

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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



April 1, 2009

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
PRELIMINARY STAFF ASSESSMENT FOR THE PROPOSED BEACON SOLAR
ENERGY PROJECT
(08-AFC-2)**

**NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKSHOP
Tuesday, April 14, 2009
Starting at 8:00am**

**California City
Council Chambers – City Hall
21000 Hacienda Blvd.
California City, CA 93505
(Wheelchair Accessible)
(Map Attached)**

DOCKET 08-AFC-2	
DATE	APR 01 2009
RECD.	APR 02 2009

**To participate in the meeting by telephone,
please call: 1-866-469-3239 (toll-free in the U.S. and Canada)
Enter passcode: 921 865 825**

TO: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

This notice is to inform you of the availability of the Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) for the Beacon Solar Energy Project (BSEP) Application for Certification (08-AFC-2). The PSA was published on April 1, 2009. The PSA contains the California Energy Commission staff's preliminary engineering and environmental evaluation of the proposed BSEP.

This notice is also to inform you that the Energy Commission staff will hold a workshop to discuss the PSA and further encourage public participation, as it relates to the proposed BSEP and the Energy Commission's permitting process. The workshop will provide an opportunity for agencies, the public and other interested parties to present questions and comments on the PSA. All interested agencies and members of the public are invited to participate. The workshop will be held on Tuesday, April 14, 2009 starting at 8:00 a.m. in California City, Council Chambers – City Hall, 21000 Hacienda Blvd., California City, California. Based on the workshop dialogue, written comments received regarding the PSA, and additional information that will be gathered, the Energy Commission staff will revise the PSA where appropriate and issue a Final Staff Assessment (FSA).

The California Energy Commission encourages public participation in the review of the (BSEP) Application for Certification (08-AFC-2). The public comment period for this PSA is from April 1, 2009 to April 30, 2009. Written comments on the PSA should be provided to Eric K. Solorio, Siting Project Manager, no later than 5:00 p.m., April 30, 2009 at the

address on this letterhead or by email to esolorio@energy.state.ca.us. Technical or project schedule questions should be directed to Mr. Eric K. Solorio at (916) 651-0966 or by email.

Following a 30-day public comment period on the PSA, the PSA will be superseded by staff's Final Staff Assessment (FSA) which will serve as staff's formal testimony in evidentiary hearings to be held by the Energy Commission Committee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, interveners, government agencies, and the public prior to proposing its decision. In the last step, the full Energy Commission will issue the final decision.

Summary of the Proposed Beacon Solar Energy Project (BSEP)

On March 14, 2008, the applicant filed an Application for Certification (AFC) with the California Energy Commission seeking permission to develop the proposed 250 megawatt (MW) BSEP project. The applicant proposes to locate BSEP on 2,012 acres within the Mojave Desert, in San Bernardino County, California. The proposed project would also require on-site and off-site infrastructure improvements such as a natural gas pipeline and metering station, new ground water monitoring wells, storm water retention basins and diversion channels, telecommunications lines and road improvements, among others.

The project site arrangement would generally consist of a 1,266-acre, rectangular arrangement of parabolic trough solar collectors surrounding a centrally located power block. The power block facility would house the majority of electrical generation equipment and related systems, with exception of the solar field. The solar collectors would be constructed in long rows across the project site and aligned side by side in a north-south orientation to allow the parabolic troughs to slowly rotate from east to west, tracking the movement of the sun. Adjoining the solar field, immediately to the west, would be various support facilities, including administration and storage buildings, and evaporation ponds.

The applicant's basic process for solar electric power generation would be to utilize parabolic trough solar collectors to concentrate solar energy onto heat collection elements (HCE) that contain a fluid, referred to as heat transfer fluid (HTF). After being heated in the solar troughs, the HTF would be run through a heat exchanger where it would heat water into steam. In the next stage, the steam would be converted into electricity utilizing a Rankine-cycle reheat steam turbine electric generator, which is housed in the power block facility. After the steam is cycled through the turbine, it would be processed through a cooling tower where it would be condensed back to a liquid form (water) and recycled through the system again to drive the steam turbine generator.

The proposed BSEP's primary point of interconnection would be the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) owned Barren Ridge Switching Station. The

new connection would be made by installing a new 230 kilovolt transmission generation tie line (gen-tie line) from the project site to the switching station.

Energy Commission Licensing Authority

The Energy Commission is responsible for reviewing and ultimately approving or denying all applications for construction and operation of thermal electric power plants, 50 MW and greater, proposed for construction 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 produces several environmental and decision documents rather than an Environmental Impact Report.

Summary of the California Energy Commission Staff's Preliminary Conclusions

Staff's preliminary analysis shows that, with the exception of Soil and Water Resources and Visual Resources, the BSEP's potential impacts could be mitigated to a less than significant level. Staff believes the impacts to Visual Resources cannot be mitigated.

Staff is currently waiting to receive from the applicant, new design data related to the engineering of the proposed diversion channel. At this time staff is unable to determine if the BSEP impacts to the floodplain and neighboring properties could be avoided or mitigated. Staff anticipates receiving this data from the applicant no later than April 30, 2009.

Staff's analysis concludes that as proposed, the BSEP would not comply with certain applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS), nor comply with state water policies that pertain to the use of fresh water in industrial applications and power plant cooling systems. BSEP's proposed use of potable groundwater for power plant cooling and the project's process and potable water needs would cause a significant adverse impact to potable water resources and could affect current and future users of groundwater.

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 Elena Miller, 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.state.ca.us.

To request special accommodations for those persons with disabilities, please contact Lourdes Quiroz, the Energy Commission's Equal Employment Opportunity Officer at lquiroz@energy.state.ca.us or by telephone (916) 654-5146. For those persons with

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limited English knowledge, request interpreter services by contacting the Project Manager, Eric Solorio, at (916) 651-0966.

The status of the project, an electronic copy of the PSA, copies of notices, and other relevant documents are also available on the Energy Commission's web site at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/beacon/index.html>

News media inquiries should be directed to Assistant Director, Susanne Garfield, at (916) 654-4989, or by email at: mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us.

The PSA will be available for review at the following local libraries:

Mojave Branch Library
16916 1/2 HWY 14
Mojave, CA 93501-1226

California City Library
9507 California City Blvd.
California City, CA 93505

Ridgecrest Branch Library
131 E. Las Flores Avenue
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Rosamond Branch Library
3611 Rosamond Blvd.
Rosamond, CA 93560

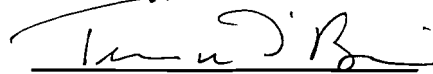
Tehachapi Branch Library
1001 W. Tehachapi Blvd., Suite A-400
Tehachapi, CA 93561

Copies will also be 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.

If you would like a paper copy or CD of the PSA, please fill out the enclosed form and return it to California Energy Commission, Attention: Maria Santourdjian, Siting Project Secretary, at (916) 651-9410, or by e-mail at msergoya@energy.state.ca.us.

Date: 4/1/09

Sincerely,



TERRENCE O'BRIEN, Deputy Director
Energy Facilities Siting Division

Enclosure

Mailed to lists:
7285 - General
7286 - Property Owners

Please send me a paper copy / CD (circle one) of the California Energy Commission staff's Preliminary Staff Assessment for the Beacon Solar Energy Project (BSEP) Application for Certification (08-AFC-2).

Name:

Address:

City/State/Zip:

FOLD HERE

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

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Staple or Tape closed.

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