



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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BLM Seeks Additional Public Input on Proposed SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, Proposed Study Area Expansion Announced, Three Additional Public Scoping Meetings to be Held in New Mexico

Santa Fe, N.M. – The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is holding additional public scoping meetings to seek input and discuss with the public a proposed study expansion area for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project. The project is a proposed 460 mile high capacity 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line (or two parallel lines) across New Mexico and Arizona. The project proponent, SunZia Transmission LLC, is proposing to transport electricity generated by power generation resources, including primarily renewable resources, to western power markets and load centers. The BLM is the lead Federal agency which will oversee the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that will identify environmental impacts and evaluate alternatives for the project.

The BLM initially held nine public scoping meetings in June and July of this year in New Mexico and Arizona throughout communities along the proposed transmission line route. The purpose of public scoping is to allow the public to share comments and concerns, and identify issues and alternatives to be considered during the EIS process. During the initial public scoping process, the BLM received numerous comments regarding the proposed and alternative transmission line routes.

The results of scoping aid in determining an appropriate study plan and analysis for the EIS. In order to address the issues and concerns identified by the public and agencies, the scope of the study must include an adequate range of reasonable alternatives. Alternative routes or sub-routes will be added, modified, or deleted from further study. Among the many public and agency comments received to date regarding the New Mexico portion of the SunZia proposal were concerns regarding the location of the proposed route crossing the Rio Grande in the vicinity of the San Antonio community, north of the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Numerous comments also included requests to consider alternative routes that avoid that location.

Suggested transmission line corridors for consideration in New Mexico are potential routes south of the White Sands Missile Range (WSMR) in Dona Ana County and along the eastern boundary of the WSMR in Otero and Lincoln counties. These corridors in the New Mexico area could provide alternative routes between the Midpoint Substation site near Deming, and the proposed SunZia-East Substation termination site in Lincoln County. The BLM announces the expansion of the project study area so that these potential transmission line routes can be considered in the EIS process. (For a map of the Expansion Study Area, see BLM Project Website at address below) The BLM is holding an additional three scoping meetings to discuss with the public the proposed study expansion area and subsequent alternative routes being considered. The scoping meetings will provide the public an opportunity to learn more about the project's proposed study expansion area, and share comments and concerns. As a result of the proposed study area expansion, the BLM has opened an additional 30-day public comment period ending November 27, 2009.

Three open-house public scoping meetings along the expanded study area will be held in the following New Mexico communities. All meetings will be from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm.

Las Cruces, October 26, 2009

Court Youth Center

402 West Court

Alamogordo, October 27, 2009

First National Bank

414 Tenth Street

Chaparral, October 28, 2009

Chaparral High School

800 County Line Drive

In addition to comments given at each meeting, comments can also be made to the BLM via the BLM Project Website at http://www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands_realty.html via the project email address at NMSunZiaProject@blm.gov or in writing to the Bureau of Land Management, SunZia Transmission Line Project, P.O Box 27115, Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115. Deliveries will be accepted via courier/hand delivery to the Bureau of Land Management, SunZia Transmission Line Project, 1474 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe, NM or after October 26, 2009 to 301 Dinosaur Trail, Santa Fe, NM.

To be added to the mailing list or if you have questions, please contact BLM Project Manager Adrian Garcia at (505) 438-7424, or at (505) 954-2199 after October 26, 2009.

The BLM manages more land - 256 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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