

DOCKETED

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| Description: | Public Letter |
| Filer: | Alicia Campos |
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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

1516 NINTH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5512
www.energy.ca.gov



October 18, 2013

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE
STAFF ASSESSMENT – PART B
FOR THE PROPOSED BLYTHE SOLAR POWER PROJECT AMENDMENT
(09-AFC-6C)**

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

This notice is to inform you that the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) staff has prepared a Staff Assessment-Part B (SA) for Revised Petition to Amend to modify the Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP). The SA Part B contains staff's independent, objective evaluation of the Revised Petition to Amend for the technical areas of Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, Land Use, Traffic and Transportation, Visual Resources, and Alternatives.

The SA Part A, which was published on September 23, 2013, and Part B, are now available for public review and comment at http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/blythe_solar/

Under its certified regulatory program, Energy Commission staff has completed an independent assessment of the BSPP Revised Petition to Amend (09-AFC-6C). The Energy Commission staff's final conclusions are summarized in this notice. The Energy Commission encourages public participation in the review of the BSPP Amendment.

Written comments for the SA Part B should be provided by November 8, 2013. If you wish to provide comments on the SA, please submit comments to the Energy Commission using the Energy Commission's e-commenting feature by going to the Energy Commission's Blythe Solar Power Project webpage, http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/blythe_solar/, and click on the "Submit e-Comment" link. A full name, e-mail address, comment title, and either a comment or an attached document (.doc, .docx, or .pdf format) is mandatory. After entering CAPTCHA (a challenge-response test used by the system to ensure that responses are generated by a human user and not a computer), click on the "Agree & Submit Your Comment" button to submit the comment to the Energy Commission Dockets Unit. If you are preparing non-electronic written comments, please mail or hand deliver them to:

California Energy Commission
Dockets Unit, MS-14
Docket No. 09-AFC-6C
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

All comments and materials filed with the Dockets Unit will become a part of the public record of the proceeding. Additionally, your comments will be posted on the Energy Commission's BSPP webpage.

You can also subscribe to receive e-mail notification of all notices and announcements at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/listservers>. By being on this email list, you will receive all project related notices and documents pertaining to the project's evaluation and review. For additional information contact Mary Dyas, Energy Commission Compliance Project Manager, at (916) 651-8891 or email at mary.dyas@energy.ca.gov.

A public workshop and hearing will be scheduled in mid November 2013, after the comment period for Part B of the SA, to discuss all comments. The SA will serve as staff's formal testimony and submitted into the evidentiary record for Committee consideration. The Committee will consider the recommendations submitted by staff, applicant, intervenors, government agencies, tribes and the public prior to proposing its decision. In the last step, the full Energy Commission will issue the final decision.

SUMMARY OF THE BLYTHE SOLAR POWER PROJECT

On June 28, 2012, Palo Verde Solar I, LLC (PVSI), the original project owner, filed a petition with the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) requesting to modify the Blythe Solar Power Project by replacing the solar thermal technology completely with photovoltaic (PV) generating technology. On April 12, 2013, NextEra Blythe Solar Energy Center, LLC (NextEra Blythe Solar), current owner of the BSPP, filed a Revised Petition to Amend with the Energy Commission requesting to modify the approved BSPP (http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/blythe_solar/) to change the solar thermal power-generating technology of the approved project from parabolic trough technology to photovoltaic (PV) technology.

The project, as licensed by the Energy Commission on September 15, 2010, is a 1,000-megawatt (MW) solar thermal power-generating facility utilizing parabolic trough technology on approximately 7,043 acres. The project site is located approximately 8 miles west of the City of Blythe and 2 miles north of the Interstate-10 freeway, on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Riverside County, California.

The modifications proposed in this revised Petition to Amend include replacing the parabolic trough solar collection system and associated heat transfer fluid, steam generator and steam turbine with PV modules. The PV modules will consist of a tracker system, fixed tilt system, or combination of the two systems. NextEra Blythe Solar is requesting the Decision be amended to allow the specific combination of PV technologies to be selected prior to construction without the need for filing another amendment.

The modified BSPP would be comprised of four phases designed to generate a total of approximately 485 MW (nominal) of electricity when completed. The first three units (phases) would consist of approximately 125 MW alternating current (AC) each. The fourth unit would generate approximately 110 MW AC. All four units would share an operations and maintenance facility, one on-site switchyard, access and maintenance roads, perimeter fencing and other ancillary security facilities, and a 230-kV gen-tie line. The transmission corridor is located in the center of the site with the exact location to be determined during final design.

