

--- WELCOME ---
CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
SITE VISIT / INFORMATIONAL HEARING AND
U.S. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
SCOPING MEETING
FOR THE RIDGECREST SOLAR POWER PROJECT



■ **CEC HEADQUARTERS BUILDING**
■ **1516 9TH STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814**

DOCKET
09-AFC-9
DATE _____
RECD. <u>JAN 19 2010</u>



NOTICE OF TODAY'S SITE VISIT AND HEARING PROVIDED TO:

- Parties,
 - Adjoining landowners,
 - Interested governmental agencies,
- AND*
- Published on the California Energy Commission Website
 - Mailed on December 3, 2009
 - Public Advisor's outreach efforts



THE COMMITTEE

- There are five members of the Energy Commission, two of whom have been appointed as the Committee that will conduct the certification process.
- The Committee will eventually issue a Presiding Member's Proposed Decision (PMPD) containing recommendations on the proposed project to the full Energy Commission.



EX PARTE RULE

- All decisions made in this case will be made solely on the basis of the public record.
- No off-the-record contacts concerning substantive matters are permitted to take place between the parties and the Commissioners, their advisors, this Committee, or the Hearing Officer.



EX PARTE RULE

- Contacts between the parties and the members of the Committee regarding a substantive matter must occur in a public forum or in a writing distributed to all the parties and made available to the public.
- Purpose: to provide full disclosure to all participants of any information that may be used as a basis for the future Decision on this project.



TODAY'S AGENDA

- Public Advisor's Office
- Applicant, Solar Millennium LLC
- CA Energy Commission Staff
- Bureau of Land Management Staff
- Issues Identification Report
- Proposed Schedule
- Public Questions and Scoping Comments



Energy Commission's Role

- **Energy Commission's permitting authority**
 - ❖ Certify "sites" for thermal power plants with a rated capacity of 50 megawatts or greater.
 - ❖ Sites are certified together with their related facilities (i.e. transmission lines, substations, water supply systems, natural gas pipelines, waste disposal facilities, access roads etc.)
 - ❖ Lead state agency for California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)



Local, State and Federal Coordination

- ❖ BLM and Energy Commission Staff work closely with local, state and federal agencies, for example:
 - Local: City of Ridgecrest, Inyokern and surrounding communities
 - Regional: Kern County and Regional Water Quality Control Board
 - State: Department of Fish and Game, Water Board, Office of Historic Preservation, Native American Heritage Commission
 - Federal: Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Parks Service



Overview of Energy Commission's Site Certification Process

1. Data Adequacy
 - ❖ Minimum requirements to accept an Application for Certification
2. Staff Discovery and Analyses
 - ❖ Data Requests and Data Responses
 - ❖ Issues Identification and Public Workshops
 - ❖ Preliminary and then a Final Staff Assessment (FSA) (can also produce “joint documents”)
3. Committee Evidentiary Hearing and Decision
 - ❖ Evidentiary Hearings consider the FSA and other information
 - ❖ Presiding Member's Proposed Decision (PMPD)
 - ❖ PMPD hearing and Commission decision



Energy Commission Staff's Role in the Site Certification Process

- ❖ Produce an “environmental document” that identifies and analyzes the proposed project’s design and engineering, conformance with Laws, Ordinances, Regulations and Standards (LORS), potential impacts to the human environment and related mitigation measures. Staff recommends Conditions of Certification to bring the project into compliance with LORS and or to mitigate environmental impacts to “less than significant” levels.
- ❖ Make the environmental review process open to the public and inclusive of other local, state and federal agencies.
- ❖ Recommend approval, denial or modifications to the proposed project (Staff’s recommendations are advisory).



Evidentiary Hearing & Decision Process

- ❖ Committee conducts hearings on the proposed project
 - Issues Presiding Member's Proposed Decision (PMPD)
 - PMPD contains findings relating to:
 - Environmental impacts, public health, engineering
 - Project's compliance with LORS
 - Recommends conditions of certification
 - Recommends whether or not to approve the project
- ❖ Full Commission then makes a decision to approve, deny or modify the proposed project.
- ❖ Energy Commission monitors compliance with all conditions of certification, for the life of the project, including closure and decommissioning.





