

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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



August 6, 2012

**NOTICE OF RECEIPT OF AN AMENDMENT TO THE
 APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION FOR
 THE RIO MESA SOLAR ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY
 (11-AFC-04)**

California Energy Commission

DOCKETED**11-AFC-4**

TN # 66485

AUG 06 2012

BACKGROUND

On October 14, 2011, BrightSource Energy, Inc., submitted an Application for Certification (AFC) to the California Energy Commission (11-AFC-04) to construct and operate the Rio Mesa Solar Electric Generating Facility (Rio Mesa SEGf).

On October 28, 2011, the Energy Commission mailed a Notice of Receipt (NOR) containing the following information: 1) The Energy Commission's receipt of the filing of the original AFC, 2) a brief project description, 3) an overview of the Energy Commission's site certification process, 4) a summary of the agency/public participation process, and 5) where information related to the proceeding could be obtained, including a copy of the AFC.

On November 16, 2011, the Energy Commission deemed the AFC incomplete. In response to the Energy Commission's decision, on November 18, 2011 the applicant submitted a Supplement to the AFC wherein they provided a response addressing the identified inadequacies. On November 22, 2011, the Energy Commission mailed another NOR stating that a Supplement that had been submitted along with a copy of the Supplement or identifying where the information could be found. A subsequent Supplement #1A was submitted by the applicant on December 9, 2011 and a related NOR was mailed on December 14, 2011 identifying receipt of Supplement #1A, along with a copy of Supplement #1A or indicating where the information could be found.

On July 23, 2012, the applicant submitted an amended AFC, described by the applicant as an "Environmental Enhancement Proposal". The amended AFC was submitted with new text (underlined) and deleted text (~~strike through~~) shown to more easily follow the project changes. The primary differences from the original proposal include: eliminating one-third of the project proposed on lands managed by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), moving the location of the project switchyard and common area facilities to another area within the same overall project site, and moving the location of the natural gas tap/meter station. For agencies and libraries, enclosed is a copy of the applicant's amended AFC. The applicant's amended AFC filing, referred to on the project website as "Applicant's Environmental Enhancement Proposal – Amending the Project from Three Power Plants to Two" is located at <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/riomesa/index.html>.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Rio Mesa SEGF site is proposed to be located on the Palo Verde Mesa in Riverside County, California, approximately 13 miles southwest of the City of Blythe. As currently proposed, the Rio Mesa SEGF project would comprise two solar fields and associated facilities encompassing a total of approximately 3,805 acres. If approved, the two power plants, solar fields, and associated facilities would be located on private land leased from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California while the project gen-tie-line, emergency and construction electrical power supply line, and primary access road would be located on federal land administered by the BLM. Each solar plant would generate approximately 250 megawatts (MW), for a total net output of 500 MW and would use heliostats – elevated mirrors guided by a tracking system mounted on pylons – to focus the sun’s rays on a receiver located atop a 750-foot tall solar power tower near the center of each solar field. Each solar plant would utilize approximately 85,000 heliostats.

If the proposed project is approved by the Energy Commission, the applicant plans to begin construction on the first plant in the fourth quarter of 2013 with commercial operation anticipated in the fourth quarter of 2015. The second plant is planned to be constructed in the first quarter of 2014 with commercial operation anticipated in the first quarter of 2016.

The applicant has applied for a ROW grant from the BLM for portions of the project located on public lands administered by the BLM. The components located within federal lands, along with the entire project, as a connected action, will be reviewed under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), for which the BLM is the lead agency.

ENERGY COMMISSION’S SITE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

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 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 because the siting process is a certified regulatory program, the Energy Commission produces several environmental and decision documents rather than an Environmental Impact Report. The issuance of a certificate by the Energy Commission is in lieu of any local or state permit, and federal permit, to the extent permitted by federal law.

The first step in the review process is for Energy Commission staff to determine whether the AFC contains all the information required by California Power Plant Site Certification regulations. For this project, the AFC was deemed data adequate on December 14, 2011, and the project is currently going through the issue analysis phase.

Under its certified regulatory program, the Energy Commission prepares and publishes both a Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) and a Final Staff Assessment (FSA) which are the legal equivalents of an Environmental Impact Report. After allowing for a public comment period on the PSA, staff will prepare and publish the FSA which will serve as staff’s formal testimony in evidentiary hearings to be held by the Energy Commission Committee assigned to hear this case. The Committee will hold evidentiary hearings and will consider the recommendations presented by staff, applicant, intervenors, government

agencies, and the public, prior to proposing its decision. In the last step, the full Energy Commission will issue the final decision.

