Joseph and Cardozo.
Janet Laurain, Adams Broadwell Joseph and Cardozo
Chad Davies, Riverside County EDA – Aviation Division
Jim Rodkey, City of Blythe Public Works/Airport
David Lane, Blythe City Manager
Ron Goldman, Riverside County Planning Director
Carolyn Syms Luna, Riverside County Environmental Programs Director
Kathleen Browne, Riverside County Planning
Ray Juarez, Riverside County Planning
Richard Denewiler
ALUC Staff



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT NEWS RELEASE
California Desert District Office

Release Date: 08/30/13

News Release No. CA-CDD-13-51

Contacts: Stephen Razo (951) 697-5217

BLM Announces Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for Blythe Solar Power Project

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Right of Way Amendment for the Blythe Solar Power Project, Riverside County, CA.

The Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP) was fully permitted and approved as a 1,000 megawatt (MW) solar thermal generating plant in 2010. NextEra Blythe Solar Energy Center, LLC (NBSEC) purchased the fully permitted (un-built) project assets in mid-2012 and now proposes to modify the technology and reduce the size of the project entirely within the approved BSPP footprint.

The Applicant is proposing to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission the BSPP using photovoltaic (PV) technology with a 485 MW capacity on 4,138 acres of BLM-administered public land. An amendment to the existing ROW authorization has been submitted to reduce the acreage of the project, change the technology from concentrating solar trough to photovoltaic, adjust the project layout per the new technology and reduce the projects capacity from 1,000 to 485 megawatts. On August 22, 2012, BLM approved the assignment of the ROW Grant from the prior holder, Palo Verde Solar I, LLC, to NBSEC. The Project area is located 8 miles west of Blythe and three miles north of Interstate 10 (I-10).

The BLM, as the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act, will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to analyze the site-specific impacts of the proposed amendment to the existing ROW. The EIS will analyze the site-specific change to impacts on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, water resources, geological resources and hazards, hazardous materials handling, land use, noise, wilderness characteristics, visual resources, transmission system engineering, and transmission line safety.

Publication of the NOI initiates a public scoping period of 30 days ending September 29. During the scoping period, the BLM will solicit public comments on environmental issues, potential changes to impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be considered in the analysis of the right of way amendment.

A scoping meeting for the Modified Blythe Solar Power Project will be held on Tuesday, September 17, 2013, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Community Room at Blythe City Hall, 235 N. Broadway, Blythe, California 92225.

Further details on the proposed BSPP project can be found at the following website:
<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html>. For information contact Frank McMenimen (760) 833-7150 or e-mail fmcmenimen@ca.blm.gov.

--BLM--

California Desert District Office 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553

*Airport Land Use Commission
Received*

SEP 16 2013

Dunes ACEC area includes the current Blowout Penstemon ACEC and additional area surrounding the existing ACEC. The nominated area was found to meet the relevance and importance criteria. The area is considered in this EA with additional use restrictions which would occur if the area is formally designated including limiting off-road travel and locatable/leasable mineral entry, intensive management of surface disturbing activities, and control of pesticide use. The RMP plan amendment will comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Federal Land Policy Management Act, and other applicable laws, executive orders, regulations, and be consistent with applicable policies. The planning effort will recognize valid existing rights. Decisions in the amendment will apply only to the BLM-administered public lands and Federal mineral estate in the planning area.

A collaborative and multi-jurisdictional approach will be used to jointly determine the desired future condition and management direction for Visual Resources and ACECs in the Rawlins Field Office Planning Area. To the extent possible and consistent with applicable laws, regulations and policies, the BLM management and planning decisions will complement the planning and management decisions of other agencies, State and local governments, and Native American tribes, with jurisdictions intermingled with, and adjacent to, the planning area.