Bureau of Land Management's Role

- **BLM Permitting Authority**

- ❖ Administration of Public Lands Under Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA)
- ❖ Review of Land Use Planning and Processing of Land Use Plan Amendment

> California Desert Conservation Plan (1980)<

- ❖ Issuance of Right-of-Way Grants for Use of Federal Land under 43 CFR 2800
- ❖ Lead Federal agency for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act, and other Federal law compliance





BLM Solar Energy Development Policy



- ❖ WO IM No. 2007-097 (April 4, 2007)
- ❖ Policy: facilitate environmentally responsible commercial development of solar energy projects on public lands.
- ❖ ROW applications for solar energy projects are a high priority and will be processed in a timely manner.
- ❖ If approved, authorize under Title V of FLPMA.
- ❖ Rent established by appraisal.
- ❖ Information on solar energy technology is available at: <http://www.eere.energy.gov/RE/solar.html> or <http://www.nrel.gov>.



■ Ref. Handout WO- IM No. 2007- 097



Summary of BLM ROW Processing and Administration

- BLM:
 - ❖ Regulations: 43 CFR 2800
 - ❖ More info: Right-of-Way Toolkit @

(General ROW)

http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/energy/cost_recovery_regulations.html

(Solar)

http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/energy/solar_energy.html

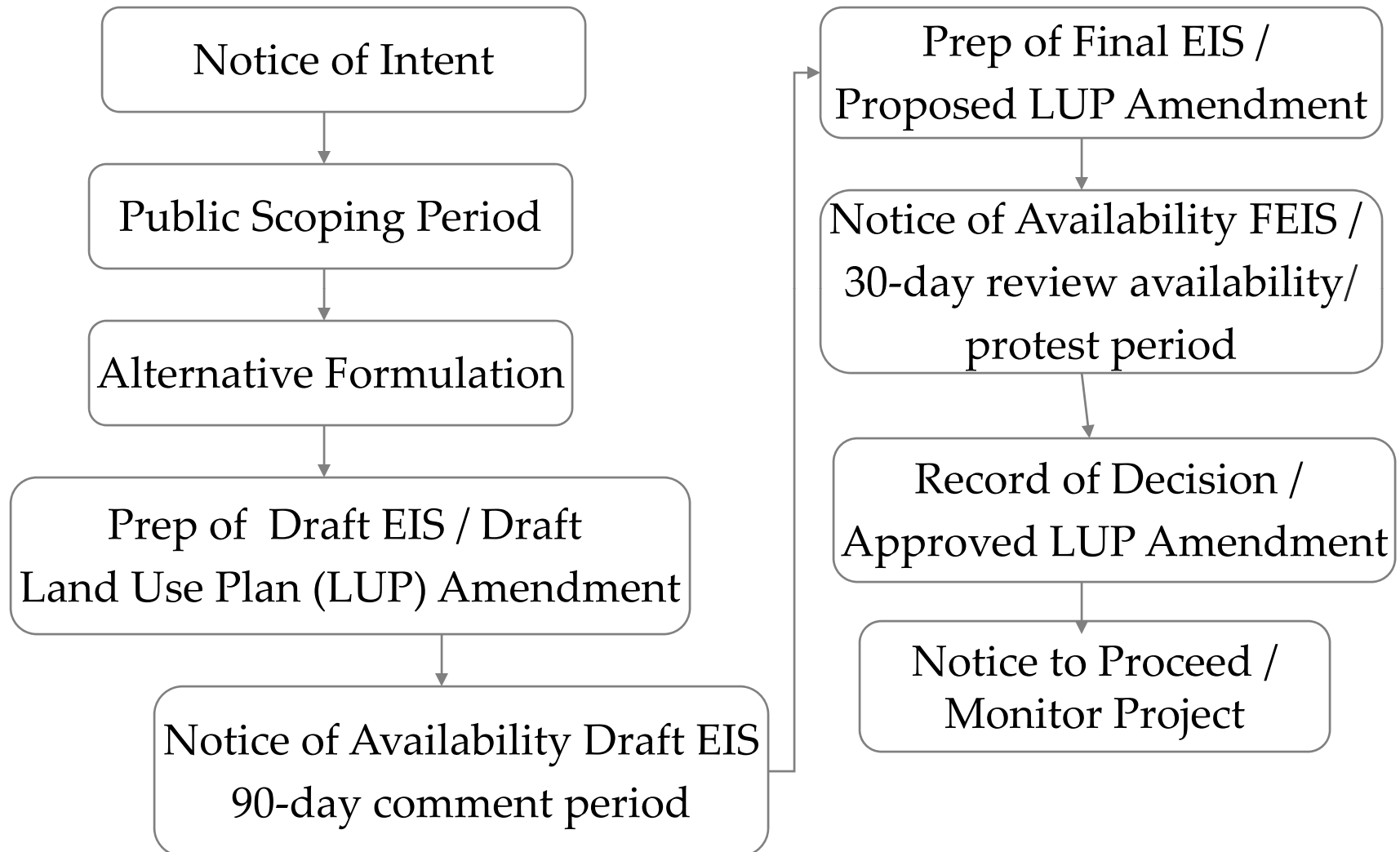


BLM Authorized Officer's Role

- ❖ Initial Response to Proposal
- ❖ Pre-application Screening
- ❖ Accept Application or Reject Proposal
- ❖ Process Application / Land Use Plan Amendment
 - ❖ - Conduct Scoping
 - ❖ - Prepare NEPA EIS document/LUP Amendment
- ❖ Decision on Application / Approve LUP Amendment
- ❖ Authorize the Use
- ❖ Administer through Termination



BLM NEPA EIS / LUP Amendment Process



Energy Commission Contacts and Web Site

- ❖ Committee Assigned
 - James D. Boyd, Vice Chair and Presiding Member
 - Julia Levin*, Commissioner and Associate Member
- ❖ California Energy Commission Staff
 - Raoul Renaud, Commission's Hearing Officer
 - (916) 654-5103, e-mail: rrenaud@energy.state.ca.us
 - Eric Solorio, Project Manager
 - (916) 651-0966 e-mail: esolorio@energy.state.ca.us
 - Web page:
http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solar_millennium_ridgecrest/
 - Public Adviser's Office
 - (916) 654-4489 or (800) 822-6228
 - e-mail: PublicAdviser@energy.state.ca.us



*Commissioner Levin resigned on January 4, 2010.



BLM Contacts and Comment Web Site

- ❖ Janet Eubanks, Project Manager