As part of our review process, the staff of the Energy Commission endeavors to work closely with local, state, and federal agencies to ensure that all laws, ordinances, regulations and standards are met and incorporated into the final decision of the Energy Commission.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Over the past several months, the Energy Commission has conducted a number of public workshops and hearings on the proposal to determine whether the proposed project should be approved for construction and operation and under what set of conditions. These workshops and hearings provided the public as well as local, state and federal agencies the opportunity to ask questions about, and provide input on, the proposed project. The Energy Commission will continue to issue notices for these workshops and hearings at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

This NOR has been mailed to all parties that requested placement on the mailing list during the pre-filing period and to property owners located within 1000 feet of the proposed project site and 500 feet of project linear features. 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. Alternately, if you would prefer to receive e-mail notifications about project related meetings and documents, sign up on the list serve at www.energy.ca.gov/listservers/. If you want your name removed from the mailing list, please contact Cenne Jackson, Project Assistant, at (916) 651-9010 or by email at cenne.jackson@energy.ca.gov.

You can find information about the project and proceedings on the project website: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/riomesa/index.html>. Please direct your technical or project schedule questions to Pierre Martinez, Project Manager, at (916) 651-3765, or by e-mail at pierre.martinez@energy.ca.gov.

Agencies and members of the public who wish to provide written comments on the Amendment are asked to submit comments to the Energy Commission Dockets Unit. Please include the docket number 11-AFC-04 in the subject line or first paragraph of your comments. Those submitting comments electronically should provide them in either Microsoft Word format or as a Portable Document Format (PDF) to [\[docket@energy.ca.gov\]](mailto:docket@energy.ca.gov). Please include your name or organization's name in the file name. Those preparing non-electronic written comments should mail or hand deliver them to:

California Energy Commission
Dockets Unit, MS-4
Docket No. 11-AFC-04
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

All written comments and materials filed with the Dockets Unit will become part of the public record of the proceeding. Additionally, comments may be posted on the website. If you desire information on participating in the Energy Commission's review of the project, please contact the Energy Commission's Public Adviser, Jennifer Jennings, 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.ca.gov.

AVAILABILITY OF THE AFC DOCUMENT

Copies of the Amended AFC are available for public inspection at the following public libraries:

Palo Verde Valley District Library 125 West Chanslor Way Blythe, CA 9225-1245	Riverside Main Library 3581 Mission Inn Avenue Riverside, CA 92501
Lake Tamarisk Library 43880 Lake Tamarisk Drive Desert Center, CA 92239	Coachella Branch Library 1538 Seventh Street Coachella, CA 92236
Imperial County Free Library 1125 Main Street El Centro, CA 92243	

Copies are also available at the Energy Commission's Library in Sacramento, the California State Library in Sacramento, and at California public libraries in Eureka, Fresno, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and San Diego. In addition, copies 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.

Sincerely,

Date: _____

Chris Davis, Manager
Siting Office

cc: Docket (11-AFC-04)
Proof of Service List
Property Owner List No. 7412 (Notice)
Agency List No.7413 (Notice and CD)
Library List No. 7414 (Notice, hardcopy and/or CD)



**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 *RIO MESA SOLAR*
*ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY***

**DOCKET NO. 11-AFC-04
PROOF OF SERVICE
(Revised 7/11/12)**

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DECLARATION OF SERVICE

I, Cenne Jackson, declare that on August 6, 2012, I served and filed a copy of the attached document dated August 6, 2012. This document is accompanied by the most recent Proof of Service list, located on the web page for this project at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/riomesa/index.html>.

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

(Check all that Apply)

For service to all other parties:

- Served electronically to all e-mail addresses on the Proof of Service list;
- Served by delivering on this date, either personally, or for mailing with the U.S. 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 mailing on that date to those addresses **NOT** marked "e-mail preferred."

AND

For filing with the Docket Unit at the Energy Commission:

- by sending electronic copies to the e-mail address below (preferred method); **OR**
- by depositing an original and 12 paper copies in the mail with the U.S. Postal Service with first class postage thereon fully prepaid, as follows:

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION – DOCKET UNIT
Attn: Docket No. 11-AFC-04
1516 Ninth Street, MS-4
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512
docket@energy.ca.gov

OR, if filing a Petition for Reconsideration of Decision or Order pursuant to Title 20, § 1720:

- Served by delivering on this date one electronic copy by e-mail, and an original paper copy to the Chief Counsel at the following address, either personally, or for mailing with the U.S. Postal Service with first class postage thereon fully prepaid:

California Energy Commission
Michael J. Levy, Chief Counsel
1516 Ninth Street MS-14
Sacramento, CA 95814
michael.levy@energy.ca.gov

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California 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.

Originally Signed By Cenne Jackson