ENERGY COMMISSION LICENSING AUTHORITY

The Energy Commission is responsible for reviewing and ultimately approving or denying all applications for construction, operation and modification of thermal electric power plants, 50 megawatts (MW) and greater, proposed for construction in California. In the case of this amendment, the Energy Commission is responsible for reviewing and ultimately approving or denying the requested project changes. The Energy Commission's facility certification process carefully examines public health and safety, environmental impacts and engineering aspects of proposed power plants and all related facilities, such as electric transmission lines and natural gas and water pipelines. The Energy Commission is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and through its certified regulatory program produces Staff Assessments rather than Draft and Final Environmental Impact Reports.

SUMMARY OF THE CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION STAFF'S FINAL CONCLUSIONS

Based upon the information provided, discovery achieved and analyses completed to date, Summary Table-1 illustrates the Energy Commission staff's assessment of the Petition to Amend and compares it to the originally approved Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP) as previously licensed by the Commission. Please review the SA for a detailed discussion of the significance of staff's conclusions.

**Summary Table 1
Environmental and Engineering Assessment**

| Technical Area | Original Final Decision | | Revised Petition to Amend | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | Complies with LORS* | Impacts Mitigated | Complies with LORS* | Impacts Mitigated |
| Environmental Assessment | | | | |
| Air Quality/Greenhouse gases | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Biological Resources | Yes | Yes | Yes | No |
| Cultural Resources | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Hazardous Materials | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Land Use | No | No | Yes | No |
| Noise and Vibration | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Public Health | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Socioeconomics | Yes | N/A | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Soil and Water Resources | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Traffic & Transportation | No | No | Yes | Yes |
| Transmission Line Safety/Nuisance | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Visual Resources | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Waste Management | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Worker Safety and Fire Protection | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |

| Technical Area | Original Final Decision | | Revised Petition to Amend | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | Complies with LORS* | Impacts Mitigated | Complies with LORS* | Impacts Mitigated |
| Engineering Assessment | | | | |
| Facility Design | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Geology & Paleontology | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Power Plant Efficiency | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Power Plant Reliability | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| Transmission System Engineering | Yes | Yes | Provided in Part A | Provided in Part A |
| Alternatives | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

*Laws, Ordinances, Regulations and Standards (LORS)

Public Resources, Contact Information and Additional Sources for Information

If you desire information on how to participate in the Energy Commission’s review of the proposed project, please contact Alana Mathews, the Energy Commission’s Public Adviser, at (916) 654-4489 or toll free in California at (800) 822-6228, or by email at: publicadviser@energy.ca.gov.

The status of the project, copies of notices and other relevant documents are also available on the Energy Commission’s web site: http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/blythe_solar/ . News media inquiries should be directed to Sandy Louey, at (916) 654-4989, or by email at: mediaoffice@energy.ca.gov.

Paper copies of the SA will be available for review at the following local libraries:

Palo Verde Valley Dist. Library
125 W. Chanslor Way
Blythe, CA 92225

Riverside Library – Main Branch
3581 Mission Inn Avenue
Riverside, CA 92501

Cathedral City Branch Library
33520 Date Palm Drive
Cathedral City, CA 92234

Coachella Branch Library
1538 Seventh Street
Coachella, CA 92236

Lake Tamarisk Library
43880 Lake Tamarisk Drive
Desert Center, CA 92239

The SA is also available at the Energy Commission and California State Libraries in Sacramento, and at public libraries in Eureka, Fresno, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. In addition, electronic copies (CDs) will be distributed to those public agencies that would normally have jurisdiction except for the Energy Commission’s exclusive authority to certify sites and related facilities.

If you would like a paper copy or CD of the SA, please fill out the enclosed form and return it to the California Energy Commission, attention: Alicia Campos, Project Assistant, or by e-mail at alicia.campos@energy.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Date: 18 OCTOBER 2013



CHRISTOPHER J. MARXEN
Manager Compliance Office
Siting, Transmission & Environmental Protection
Division

cc: Mail List No. 7368,
Proof of Service list, and
Docket Unit

Please send me a paper copy / CD (**please circle one**) of the California Energy Commission's Staff Assessment (SA) for the proposed Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP), Amendment (09-AFC-6C).

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

FOLD HERE

California Energy Commission
Attention: Alicia Campos
1516 Ninth Street, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

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