Phone: (951) 697-5376

e-mail: janet_eubanks@blm.gov

- ❖ BLM Web Page:

http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/cdd/alternative_energy.html or

<http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/ridgecrest.html>

- ❖ Scoping comments to:

California Energy Commission
c/o Eric Solorio, Project Manager
1516 9th Street, MS-15
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

Or email comments to:

esolorio@energy.state.ca.us

(Re: Ridgecrest Solar Power Project)



Public Participation Information

- Open Public Process
 - ❖ Workshops and Hearings noticed at least 15 days in advance
 - ❖ Mailing lists
 - ❖ List Server: www.energy.ca.gov/listservers

- Documents are available for public review at:
 - ❖ Public Libraries in the following counties: Kern, Imperial, Eureka, Sacramento, San Francisco, Fresno, Los Angeles and San Diego
 - ❖ Energy Commission Library in Sacramento
 - ❖ Energy Commission Web site:
http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solar_millennium_ridgecrest/
 - ❖ Dockets Unit at the Energy Commission
1516 9th Street, MS - 4
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512



Public Participation Opportunities

- ❖ Submit written comments or statements to the Commission
- ❖ Provide oral comments at public meetings
- ❖ Participate in workshops
- ❖ Become a formal intervenor (Contact Public Advisor's Office)
- ❖ Provide written comments on the Scoping, SA/DEIS, SA/FEIS and PMPD



Energy Commission Project Web Page

The screenshot shows the California Energy Commission website for the (Solar Millennium) Ridgecrest Solar Power Project. The page includes a navigation menu with categories like Home, Jobs, Reports & News, Climate Change, Efficiency, Electricity & Nat Gas, Power Plants, Renewables, R & D, Transmission, Transportation, and Funding. A search bar is located in the top right corner.

(Solar Millennium) Ridgecrest Solar Power Project

Docket Number: 09-AFC-9 (Application For Certification)

Committee Overseeing This Case:
 James D. Boyd, Commissioner, Presiding Member
 Julia Levin, Commissioner, Associate Member
 Hearing Officer: Raoul Renaud

Key Dates

- 9/1/2009 - Application for Certification (AFC) filed

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Solar Millennium LLC is proposing to construct a utility-scale solar thermal electric power generating facility named the Ridgecrest Solar Power Project. The project will have a nominal output of 250 megawatts (MW), consisting of a single power plant utilizing two solar fields.

