



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
SOLAR TWO POWER PROJECT
 STIRLING ENERGY SYSTEMS

DOCKET No. 08-AFC-5

DOCKET	
08-AFC-5	
DATE	_____
RECD.	OCT 31 2008

**NOTICE OF INFORMATIONAL HEARING AND PUBLIC SITE VISIT
 AND
 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT SCOPING MEETING**

On June 30, 2008, Stirling Energy Systems (SES) Solar Two, LLC (Applicant), submitted an Application for Certification (AFC) to the Energy Commission to construct a concentrated solar thermal power plant facility approximately 14 miles west of El Centro, in Imperial County. The project site is just south of Plaster City between the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and the Interstate 8 Highway. The Energy Commission has exclusive state-level jurisdiction to license this project and is considering the proposal under a twelve-month review process established by Public Resources Code section 25540.6. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is conducting its own concurrent process to determine whether to approve an amendment to the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan and a right-of-way grant authorizing the construction and operation of the proposed project on federal lands.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Energy Commission has designated a Committee of two commissioners to conduct proceedings on the Application. The Committee has scheduled a public Informational Hearing and Site Visit to discuss the proposed Project and the BLM will conduct a Public Scoping Meeting as described below:

Monday, November 24, 2008
Public Informational/Scoping Meeting begins at 2:00 p.m.
Site Visit begins (bus leaves) at 3:30 p.m.

Imperial County Administration Center
Board Chambers
940 West Main Street, Suite 211
El Centro, California 92243
(Map Attached)

After the Informational Hearing/Scoping Meeting, members of the public are invited to join the Committee and the BLM on a tour of the proposed site. The Applicant will provide transportation to and from the site. For reservations, contact the Energy Commission's Public Adviser's Office at (916) 654-4489 or 1-800-822-6228 or e-mail: [\[publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us\]](mailto:publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us). Please make your reservation prior to **Monday, November 17** so that we can assure you a space.

Background

On October 8, 2008, the Energy Commission began review of the Project. During the review period, Energy Commission staff will determine whether the proposed project complies with applicable laws related to public health and safety, environmental impacts, and engineering requirements. This Informational Hearing/Scoping Meeting is co-sponsored by the Energy Commission and BLM to inform the public about the Project and to invite public participation in the review process.

As the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (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 Energy Commission 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.

Under federal law, the BLM is responsible for processing applications 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 the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires that federal agencies consider the environmental impacts associated with such projects.

Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the BLM and the Energy Commission staff intend to conduct a joint environmental review of the SES Solar Two Project in a single NEPA/ 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 providing a joint document and a more efficient environmental review process.

Purpose of the Informational/Scoping Hearing

This Informational Hearing/Scoping Meeting provides an opportunity for members of the community in the project vicinity to obtain information, to offer comments and concerns, and then to view the project site. The Applicant will explain plans for developing the Project and the related facilities and Energy Commission staff will explain the

administrative licensing process and Staff's role in reviewing the Application. The BLM staff will also explain the role of their agency in the joint process as is described in **Attachment A** to this Notice—BLM's Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement/Staff Assessment.

Project Description

The proposed project would utilize SunCatcher technology, consisting of approximately 30,000 25-kilowatt solar power dishes with a generating capacity of approximately 750 megawatts (MW) to be built in two phases. The first phase would consist up to 12,000 SunCatchers configured in 200 1.5 MW solar groups of 60 SunCatchers per group and have a net nominal generating capacity of 300 MW. The second phase would consist of approximately 18,000 SunCatchers configured in 300 1.5 MW groups with a net generating capacity of 450 MW. Each SunCatcher system consists of an approximate 38-foot high by 40-foot wide solar concentrator dish that supports an array of curved glass mirror facets designed to automatically track the sun and focus solar energy onto a Power Conversion Unit which generates electricity. Related structures would include a main services complex, assembly buildings, a 230-kilovolts (kV) electrical substation, access roads, supply water line, and a 10.3-mile double circuit 230-kV transmission line from the project site to San Diego Gas and Electric's existing Imperial Valley electrical substation. Development of the 450 MW Phase II is dependent on the approval and construction of additional transmission capacity, such as the proposed Sunrise Powerlink 500-kV transmission line that would also interconnect with the Imperial Valley electrical substation.

The engineering and environmental details of the proposed project are contained in the AFC. Copies of the AFC are available at the local public agencies that are involved in the review process and at the following libraries: Imperial County Free Library, Ocotillo and Seeley Branches; Fresno County Library; San Diego Public Library; UCLA, University Research Library; Barstow Branch Library; San Bernardino County Library; Humboldt Library; San Francisco Public Library; the Energy Commission's Library in Sacramento; and the California State Library in Sacramento.

