

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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

DOCKET**11-AFC-4**

DATE Oct. 28 2011

RECD. Oct. 28 2011



October 28, 2011

Dear Librarian:

DOCUMENT HANDLING FOR THE RIO MESA SOLAR ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY (11-AFC-4)

On October 14, 2011, BrightSource Energy, Inc., submitted an Application for Certification (AFC) to construct and operate the Rio Mesa Solar Electric Generating Facility (Rio Mesa SEGF). The Rio Mesa SEGF site is located on the Palo Verde Mesa in Riverside County, California, approximately 13 miles southwest of the City of Blythe.

The Rio Mesa SEGF is under the Energy Commission's siting authority. The Commission's power plant certification process examines engineering, environmental, public health, and safety aspects of power plant proposals and provides analyses pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). When issuing a license, the Energy Commission is the lead state agency under CEQA and through its certified regulatory program produces several environmental and decision documents rather than 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 Fresno, Eureka, Sacramento, San Francisco, 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 to 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 the Energy Commission's Project Manager, Pierre Martinez (916) 651-3765 or by e-mail at pmartine@energy.state.ca.us or Maria Santourdjian, Project Assistant, at (916) 651-9410 or by email at msergoya@energy.state.ca.us.

Sincerely,

Chris Davis, Manager
Energy Facilities Siting Office

Enclosures (2): Rio Mesa Solar Electric Generating Facility 11-AFC-4 and
Letter to the Public

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION1516 NINTH STREET
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-5112

October 28, 2011

To: MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE REVIEW OF THE RIO MESA SOLAR ELECTRIC GENERATING FACILITY (11-AFC-4)**

On October 14, 2011, BrightSource Energy, Inc., submitted an Application for Certification (AFC) to construct and operate the Rio Mesa Solar Electric Generating Facility (Rio Mesa SEGF). The Rio Mesa SEGF site is located on the Palo Verde Mesa in Riverside County, California, approximately 13 miles southwest of the City of Blythe.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed Rio Mesa SEGF (Project) would be comprised of three solar fields and a common area with shared facilities encompassing a total of approximately 5,750 acres. The southern solar field would be located on privately owned land on approximately 1,800 acres, the middle solar field would be located on mostly privately owned land on approximately 1,940 acres, with a small portion located on Federal land administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). The third solar field, approximately 1,800 acres in size and located in the northern portion of the project, is mostly on BLM land, with a small portion on private lands. A separate Right of Way grant must be approved by BLM for that portion of the project located on BLM land. Each solar plant would generate approximately 250 megawatts (MW), for a total net output of 750 MW and would use heliostats – elevated mirrors guided by a tracking system mounted on a pylon – 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.

The shared facilities located in the common area east of the plant sites would include administration, control, maintenance, and warehouse buildings; a heliostat assembly building, evaporation ponds, groundwater wells, a water treatment plant, construction laydown and parking areas, mobile equipment maintenance facilities and a natural gas tap and meter station.

The Rio Mesa SEGF will be interconnected to the Southern California Edison (SCE) grid through upgrades to SCE's 220 kilovolt (kV) line passing north of the site known as the Palo Verde-Devers Line. The upgrades will include construction by SCE of a new 220/ 500 kV substation adjacent to the Palo Verde-Devers line to be designated as the Colorado River Substation. This new substation and the 220 kV upgrades will be for the benefit of the Rio Mesa SEGF project and other interconnection customers in the region.

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 and third plants are

planned to be constructed in 2014 and 2015 with commercial operation of third plant planned for second quarter of 2016.

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 and its permit is in lieu of all other applicable state, local, and federal permits to the extent permitted by federal law. 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 has a certified regulatory program and is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The first step in the review process is for Energy Commission staff (staff) to determine whether or not the AFC contains all the information and data required by our regulations. Once the Energy Commission deems the AFC complete, staff will begin the discovery and issue analysis phases. At that time, a detailed and thorough examination of issues will occur.

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.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Over the coming months, 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 under what set of conditions. These workshops and hearings will provide 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 issue notices for these workshops and hearings at least 10 days prior to the meeting.

This notice of receipt 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 project-related workshops and hearings and notices when the PSA and FSA are available for review. If you want your name removed from the mailing list, please contact Maria Santourdjian, Project Assistant, at (916) 651-9410 or by email at msergoya@energy.state.ca.us.

You can find information about the project and proceedings on the project website: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/riomesa/index.html>. If you want to be notified by e-mail whenever a document is posted to the project website then you can sign up for the project list server on the main web page. Please direct your technical or project schedule questions to Pierre Martinez, Project Manager, at (916) 651-3765, or by e-mail at pmartine@energy.state.ca.us.

If you desire information on participating in the Energy Commission's review of the project, please contact the Energy Commission's Public Adviser's Office, 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.state.ca.us.

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