



## Tri-State-backed southwestern transmission project could go on fast track

Published on October 12, 2011



The proposed SunZia Southwest Transmission Project could eventually move up to 3,000 megawatts of renewable generation across the southwestern U.S. It is slated to go into service by 2016.

The proposed [SunZia Southwest Transmission Project](#), in which Tri-State is one of four sponsors, could be put on the development fast track by the Obama Administration. Last week, the administration's new [Rapid Response Team for Transmission](#) named SunZia and six other large-scale transmission projects in the U.S. as priority projects that would be given accelerated permitting and construction treatment.

“Transmission is a vital component of our nation’s energy portfolio, and these seven lines, when completed, will serve as important links across our country to increase our power grid’s capacity and reliability,” said U.S. Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. “This is the kind of critical

infrastructure we should be working together to advance in order to create jobs and move our nation toward energy independence.”

Transmission projects of this scope involve reviews by multiple federal, state and tribal agencies. Nine federal agencies and the White House Council on Environmental Quality will be a part of the Rapid Response Team. The team’s charge is to resolve inter-agency conflicts, coordinate reviews, permitting and other processes.

The SunZia project consists of two transmission lines and substations that will transport primarily renewable energy from Arizona and New Mexico to customers and markets across the southwestern United States. The length of the proposed route is approximately 460 miles. In addition to Tri-State, partners in the SunZia project are Shell WindEnergy, Southwestern Power Group and Tucson Electric Power.