Proposed Schedule and Issue Identification Report

To assist the parties and public in understanding the process, Staff shall file a proposed schedule for project review. Staff shall also file an Issue Identification Report summarizing the major issues. The proposed schedule and Staff's report shall be filed no later than **noon on November 17, 2008**. The Applicant shall file its response, if any, no later than **noon on November 20, 2008**.

Public Adviser and Public Participation

The Energy Commission Public Adviser Office is available to assist the public in participating in the application review process. For those individuals who require general information on how to participate, please contact the Associate Public Adviser, Loreen R. McMahon at (916) 654-4489 or 1-800-822-6228 or e-mail:

[publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us]. If you have a disability and need assistance to participate in this event, contact Lourdes Quiroz at 916-654-5146 or e-mail: **[lquiroz@energy.state.ca.us]**.

Information

Questions of a legal or procedural nature should be directed to Raoul Renaud, the Hearing Officer, at (916) 651-2020 or e-mail: **[rrenaud@energy.state.ca.us]**.

Technical questions concerning the Project should be addressed to Christopher Meyer, the Staff Project Manager, at (916) 653-1639 or e-mail: **[cmeyer@energy.state.ca.us]**.

Technical questions concerning the BLM permitting process should be addressed to Lynda Kastoll at (760) 337-4421, **[lynda_kastoll@ca.blm.gov]** or Jim Stobaugh, (775) 861-6478, **[Jim_Stobaugh@blm.gov]**.

Media inquiries should be directed to the Office of Media and Public Communications at (916) 654-4989 or e-mail: **[mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us]**.

Information concerning the status of the project, as well as notices and other relevant documents may be viewed on the Energy Commission's Internet web page at: **[www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solartwo/]**.

Dated: October 30, 2008, at Sacramento, California.

Original Signed By: _____
JEFFREY D. BYRON
Commissioner and Presiding Member
Solar Two AFC Committee

Original Signed By: _____
JACKALYNE PFANNENSTIEL
Chairman and Associate Member
Solar Two AFC Committee

Attachment A

**DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
(CACA 47740, LLCAD07000 L51030000)**

**Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement/Staff Assessment
and
Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment for the Proposed SES Solar Two Project,
Imperial County, California**

**AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management
ACTION: Notice (4310-40-P)**

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM), together with the California Energy Commission, (hereinafter jointly referred to as the Agencies) intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement / Staff Assessment (EIS/SA), and a Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment for the Stirling Energy Systems (SES) Solar Two Project (Project), a Stirling engine systems solar dish project in Imperial County, California. SES is seeking approval to construct and operate an electrical generating facility with a nominal capacity of 750 megawatts (MW), using concentrated solar thermal power. The approximately 6,500 acres of land needed to develop the Project consists of approximately 6,140 acres of BLM administered public land and approximately 360 acres of privately owned land. SES has submitted an application to the BLM requesting a right-of-way (ROW) to construct the Project and related facilities. Pursuant to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan (1980, as amended), sites associated with power generation or transmission not identified in the CDCA Plan will be considered through the plan amendment process.

Under Federal law, BLM is responsible for processing requests for rights-of-way to authorize such proposed projects and associated transmission lines and other appurtenant facilities on land it manages. BLM must comply with the requirements of NEPA to ensure that environmental impacts associated with construction, operation, and decommissioning will be identified, analyzed and considered in the application process. In the case of solar thermal power plant projects, this will be accomplished through coordination of the state and federal application processes, public participation, environmental analysis, and the preparation of Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in coordination with the Energy Commission and its Preliminary and Final Staff Assessments.

Under California law, the Energy Commission is responsible for reviewing the Application for Certification filed for thermal power plants over 50 MW, and also has the role of lead agency for the environmental review of such projects under the CEQA (Pub. Res. Code, §§ 21000 et seq., 25500 et seq.) The Energy Commission conducts this

review in accordance with the administrative adjudication provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act (Gov't. Code § 11400 et seq.) and its own regulations governing site certification proceedings (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 20, § 1701 et seq.), which have been deemed CEQA equivalent by the Secretary of Resources. SES Solar Two, LLC, has submitted an Application for Certification (AFC) to the Energy Commission. The AFC facilitates analysis and review by staff prior to an Energy Commission decision on the proposed project.

