

**ADDRESSES:** Submit comments related to the project by any of the following methods:

- *E-mail:*

*Nextlight Primm NV\_SEP@blm.gov*

- *Fax:* (702) 515-5010, attention Gregory Helseth.

- *Mail:* BLM, Las Vegas Field Office, Attn: Gregory Helseth, 4701 North Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89130-2301.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information and/or to have your name added to the mailing list, contact Gregory Helseth, Renewable Energy Project Manager, at (702) 515-5173; or e-mail at

*Nextlight Primm NV\_SEP@blm.gov.*

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** NextLight Renewable Power, LLC, has submitted two applications for rights-of-way for the construction, operation, maintenance, and termination of two solar energy generation sites. The two applications are identified as NVN-085077 Silver State South Solar Project, and NVN-085801 Silver State North Solar Project. The proposed projects would consist of photovoltaic panels and related right-of-way appurtenances, including a substation and switchyard facilities. The proposed projects, combined, would produce approximately 400 megawatts of electricity, and would be located on approximately 7,840 acres of public lands east of Primm, Nevada.

Issues that are anticipated to be addressed in this EIS include threatened and endangered species impacts, visual impacts, socioeconomic impacts, and cumulative impacts. The EIS will analyze the site-specific impacts on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, water resources, geological resources and hazards, hazardous materials handling, land and airspace use, noise, paleontological resources, public health, socioeconomic, soils, traffic and transportation, visual resources, waste management, worker safety, and fire protection, as well as facility design engineering, efficiency, reliability, transmission system engineering, transmission line safety, and nuisance. Native American Tribal consultations will be conducted in accordance with policy, and Tribal concerns will be given due consideration, including impacts on Indian trust assets. Federal, State, and local agencies, as well as individuals or organizations that may be interested in or affected by the BLM's decision on this project are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate as a cooperating agency.

Documents pertinent to this project may be examined at the Las Vegas Field Office. Additional opportunities for public participation will be provided upon publication of the draft EIS.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

(Authority: 43 CFR Part 2800)

**Robert B. Ross Jr.,**

*Las Vegas Field Manager.*

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**BILLING CODE 4310-HC-P**

## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[LLW0350000.L14300000]

#### **Notice of Availability of Maps and Additional Public Scoping for Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement To Develop and Implement Agency-Specific Programs for Solar Energy Development; Bureau of Land Management Approach for Processing Existing and Future Solar Applications**

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of Availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Energy (DOE) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) (the Agencies) are announcing the availability of maps depicting solar energy study areas to be analyzed in their joint Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to Develop and Implement Agency-Specific Programs for Solar Energy Development (Solar PEIS) and the opportunity for additional public scoping. The BLM is issuing this Notice to inform the public of the availability of the solar energy study area maps; to solicit public comments for consideration in identifying environmental issues, existing resource data, and industry interest with respect to the solar energy study areas in particular; and to explain how the BLM will address existing and future solar energy development applications on BLM-administered lands.

**DATES:** The time period for public comments starts with the publication of this notice in the **Federal Register** and

will continue through July 30, 2009. Comments received or postmarked after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**ADDRESSES:** You may submit written comments by the following methods:

- Electronically, using the online comment form available on the project Web site: <http://solareis.anl.gov>. This is the preferred method of commenting.

- In writing, addressed to: Solar Energy PEIS, Argonne National Laboratory, 9700 S. Cass Avenue—EVS/900, Argonne, IL 60439.

Availability of Maps: Maps of the solar energy study areas are available electronically from the project Web site: <http://solareis.anl.gov>. The maps may also be obtained from the following BLM offices:

Arizona State Office, One North Central Avenue, Suite 800, Phoenix, AZ 85004.

California State Office, 2800 Cottage Way, Suite W-1623, Sacramento, CA 95825.

Colorado State Office, 2850 Youngfield Street, Lakewood, CO 80215.

Nevada State Office, 1340 Financial Blvd., Reno, NV 89520.

New Mexico State Office, 1474 Rodeo Road, Santa Fe, NM 87505.

Utah State Office, 440 West 200 South, Suite 500, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** For further information contact: Linda Resseguie, BLM Washington Office, [linda\\_reseguie@blm.gov](mailto:linda_reseguie@blm.gov), 202-452-7774; or Lisa Jorgensen, Department of Energy, Golden Field Office, [lisa.jorgensen@go.doe.gov](mailto:lisa.jorgensen@go.doe.gov), 303-275-4906. You may also visit the Solar PEIS Web site at <http://solareis.anl.gov>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** On May 29, 2008, the Agencies published a Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to Evaluate Solar Energy Development (73 FR 30908). Subsequently, the Agencies held a series of public scoping meetings, received public comments, and published a scoping summary report, available at <http://solareis.anl.gov>.