A total of 9,369 comments were received during scoping, of which 214 were considered to be unique. A majority of the comments were received by individuals and non-governmental organizations, and identified the following key issues:

1. Impacts to historic trails and roads;
2. Potential changes to existing land use planning and consistency with current management;
3. Continuation of public involvement;
4. Socioeconomic impacts; and
5. Impacts of additional ACEC designations.

Please note that public comments and information submitted including names, street addresses, and email addresses of persons who submit comments will be available for public review and disclosure at the above address during regular business hours (8 a.m. to 4 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays. You may submit comments in writing to the BLM at any public meeting, or you may submit them to the BLM using one of the methods listed in the "ADDRESSES" section above. For your comments to be most effective and

fully considered, you should submit comments by the close of the 60-day comment period.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you may 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.

Authority: 40 CFR 1506.6, 43 CFR 1610.2

Donald A. Simpson,

State Director, Wyoming.

[FR Doc. 2013-21118 Filed 8-29-13; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4310-22-P

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[CACA 048811, LLCAD01500, L51010000.LVRWB13B5340.FX0000]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Blythe Solar Power Project, Riverside County, CA

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Palm Springs/South Coast Field Office, Palm Springs, California, intends to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) considering proposed amendments to the Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP) right-of-way (ROW) grant (CACA-048811). The amendments include a change in technology, reduced project footprint, and operation by a different project owner. By this notice, the BLM is announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues for the EIS.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the EIS. Comments on issues related to the EIS may be submitted in writing until September 30, 2013. The date(s) and location(s) of any scoping meetings will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media, newspapers, and on the BLM Web site at: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html>. In order to be fully addressed in the Draft

EIS, all comments must be received prior to the close of the 30 day scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. We will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft EIS.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues and alternatives related to the BSPP EIS by any of the following methods:

- Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd.html>.

- Email: fmcmenimen@blm.gov.

- Fax: 760-833-7199, Attn: Frank McMenimen.

- Mail: ATTN: Frank McMenimen, Project Manager, BLM Palm Springs Field Office, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262-8001.

Documents pertinent to this EIS may be examined at the BLM California Palm Springs Field Office.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Frank McMenimen; telephone 760-833-7199; address Frank McMenimen, Project Manager, BLM Palm Springs Field Office, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262-8001; email fmcmenimen@blm.gov. Contact Mr. McMenimen to have your name added to our mailing list. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339 to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BSPP was originally permitted and approved on October 22, 2010, as a 1,000 megawatt (MW) solar thermal generating plant located on 6,831 acres of BLM-administered public land in the Palm Springs Field Office (CACA-048811). The Project area is located 8 miles west of Blythe, California, and 3 miles north of Interstate 10 (I-10).

The ROW grant was originally issued to Palo Verde Solar I, LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Solar Millennium, which filed for Bankruptcy in April 2012. In mid-October 2012, NextEra Blythe Solar Energy Center, LLC (NBSEC), purchased the un-built BSPP as part of the bankruptcy process. The BLM approved the assignment of the ROW grant from the Palo Verde Solar I, LLC, to NBSEC on August 22, 2012. NBSEC now proposes to modify the solar technology and reduce the size of the project within the previously approved BSPP footprint. The NBSEC is proposing to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission the BSPP

using solar photovoltaic (PV) technology with a capacity of 485 MWs on 4,138 acres of BLM-administered public land, as opposed to the originally approved 1,000 MWs on 6,831 acres. The NBSEC has submitted an amendment to the existing ROW grant (CACA 048811) to reduce the overall acreage of the project, change the authorized technology from concentrating solar trough to solar PV, adjust other aspects of the project layout related to the technology change, and reduce the BSPP's authorized capacity from 1,000 MW to 485 MW (the "Modified Project"). In connection with its development of the Modified Project, NBSEC filed a partial relinquishment of the existing ROW grant with the BLM on March 7, 2013.

The BLM has determined that the requested amendment for the Modified Project is not within the range of alternatives analyzed in the EIS prepared in connection with the original 2010 decision for the project; therefore, the BLM must undertake additional NEPA analysis to evaluate the proposed amendment.