DATES: Publication of this notice initiates a public scoping period of at least 30 days. During the public scoping period, the Agencies will solicit public comments on issues, concerns, potential impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be considered in the analysis of the proposed action. In addition, the Agencies expect to hold at least one public meeting/workshop during the scoping period to encourage public input. The public meeting(s) will be announced through the local news media, newspapers, mailings, the BLM web page [<http://www.ca.blm.gov/elcentro>] and the Energy Commission web page [<http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solartwo/>] at least 15 days prior to the event. While you may have the opportunity to make oral comments, comments must also be submitted in writing. In order to be included in the Draft EIS/Preliminary Staff Assessment (DEIS/PSA), all comments must be received prior to the close of the scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. Additional opportunities for public participation and formal comment occur when the DEIS/PSA is issued.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments in a variety of ways: 1) By U.S. mail, 2) by electronic mail, (3) or by attending the public scoping meeting(s) and submitting written comments at the meeting(s). By Mail: Please use first-class postage and be sure to include your name and a return address. Please send written comment to: Christopher Meyer, Project Manager, Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division, California Energy Commission, 1516 Ninth Street, MS-15, Sacramento, CA, 95814. By Electronic Mail: e-mail comments are welcome; however, please remember to include your name and return address in the e-mail message. E-mail should be sent to [cmeyer@energy.state.ca.us].

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment including your personal identifying information may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Information regarding the BLM process may be obtained from the Bureau of Land Management, 1661 So. 4th Street, El Centro, California 92243, attention Lynda Kastoll, (760) 337-4421, [lynda_kastoll@ca.blm.gov]; or Erin Dreyfuss, (760) 337-4436, [erin_dreyfuss@ca.blm.gov]. Information regarding the Energy Commission process may be obtained from Christopher Meyer, Project Manager, Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division, California Energy Commission, 1516 Ninth Street, MS-15, Sacramento, CA 95814, (916) 653-1639, [cmeyer@energy.state.ca.us].

Information on participating in the Commission's review of the project may be obtained through the Commission's Public Adviser's Office, at (916) 654-4489 or toll free in California, (800) 822-6228, or by email: [\[publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us\]](mailto:publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us) News media inquiries should be directed to the Commission's media office at (916) 654-4989, or via email at [\[mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us\]](mailto:mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us).

Status of the proposed project, copies of notices, an electronic version of the AFC, and other relevant documents are also available on the Commission's internet web site at [\[http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solartwo\]](http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solartwo). You can also subscribe to receive email notification of all notices at [\[http://www.energy.ca.gov/listservers\]](http://www.energy.ca.gov/listservers).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: SES Solar Two, LLC has applied to BLM for a right-of-way on public lands to construct a concentrated solar thermal power plant facility approximately 14 miles west of El Centro, CA, in Imperial County. The project site is just south of Plaster City between the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and the Interstate 8 highway. The facility is expected to operate for approximately 30 years. The proposed project would utilize SunCatcher technology, consisting of approximately 30,000 25-kilowatt solar power dishes with a generating capacity of approximately 750 megawatts (MW) to be built in two phases. The first phase would consist up to 12,000 SunCatchers configured in 200 1.5 MW solar groups of 60 SunCatchers per group and have a net nominal generating capacity of 300 MW. The second phase would consist of approximately 18,000 SunCatchers configured in 300 1.5 MW groups with a net generating capacity of 450 MW. Each SunCatcher system consists of an approximate 38-foot high by 40-foot wide solar concentrator dish that supports an array of curved glass mirror facets designed to automatically track the sun and focus solar energy onto a Power Conversion Unit which generates electricity. Related structures would include a main services complex, assembly buildings, a 230-kilovolts (kV) electrical substation, access roads, supply water line, and a 10-mile double circuit 230-kV transmission line from the project site to San Diego Gas and Electric's existing Imperial Valley electrical substation. The 450 MW Phase II is dependent on the approval and construction of additional transmission such as the proposed Sunrise Powerlink 500-kV transmission line that would also interconnect with the Imperial Valley electrical substation. The EIS/SA will analyze the site-specific impacts on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, water resources, geological resources and hazards, hazardous materials handling, land use, noise, paleontological resources, public health, socioeconomics, soils, traffic and transportation, visual resources, waste management and worker safety and fire protection, as well as facility design engineering, efficiency, reliability, transmission system engineering and transmission line safety and nuisance. The CDCA Plan, while recognizing the potential compatibility of solar generation facilities on public lands, requires that all sites associated with power generation or transmission not identified in the Plan will be considered through the Plan Amendment process.