The project will be located in the high northern Mojave Desert in northeastern Kern County, California, about five miles southwest of the City of Ridgecrest, California. The project right-of-way (ROW), for which a ROW grant sought by the Applicant from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), will extend across approximately 3,920 acres of public lands owned by the federal government.

The project facilities will occupy 1,440 acres of the 3,920-acre site, and there will be a total disturbance area (including areas outside the facility fence line), of approximately 1,760 acres. The project will utilize solar parabolic trough technology to generate electricity. With this technology, arrays of parabolic mirrors collect heat energy from the sun and refocus the radiation on a receiver tube located at the focal point of the parabola. A heat transfer fluid (HTF) is heated to high temperatures (750 degrees Fahrenheit) as it circulates through the receiver tubes. The heated HTF is then piped through a series of heat exchangers where it releases its stored heat to generate high pressure steam. The steam is then fed to a traditional steam turbine generator where electricity is produced.

Energy Commission and Bureau of Land Management Joint Environmental Review Process

The BLM and the Energy Commission have executed a Memorandum of Understanding concerning their intent to conduct a joint environmental review of the project in a single National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process. It is in the interest of the BLM and the Energy Commission to share in the preparation of a joint environmental analysis of the proposed project to avoid duplication of staff efforts, to share staff expertise and information, to promote intergovernmental coordination at the local, state, and federal levels, and to facilitate public review by producing a joint environmental document and a more efficient environmental review process.


For Questions About This Siting Case Contact:
 Eric K. Solorio
 Project Manager
 Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division
 California Energy Commission
 1516 Ninth Street, MS-15
 Sacramento, CA 95814

On the right side of the page, there is a calendar for December 2009, a section for the January 05, 2010 Ridgecrest Informational Hearing, Environmental Scoping Meeting and Public Site Visit, and a List Server sign-up form.



BLM Project Web Page

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT




California

Search BLM Go

BLM > California > California Desert District > Alternative Energy Print Page

California Desert District

Renewable Energy



Outreach	Quick Links	California Energy Commission Links
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update in Progress Solar Energy Communication Plan (pdf) • Terminology • Department of Energy • Sandia National Laboratories • BLM Washington Office Solar Energy • BLM Washington Office Solar Energy PEIS • BLM Washington Office NOI Solar Energy PEIS • BLM California State Office Energy • Solar PEIS Website • Western Governors' Association Clean Energy and Diversified Energy Initiative 2005-2007 Progress Report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solar Energy Applications • Wind Energy Applications • Geothermal Energy • Fast-Track Renewable Energy Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systems Assessment and Facilities Siting Division • Status of Projects • Energy facilities Siting / Licensing Process • Large Solar Energy Projects
Native American Consultation	Guidance	Memorandum of Understanding
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Notice to Native 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TM 2000-042 Wind Energy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BLM/CEC MOU (DPE)



STAFF'S ISSUES IDENTIFICATION REPORT

■ Purpose

- ❖ Inform the Committee and all stakeholders of significant issues that will require an early focus to properly characterize and assess.
- ❖ The issues in the initial report are not limiting. Issues will likely continue to arise as more information is developed.



Potential Issue Areas

Ridgecrest Solar Power Project

Resource Areas with Significant Issues

- ❖ Biological Resources
- ❖ Cultural Resources
- ❖ Land Use (OHV Routes)
- ❖ Traffic and Transportation
- ❖ Transmission System Engineering
- ❖ Water Resources
- ❖ Visual Resources
- ❖ Cumulative Effects



Biological Resources

Potential Issues

To be presented separately...

- ❖ Type and quantity of listed species
- ❖ Habitat, connectivity and movement



Cultural Resources

Potential Issues

- ❖ A matter of concern to Native Americans is the mountainous area to the southwest of the proposed project site, known as the El Paso Mountains Sacred Lands.
- ❖ The El Paso Mountains Sacred Lands are listed in the Native American Heritage Commission's database of Sacred Lands.
- ❖ The project could potentially impact the view shed from this area that has been identified by Native Americans as sacred.



Land Use Potential Issues

- ❖ Exclusive use of no more than 3,926 acres of public land could eliminate other BLM authorized land uses
- ❖ Cumulative Impacts



Traffic and Transportation

Potential Issues

- ❖ Caltrans research (year 2007) shows that the Brown Road/S. China Lake Blvd./US 395 intersection (post mile 15) has an overall collision rate 2.8 times higher than the State-wide average for a similar type facility.
- ❖ In both phases of the project (construction and operational) additional trips would be generated by assorted vehicle types (passengers, trucks/construction vehicles).
- ❖ Although there may be potential to improve existing access at Brown Road, Caltrans and staff believe that a new access point from US 395 is likely a necessity for the project.



