

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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

DOCKET	
09-AFC-9	
DATE	MAR 29 2010
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March 29, 2010

Dear Librarian:

DOCUMENT HANDLING FOR THE STAFF ASSESSMENT / DRAFT PLAN AMENDMENT / DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE RIDGECREST SOLAR POWER PROJECT, APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION (09-AFC-9)

Please make the enclosed Staff Assessment/Draft Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SA/DPA/DEIS) available for those who may wish to be informed about the project. Additionally, please place the enclosed letter to the public in the inside cover of the SA/DPA/DEIS. We request that you not allow the SA/DPA/DEIS or any of its contents to be removed from the library. To increase accessibility of the document, we ask, if possible, that you cross reference it as a general reference work under the title and author categories, as well as under such subjects as "Energy Commission," "electricity," "energy/generation," "power plant siting," or any other relevant subject.

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact the Energy Commission's Project Manager, Eric Solorio, at (916) 651-0966, or by e-mail at esolorio@energy.state.ca.us.

Sincerely,

Originally Signed By
Eileen Allen, Manager
Energy Facilities Siting Office

Enclosure: Letter to the public and CD/hard copy containing the **Staff Assessment/Draft Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement** for the Ridgecrest Solar Power Project (09-AFC-9)

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION1516 NINTH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5112

March 29, 2010

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC COMMENT ON THE STAFF ASSESSMENT / DRAFT PLAN AMENDMENT / DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE RIDGECREST SOLAR POWER PROJECT, APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION (09-AFC-9)

This notice is to inform you that the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the California Energy Commission (CEC) have prepared a joint environmental review document deemed a "Staff Assessment/Draft Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SA/DPA/DEIS)". Additionally, this notice is to inform you of the availability of the SA/DPA/DEIS which was published by the CEC on March 26, 2010. The SA/DPA/DEIS contains the BLM's and the CEC's engineering, public health, and environmental evaluation of the proposed RSPP.

The SA/DPA/DEIS will serve as CEC staff's testimony during evidentiary hearings held by the Commission. The Energy Commission Committee assigned to the RSPP proceedings will consider and weigh the testimony and or comments and or recommendations of all interested parties, including Energy Commission staff, the applicant, interveners, public, and other local, state, and federal agencies, before issuing the Presiding Member's Proposed Decision (PMPD) for consideration by the full Energy Commission. The public, intervenors, local, state and federal agencies are encouraged to participate in these hearings. The Energy Commission will issue notices at least ten days prior to any scheduled hearings.

The California Energy Commission encourages public and agency participation in the review of staff's SA/DPA/DEIS. For purposes of the CEC's evidentiary hearings, written comments on the SA/DPA/DEIS should be provided to Eric Solorio, Siting Project Manager, no later than 5:00 p.m., April 30, 2010 at the address on this letterhead (please add "Mail Slot 15") or by email to esolorio@energy.state.ca.us. Technical or project schedule questions should also be directed to Eric Solorio at (916) 651-0966 or by email.

The BLM plans to issue its Notice of Availability in the Federal Register on April 9, 2010 which will begin the BLM's 90-day public comment period on the SA/DPA/DEIS, under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in conjunction with the BLM's review of the RSPP.

SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED RIDGECREST SOLAR POWER PROJECT

On September 1, 2009, Solar Millennium LLC submitted an Application for Certification (AFC) to the California Energy Commission (CEC) to develop the Ridgecrest Solar Power Project (RSPP) on federal land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in Kern County, California. Solar Millennium also submitted an

application to the BLM for a right-of way grant on public land, together with a Plan of Development.

Solar Millennium LLC is proposing to construct a utility-scale solar thermal electric power generating facility. The RSPP will have a nominal output of 250 megawatts (MW), consisting of a single power plant utilizing two solar fields. The RSPP will utilize 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) reaches high temperatures (750 degrees Fahrenheit [°F]) as it circulates through the receiver tubes. The HTF is then piped through a series of heat exchangers where it releases its stored energy to generate high pressure steam. The steam is then fed to a traditional steam turbine generator where electricity is produced.

The project is proposed to be developed on an approximately 2,000-acre site, administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The project site is located in north-eastern Kern County, along U.S Highway 395, just west of the China Lake Boulevard exit. The site is approximately five miles southwest of Ridgecrest, California. Ridgecrest is at the southwestern boundary of the China Lake Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS).