On March 11, 2009, the Secretary of the Interior issued Secretarial Order No. 3285, which announced a policy goal of identifying and prioritizing specific locations best suited for large-scale production of solar energy. Also, the BLM received funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to accelerate permitting of renewable energy projects on public lands. A portion of that funding is being used to enhance the Solar PEIS by enabling in-depth environmental analysis of 24 specific tracts of public

lands which have excellent solar development potential and limited resource conflicts.

The Solar PEIS will help BLM identify lands appropriate for solar energy development and establish a comprehensive list of mitigation requirements applicable to all future solar energy development on BLM-administered lands. As part of the Solar PEIS, the Agencies will conduct in-depth environmental analyses of 24 solar energy study areas for the purpose of determining whether such areas should be designated as Solar Energy Zones (SEZs), specific locations determined best suited for large-scale production of solar energy.

The solar energy study areas were identified based on preliminary results of California's Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative, the Western Governors' Association Western Renewable Energy Zone and Transmission Study, and existing BLM resource information. Criteria used to identify solar energy study areas include requirements that the area: be a minimum size of 2,000 acres, be near existing roads and existing or designated transmission line routes, and have a slope of less than 5%. Sensitive resource areas were also removed from consideration, including the following categories of lands:

(1) National Landscape Conservation System lands (except that lands within the California Desert Conservation Area that have no other special designation may be included in a solar energy study area);

(2) Threatened and endangered species designated critical habitat;

(3) Back-country byways;

(4) Areas of known Tribal concern;

(5) Areas of known high cultural site density; and

(6) Areas designated for right-of-way avoidance or right-of-way exclusion in BLM land use plans. Such areas include BLM areas of critical environmental concern, areas with important visual resources, special recreation management areas, areas allocated to maintain wilderness characteristics, wildlife movement corridors, and areas where the BLM has made a commitment to take certain actions with respect to sensitive species habitat.

Some or all of the solar energy study areas may be found appropriate for designation as SEZs as described above. The Agencies are making the maps of the solar energy study areas available to the public and soliciting written comments to provide an opportunity for public input as part of the ongoing Solar PEIS analysis. Specifically, the Agencies request information and comments on

the potential for significant impacts of solar energy development on known solar resources within a solar energy study area and the economic viability of solar energy development within specific areas. No additional public meetings are planned prior to the release of the draft Solar PEIS; however, the public will have additional opportunities to comment when the draft Solar PEIS is released.

The BLM's objective for the Solar PEIS is to create a more efficient process for authorizing solar energy development on public lands that would also:

- Facilitate near-term utility-scale solar energy development on public lands;
- Minimize potential environmental, social, and economic impacts;
- Provide the solar industry flexibility in proposing and developing solar energy projects (location, facility size, technology, etc.);
- Optimize existing transmission corridors; and
- Standardize the authorization process for solar energy development on BLM-administered lands.

The BLM will continue to accept new solar applications. The BLM is in the process of considering alternative procedures, such as non-competitive and competitive, application fees, and diligent development requirements, for solar energy development applications within the solar energy study areas. Any entity with an existing application for lands within the solar energy study areas received by the BLM prior to June 30, 2009 will continue to be processed under the BLM's current procedures. Applications received after June 30, 2009 for lands inside the solar energy study areas will be subject to the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Solar PEIS and any alternative procedures developed by BLM for non-competitive and competitive processes. All applications received for lands outside of the solar energy study areas will be processed under the BLM's current procedures. Any right-of-way grant for a solar energy application issued after the BLM's ROD for the Solar PEIS may be issued subject to the requirements adopted in the ROD.

The Agencies invite interested Federal and State agencies, organizations, Native American tribes and members of the public to submit written comments to assist in identifying significant environmental issues, existing resource data, and industry interest with respect to the solar energy study areas. You may submit comments in writing using one of the methods listed in the "ADDRESSES" section above. Before

including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comments—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Mike Pool,**

*Acting Director, Bureau of Land Management.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[LLWO350000.L14300000]

#### Notice of Proposed Withdrawal and Opportunity for Public Meeting; Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Secretary of the Interior proposes to withdraw approximately 676,048 acres of public lands from settlement, sale, location, or entry under the general land laws, including the mining laws, on behalf of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to protect and preserve solar energy study areas for future solar energy development. This notice segregates the lands for up to 2 years from surface entry and mining while various studies and analyses are made to support a final decision on the withdrawal application. The lands will remain open to the mineral leasing laws.

**DATES:** Comments and requests for a public meeting must be received by September 28, 2009.

**ADDRESSES:** Comments and meeting requests should be sent to the BLM Director, 1849 C Street NW. (WO350), Washington, DC, 20240.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Linda Resseguie, BLM, 202-452-7774, or one of the following BLM State Offices.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The applicant is the Bureau of Land Management at the address above and its petition requests the Secretary of the Interior to withdraw, subject to valid existing rights, approximately 676,048 acres of public lands located in the States of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah from