



# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office

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### **CERTIFIED MAIL: RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED**

Terry O'Brien, Deputy Director  
Chief, Siting, Transportation, and Environmental Protection Division  
California Energy Commission  
1516 9<sup>th</sup> Street, MS 16  
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Solar Millennium Blythe Solar Power Generation Project, Riverside County, California

Dear Mr. O'Brien:

The Bureau of Land Management Palm Springs Field Office (BLM) and the California Energy Commission (CEC) are currently conducting a joint review of an application from Solar Millennium, LLC, and Chevron Energy Solutions (Applicants), for a right-of-way (ROW) grant to develop a solar energy generating facility, referred to as the Solar Millennium Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP), on federal land in eastern Riverside County. With this letter the BLM would like to invite the CEC staff to be an Invited Signatory and consulting party in the development of a Programmatic Agreement in accordance with 36CFR 800.14(b)(3). The Programmatic Agreement will govern the continued identification and evaluation of historic properties as well as the resolution of any adverse effects that may result from this proposed undertaking.

The BLM is the lead Federal agency for this undertaking and we have concluded that this project is sufficiently complex and controversial and outside the scope of our *Statewide Protocol* that a Programmatic Agreement is required to resolve issues related to future inventory efforts, potential effects to historic properties, and proposed treatment strategies. Consequently, pursuant to Section VI(B) of the BLM *Statewide Protocol*, the BLM will begin to develop a draft agreement document for this undertaking in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and other consulting parties.

### **Status of Cultural Resource Studies**

AECOM is the cultural resources consultant for this project. A BLM Class III survey was conducted over 8,005 acres of the APE and areas since removed from the proposed project footprint. The BLM is currently reviewing and field checking the preliminary results of survey. The survey efforts, to date, have resulted in the identification of 234 archaeological sites and 1,210 isolates. Of the 234 sites identified, 32 are prehistoric, 199 are historic, and three are dual component sites (prehistoric/historic). The isolates include 80 prehistoric and 1,125 historic finds, and 5 isolated finds consisting of historic and prehistoric items. The final draft Cultural Resources Class III Survey Report from the consultant has been received and is being reviewed.

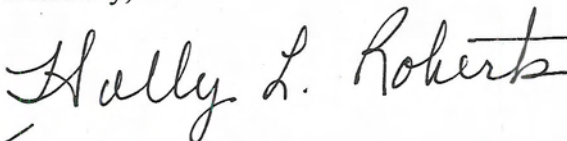
### **Status of Consultation with Native American Tribes**

With the filing of the application for a right-of-way, the BLM took the lead in formal tribal consultation pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act as well as other laws and regulations. The Native American Heritage Commission was contacted by letter about the project and they provided a list of tribal contacts. We then initiated Section 106 consultation in the early stages of project planning by letter in November 2009 and have followed up with an additional letter and other information since then. To date, thirteen tribes or related institutions have been identified and invited to consult on this project. Tribes were also invited to a general informational meeting and site visit about the project held on January 25, 2009. We have thus far received one written comment letter from Ms. Diana L. Chihuahua, the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians Cultural Resources Coordinator. Communications have been ongoing between concerned parties since the early planning efforts in the summer of 2009, and consultation will continue throughout the process.

### **Programmatic Agreement**

As noted above, the primary purpose of this letter is to invite the CEC staff to be an Invited Signatory and consulting party in the development of a Programmatic Agreement for the undertaking. We appreciate your review and consideration of the above issues and contexts for future consultation on this undertaking. We are formally initiating consultation under Section 106 and we believe the best setting to manage and address the complexities of this undertaking is under a Programmatic Agreement for the Solar Millennium Blythe Solar Power Project. If you have specific questions or need any clarification, please contact George Kline, BLM Palm Springs Archaeologist, at (760) 833-7135.

Sincerely,



*for*  
John R. Kalish  
Field Manager  
Palm Springs South Coast Field Office

Enclosures - 3

1. Figure 2a. Project Area (Pp. 5), Class III Cultural Resources Report for the Blythe Solar Power Project.
2. Figure 2b. Project Area (Pp. 6), Class III Cultural Resources Report for the Blythe Solar Power Project.
3. Figure 2c. Project Area (Pp. 7), Class III Cultural Resources Report for the Blythe Solar Power Project.

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