Transmission System Engineering

Potential Issues

- ❖ The July 28, 2009 California Independent System Operator (California ISO) Phase I Interconnection study for the Ridgecrest Solar Power Project (RSPP) was completed for a 750 MW net generation plant. This study was provided to staff *without* the necessary Appendices.
- ❖ At a minimum, the complete Phase 1 Interconnection Study is required for staff to determine the potential project's impacts on the existing transmission network. The CEQA analysis of potential downstream transmission upgrades could cause a delay in the licensing process for the RSPP.



Water Resources

Potential Issues

- ❖ The project proposes using high quality groundwater from Indian Wells Valley Water District from wells located within the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Basin for site construction and plant operations that include power cycle makeup water, mirror wash water, domestic potable water, dust suppression water and cooling of ancillary equipment.
- ❖ Staff's preliminary review of data presented by the applicant suggests that overdraft in the basin will continue and will be exacerbated by the additional water requirements of the Ridgecrest Solar Project.
- ❖ Staff is concerned that 1,470 acre-feet is not a realistic amount for meeting construction needs.



Visual Resources

Potential Issues

- ❖ New intrusions on the landscape from solar troughs affects 1,800 acres +/-.
- ❖ Development of VRM classification



Cumulative Effects

- ❖ NEPA and CEQA both require a “cumulative effects” analysis of the proposed project which would consider its environmental impacts *together with* the potential environmental impacts of *other* proposed projects.



"MILESTONE" SCHEDULE

Milestones to Permit Solar Thermal Energy Projects with Joint BLM-CEC Jurisdiction by December, 2010

Schedule A

For solar thermal projects 50 MW or larger with joint BLM-CEC jurisdiction. Projects are proposed on federal land, or private or state land with a confirmed BLM federal ESA section 7 consultation lead. [Permitting agencies: BLM, CEC, FWS, DFG]

Complete	Applicant BLM Plan of Development (POD) approved
11/4/2009	Project AFC deemed data adequate by the California Energy Commission (CEC)
	BLM publishes Notice of Intent in Federal Register
	CEC/BLM staff file Issues Identification Report
	CEC/BLM staff file data requests
11/19/2009	Informational hearing and site visit/BLM scoping meeting
	CEC/BLM staff data request workshop
12/1/2009	Applicant provides data responses
12/10/2009	Data response and issue resolution workshop
	Initiate consultation with State Historical Preservation Offices (SHPOs)
1/11/2010	Administrative Staff Assessment (SA)/Draft EIS circulated for agency staff review
1/15/2010	Selected draft SA sections posted on CEC and BLM websites
2/19/2010	Notice of Availability (NOA) of SA/Draft EIS in Federal Register
	SA/DEIS filed (90-day comment period begins)
	BLM submits Biological Assessment (BA) to FWS. Start 135-day section 7 consultation
3/19/2010	BA determined adequate by FWS
5/3/2010	Prehearing/Evidentiary hearings start (evidentiary record remains open until key items such as FWS Biological Opinion are received)
5/20/2010	Close BLM comment period
5/20-7/15/2010	BLM and FWS consultation
7/1/2010	Prepare responses to comments and Staff Assessment Errata (SAE)/FEIS
7/9/2010	Administrative SAE/FEIS circulated for agency staff review
7/15/2010	USFWS issues Biological Opinion
7/30/2010	NOA of SAE/FEIS in Federal Register
	SAE/FEIS distributed
8/30/2010	Expedited Governor's review period ends
	BLM Plan Amendment Protest period ends
9/15/2010	CEC Committee files Presiding Member's Proposed Decisions (PMPD)
10/8/2010	CEC Comment Hearing on PMPD
10/15/2010	Close of public comments on PMPD
10/29/2010	Addendum/revised PMPD
11/3/2010	BLM Record of Decision/Right-of-Way issued
	CEC Decision
12/3/2010	Notice to Proceed Issued



Staff's Proposed Schedule

- Completing the Commission's certification process by December 2010 will depend on:
 - ❖ Applicant's timely response to staff's data requests
 - ❖ Determinations by other local, state, and federal agencies
 - ❖ Timely preparation of required documents
 - ❖ Protests received during the NEPA comment period
 - ❖ Other factors not yet known