ENERGY COMMISSION'S AND THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT'S JOINT ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS

The BLM and the CEC have prepared a joint environmental review document (SA/DPA/DEIS) because it is in the interest of the BLM and the CEC 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 providing a joint document and a more efficient environmental review process.

Under federal law, the BLM is responsible for processing requests for rights-of-way to authorize the proposed project and associated transmission lines and other facilities to be constructed and operated on land it manages. In processing applications, the BLM must comply with the requirements of NEPA, which requires that federal agencies reviewing projects under their jurisdiction consider the environmental impacts associated with the proposed project construction and operation. In order to comply with NEPA the BLM cooperated with the Energy Commission to prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Draft Plan Amendment that was combined with the Energy Commission's Staff Assessment in a joint document.

As the lead state agency under CEQA, the Energy Commission is responsible for reviewing and ultimately approving or denying all applications to construct and operate thermal electric power plants, 50 MW and greater, in California. The CEC's site 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.

PUBLIC AND AGENCY PARTICIPATION

The BLM and the CEC have jointly conducted three public workshops and two formal scoping meetings. The BLM and the CEC will conduct at least two more public workshops to discuss the contents of the SA/DPA/DEIS and continue to work through any outstanding issues. These workshops will provide the public as well as local, state and federal agencies the opportunity to ask questions about, and provide input on, the proposed project. All public notices will be made in accordance with the Energy Commission's notice requirements, and the BLM's notice requirements set forth by NEPA and BLM's environmental review policies. Please direct your technical or project schedule questions to the Energy Commission's Project Manager, Eric K. Solorio, at (916) 651-0966, or by e-mail at esolorio@energy.state.ca.us.

If you desire information on participating in the Energy Commission's review of the project, please contact the Energy Commission's Public Adviser's Office, at (916) 654-4489 or toll free in California, at (800) 822-6228. The Public Adviser's Office can also be contacted via email at publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us. News media inquiries should be directed to the media office at (916) 654-4989 or via email at mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us.

The status of the proposed project, copies of notices, an electronic version of the SA/DPA/DEIS, and other relevant documents are also available on the Energy Commission's web site at:

http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solar_millennium_ridgecrest/index.html.

You can also subscribe to receive e-mail notification of all notices at <http://www.energy.ca.gov/listservers>. By being on the mailing list, you will receive notices of all project-related activities and notices when documents related to the proposed project's evaluation are available for review. If you want your name removed from the mailing list, please contact April Albright, Project Assistant, at (916) 653-1640 or by email at aalbrigh@energy.state.ca.us.

If you would like a paper copy or CD of the SA/DPA/DEIS, please contact April Albright, Project Assistant, at (916) 653-1640 or by email at aalbrigh@energy.state.ca.us.



**BEFORE THE ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
1516 NINTH STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
1-800-822-6228 – WWW.ENERGY.CA.GOV**

**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION
For the *RIDGECREST SOLAR
POWER PROJECT***

Docket No. 09-AFC-9

**PROOF OF SERVICE
(Revised 3/2/2010)**

APPLICANT

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DECLARATION OF SERVICE

I, April Albright, declare that on, April 1, 2010, I served and filed copies of the attached Public and Agency Notice of Availability of the Document Handling Letter for the Staff Assessment/ Draft Plan Amendment/Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The original document, filed with the Docket Unit, is accompanied by a copy of the most recent Proof of Service list, located on the web page for this project at:

[http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solar_millennium_ridgecrest].

The document has been sent to both the other parties in this proceeding (as shown on the Proof of Service list) and to the Commission's Docket Unit, in the following manner:

(Check all that Apply)

For service to all other parties:

sent electronically to all email addresses on the Proof of Service list;

by personal delivery;

by delivery on this date, for mailing with the United States Postal Service with first-class postage thereon fully prepaid, to the name and address of the person served, for mailing that same day in the ordinary course of business; that the envelope was sealed and placed for collection and mailed on that date to those addresses **NOT** marked "email preferred."

AND

For filing with the Energy Commission:

sending an original paper copy and one electronic copy, mailed and emailed respectively, to the address below (preferred method);

OR

depositing in the mail an original and 12 paper copies, as follows:

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

Attn: Docket No. 09-AFC-9

1516 Ninth Street, MS-4

Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

docket@energy.state.ca.us

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct, that I am employed in the county where this mailing occurred, and that I am over the age of 18 years and not a party to the proceeding.

Original signed by: _____
April Albright