

**CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION**

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

**09-AFC-6**DATE OCT 01 2009RECD OCT 01 2009

Dear Librarian:

**DOCUMENT HANDLING FOR THE BLYTHE SOLAR POWER PROJECT (09-AFC-6)**

On August 24, 2009, the California Energy Commission received an Application For Certification (AFC) from Solar Millennium, LLC and Chevron Energy Solutions to construct and operate the Blythe Solar Power Project in Riverside County. The Blythe Solar Power Project is a concentrated solar thermal electric generating facility with four adjacent, independent, and identical units of 250 megawatt (MW) nominal capacity each for a total nominal capacity of 1,000 MW. If approved, project construction would begin in the fourth quarter of 2010, with commercial operation commencing in the second quarter of 2013.

The project is under the Energy Commission's siting authority. The power plant certification process examines engineering, public health and safety, and environmental aspects of power plant proposals and provides analyses pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). When issuing a certificate, the Energy Commission is the lead state agency under CEQA, and its process is functionally equivalent to the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.

The Energy Commission's siting process is open to the public and incorporates the input of the public as well as local, state, and federal agencies. To facilitate public participation in our review process, the Energy Commission has sent copies of the AFC to libraries in the project area, and to libraries in Eureka, San Francisco, Sacramento, Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Diego.

Please make the enclosed AFC available for those who may wish to be informed about the project. We request that you not allow the AFC or any of its contents 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 Alan Solomon, Energy Commission Project Manager, at (916) 653-8236, or by email at [asolomon@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:asolomon@energy.state.ca.us) or Hilarie Anderson, Project Assistant, at (916) 651-0479, or by email at [handerso@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:handerso@energy.state.ca.us).

Sincerely,

Eileen Allen, Manager  
Energy Facilities Siting and Dockets Office

Enclosure

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October 1, 2009

**To: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE REVIEW OF THE BLYTHE SOLAR POWER PROJECT, DISTRIBUTION OF APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION (09-AFC-6)**

On August 24, 2009, the California Energy Commission received an Application For Certification (AFC) from Solar Millennium, LLC and Chevron Energy Solutions to construct and operate the Blythe Solar Power Project in Riverside County.

**Project Description**

The Blythe Solar Power Project (project) is a concentrated solar thermal electric generating facility with four adjacent, independent, and identical units of 250 megawatt (MW) nominal capacity each for a total nominal capacity of 1,000 MW. The project is proposed to be located in the southern California inland desert, approximately eight miles west of the city of Blythe and two miles north of the Interstate-10 freeway in Riverside County, California. The applicants are seeking a right-of-way grant for approximately 9,400 acres of lands owned by the Federal government and administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Construction and operation of the project would disturb a total of about 7,030 acres.

The project would generate electric power through solar energy using parabolic trough technology. Pipelines supplying water would be routed from on-site wells to water treatment units. Water would be used principally for solar mirror washing, feedwater makeup, onsite domestic use, cooling of auxiliary equipment, and firewater supply. Total water consumption for the project is estimated at 600 acre-feet per year.

A natural gas pipeline for cold start up and freeze protection would be installed parallel to the project's new access road and would tie into a gas transmission pipeline south of Interstate-10. Proposed electric transmission lines would connect each steam turbine generator to a central internal switchyard. From this switchyard, a new single-circuit three-phase 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line would interconnect with Southern California Edison's regional transmission system at its planned Colorado River substation. At the time the AFC was filed, no project transmission line route was described or finalized.

If approved, project construction would begin in the fourth quarter of 2010, with commercial operation commencing in the second quarter of 2013.

**Energy Commission and Bureau of Land Management Joint 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)

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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.

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.

As the lead 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 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 first step in the Energy Commission's review process is for staff to determine whether or not the AFC contains all the information required by its regulations. When the Energy Commission determines the AFC is complete, staff will begin data discovery and issue analysis phases. At that time, a detailed examination of the issues will occur.

### **Public Participation**

Over the months, following a determination that the AFC is complete, the Energy Commission will conduct a number of public workshops and hearings to determine whether the proposed project should be approved for construction and operation and, if so, under what set of conditions. The workshops will provide the public as well as local, state and federal agencies the opportunity to participate in reviewing the proposed project. The Energy Commission will issue notices for these workshops and hearings at least ten days prior to the meeting. If you are not currently receiving these notices and wish to be placed on the mailing list, please contact Hilarie Anderson, Project Assistant, at (916) 651-0479, or by email at [handerso@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:handerso@energy.state.ca.us).

If you desire information about participating in the Energy Commission's review of the proposed project, please contact the Energy Commission's Public Adviser by phone at (916) 654-4701 or toll free in California at (800) 822-6228, or by email at [publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us). Technical or project schedule questions should be directed to Alan Solomon, Energy Commission Project Manager, at (916) 653-8236, or by email at [asolomon@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:asolomon@energy.state.ca.us). News media inquiries should be directed to (916) 654-4989, or by email at [mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us](mailto:mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us).

**Note: Please retain this letter behind the front cover of the AFC. Thank You.**