The following Planning Criteria will be utilized during the plan amendment process:

- The plan amendment process will be completed in compliance with FLPMA, NEPA, and all other relevant Federal laws, Executive orders, and management policies of the BLM;

- The plan amendment process will include an EIS that will comply with NEPA standards;
- Where existing planning decisions are still valid, those decisions may remain unchanged and be incorporated into the new plan amendment;
- The plan amendment will recognize valid existing rights;
- Native American Tribal consultations will be conducted in accordance with policy and Tribal concerns will be given due consideration. The plan amendment process will include the consideration of any impacts on Indian trust assets;
- Consultation with the SHPO will be conducted throughout the plan amendment process; and
- Consultation with USFWS will be conducted throughout the plan amendment process.

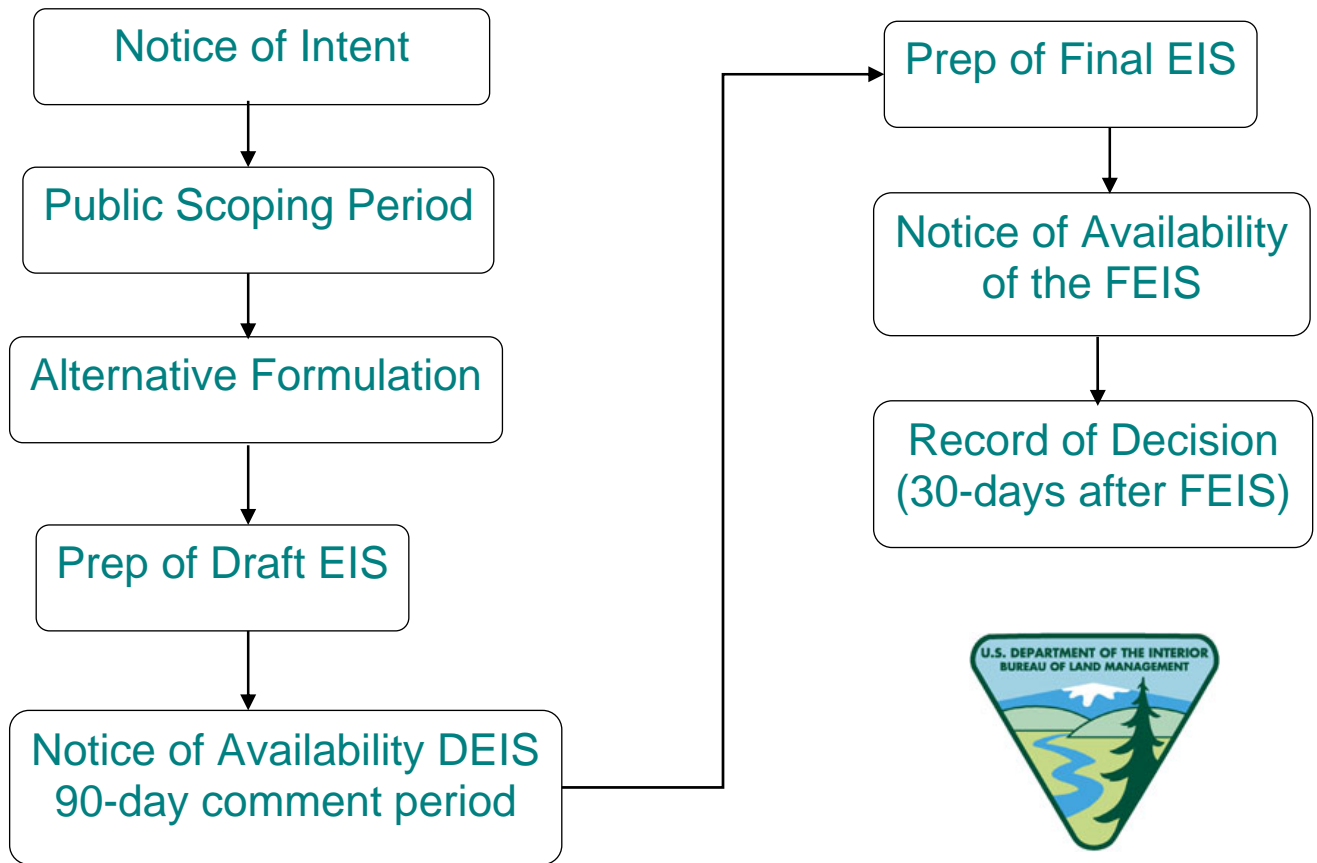
If the ROW and proposed land use plan amendment are approved by BLM, the concentrated solar thermal power plant facility on public lands would be authorized in accordance with Title V of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 and the Federal Regulations at 43 CFR 2800. A certificate designating approval of the Energy Commission must be obtained by SES before it may construct a power plant and/or electric transmission line and related facilities.