The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of this environmental analysis, including alternatives, and to guide the process for developing the Draft EIS. The BLM has identified the following preliminary issues: Noise, visual resources, wildlife, vegetation, hydrology, air quality, and cumulative effects along with other areas with high potential for renewable energy development. The BLM published the Final EIS for the existing project on August 20, 2010. The BLM will incorporate the analysis of that Project by reference to the extent appropriate, and also seeks comments on whether new issues or information have arisen since the publication of that Final EIS. Although the proposed amendment would be entirely within the project footprint analyzed in the 2010 Final EIS, the BLM has determined that a new EIS would assist in planning and decision-making on whether to approve NBSEC's proposed amendment.

The BLM, in consultation with the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and consulting parties pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(b)(2), are phasing final identification and evaluation of historic properties for the project pursuant to 36 CFR 800.4(b)(2) because the alternatives under consideration consist of large land areas. In accordance with the requirements of 36 CFR 800.4(b)(2), the BLM executed a Programmatic Agreement (PA) in connection with its prior approval of the BSPP. The PA sets

forth the process for completing phased compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA and also addresses subsequent modifications to the Project.

The BLM previously notified and invited federally recognized tribes to participate in the development of the PA. The Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians and the Colorado River Indian Tribes signed the PA as Concurring Parties. Tribes expressed their views and concerns about the importance and sensitivity of specific cultural resources to which they attach religious and cultural significance. The BLM will continue to consult with the tribes throughout the implementation of the PA regarding the adverse effects to historic properties to which they attach religious and cultural significance. The BLM will carry out its responsibilities to consult with tribes on a government-to-government basis and other members of the public pursuant to Section 106, Executive Order 13175, and other laws and policies to the extent applicable to its consideration of NBSEC's proposed amendment to the BSPP ROW grant. Tribal concerns, including impacts on Indian trust assets and potential impacts to cultural resources, will be given due consideration as part of that process.

Federal, State, and local agencies, along with tribes and other stakeholders that may be interested in or affected by the BLM's decision on the proposed project and amendment of the existing ROW authorization, are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate in the development of the environmental analysis as a cooperating agency.

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware 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.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7, 43 CFR 1610.2, 2091.3–1(e), and 2804.25(e).

Thomas Pogacnik,
Deputy State Director, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[LLNVS0100.L51010000.
ER0000.LVRWF1304100; NVN–085801,
NVN–088592, NVN–089530, and NVN–
090050; MO# 4500053295; TAS: 14X5017]

Notice To Extend Mineral Segregation for the Proposed Silver State Solar Project Near Primm in Clark County, Nevada

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Publication of this notice serves to extend the segregation of the identified lands for an additional two years from appropriation pursuant to the public land laws, including location pursuant to the *General Mining Act*, but not the *Mineral Lands Leasing Act* or the authority of the *Materials Act of 1947*, subject to valid existing rights in existence prior to the original segregation. This segregation extension is warranted to provide for the orderly administration of the public lands to facilitate the development of valuable renewable energy resources and to avoid conflicts between renewable energy generation and mining claims.

DATES: *Effective Date:* September 1, 2013.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information or to have your name added to the mailing list, contact Gregory Helseth, Renewable Energy Project Manager, at 702–515–5173; or email at SilverStateSouthEIS@blm.gov. Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1–800–877–8339 to contact the above individual. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Silver State Solar, LLC, has submitted a right-of-way (ROW) application for the construction, operation, maintenance, and termination of a solar energy generation facility on a portion of the ROW application on 13,043 acres of public lands east of Primm, Nevada. The ROW application is assigned BLM case number NVN–089530. This application expands on ROW application NVN–085801. The proposed solar energy project would consist of photovoltaic panels and related ROW appurtenances, including a substation and switchyard facilities, and would produce about 250 megawatts of electricity. The lands