Dated October 10, 2008

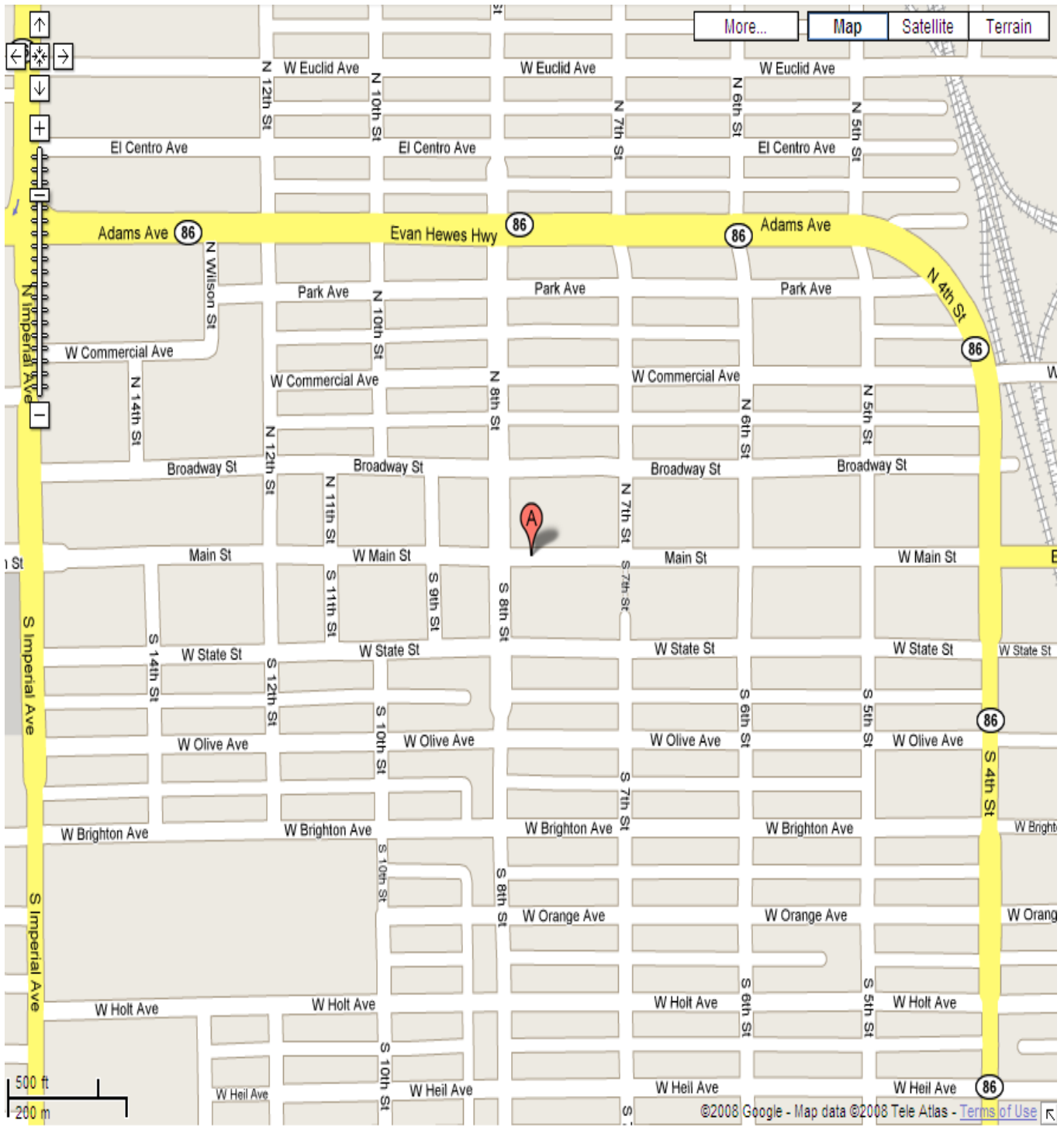
Original Signed By:

THOMAS POGACNIK
Deputy State Director
Natural Resources (CA-930)
California State Office

BLM NEPA Process for EIS



Mailed to Lists: POS, 7302, 7303, 7304, 7305



Imperial County Administration Center
Board Chambers
940 West Main Street, Suite 211
El Centro, CA 92243

Monday, November 24, 2008
Public Informational/Scoping Meeting begins at 2:30 PM
Site Visit begins (bus leaves) at 4:00 PM