

would preclude development of the SSEP in any configuration and maintain existing land uses in the project area. The Final EIS also analyzed three action alternatives, one sub-alternative, and two options including: (1) The Proposed Action (375-megawatt (MW) wet-cooled concentrated solar thermal parabolic trough facility on 3,620 acres of land); (2) Alternative A: Reduced Water Use (using a dry-cooling technology); (3) Sub-alternative A1: Photovoltaic (PV) (a 300-MW PV facility occupying 2,013 acres of land); (4) Alternative B: Reduced Footprint (a 250-MW wet-cooled facility occupying 2,320 acres of land); (5) Brine Concentrator Option (could be added to the Proposed Action or Alternative B to reduce wastewater); and (6) Generation Intertie (Gen-tie) Line Option (could be used for any alternative to address alternate methods and locations for crossing existing high-voltage transmission lines near the project area).

The Preferred Alternative from the Final EIS, including the proposed gen-tie line, is the Selected Alternative in the ROD. The Selected Alternative will allow the issuance of a ROW grant for a PV facility capable of generating up to 300 MW of solar power on 2,013 acres of land. The project will consist of multiple arrays of PV panels electrically connected to associated power inverter units. The current from the power inverters will be gathered by an internal electrical collection system and transformed to transmission voltage prior to leaving the project area. The Selected Alternative facilities include the following major components or systems: PV modules/arrays; solar trackers and/or fixed support structures; an electrical collection system; a step-up transformation/on-site switchyard; a 500-kilovolt generation tie-line/utility interconnection; administration buildings and local warehouses; and drainage collection and discharge facilities. A single evaporation pond of approximately 1 acre is required. The PV does not use heat transfer fluid; therefore, no land-treatment unit is required. The Selected Alternative in the ROD will use approximately 33 acre-feet per year of water for project operations, mostly for washing PV mirrors. That amounts to 1–2 percent of the water that the original proposed action would have used.

As described in the Final EIS, the BLM Selected Alternative, with its preferred gen-tie line, was developed in response to agency and public comments on water consumption. It was developed after the Draft EIS, due to advancements in technology and a change in market conditions that

allowed for a reconsideration of PV technology as a viable alternative. The Selected Alternative also avoids other resource issues raised by the public and agency cooperators, including wildlife habitat and travel corridors, pending Federal Emergency Management Agency floodplains, air quality point sources and vapor plumes, and nearby residences.

The Notice of Availability of the Final EIS for the SSEP was published in the **Federal Register** on October 21, 2011 (76 FR 65532). Publication of the Notice of Availability initiated a 30-day comment period on the Final EIS. At the close of the 30-day period on November 21, 2011, four comments had been received. These comments and their responses are attached to the ROD.

Because this decision is approved by the Secretary of the Interior, it is not subject to administrative appeal (43 CFR 4.410(a)(3)).

Authority: 40 CFR 1506.6.

Robert V. Abbey,

Director, Bureau of Land Management.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Bureau of Land Management

[**CACA 49698, LLCAD07000, L51010000.FX0000, LVRWB10B3810**]

Notice of Availability of the Record of Decision for the Tule Wind, LLC's Tule Wind Project, San Diego County, CA

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of Availability.

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the project, located in San Diego County. The Secretary of the Interior approved the ROD on December 19, 2011, which constitutes the Department's final decision.

ADDRESSES: Copies of the ROD are available upon request from the Field Manager, BLM El Centro Field Office, 1661 S. 4th Street, El Centro, California 92243, and the BLM California Desert District Office, 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, California 92553, or via the Internet at the following Web site: <http://www.ca.blm.gov/elcentro>.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Greg Thomsen, Project Manager, telephone (951) 697–5237; address BLM California Desert District Office, 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos, Moreno Valley,

California 92553–9046; email catulewind@blm.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Tule Wind, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Iberdrola Renewables, Inc., filed right-of-way (ROW) application CACA–51204 for the Tule Wind Project. The project will consist of up to 62 wind turbines (1.5 to 3.0 megawatts (MW) each) with a generating capacity of up to 186 MW, an overhead and underground 34.5-kilovolt (kV) collector system leading to a collector substation, an operations and maintenance facility, and a 138-kV transmission line as the generation tie-in to the existing Boulevard Substation. The Tule Wind Project will be on 12,200 acres of BLM-managed lands. The project site is located in the In-Ko-Pah Mountains near the McCain Valley in San Diego County, north of the unincorporated community of Boulevard.

The BLM selected the preferred alternative that was evaluated in the Final EIS. The Notice of Availability of the Final EIS for the Tule Wind Project was published in the **Federal Register** on October 24, 2011 (76 FR 65746). In addition to the Tule Wind Project, the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report evaluated a ROW application by San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) to construct the ECO Project, which includes a 138-kV transmission line that would traverse approximately 1.5 miles of public land managed by the BLM. The BLM will issue a separate decision on the SDG&E's ROW application.

As a result of the ROD, access to certain recreation areas including, but not limited to, the Lark Canyon OHV Area, Lark Canyon Campground, Cottonwood Campground, Carrizo Overlook, and Sacatone Overlook could be reduced during construction, and in some instances, access roads off McCain Valley Road to these areas may be temporarily closed (resulting in an inability to access these areas and facilities by vehicles) during the period of time construction is authorized. Specific routes and times will be announced when a more detailed construction schedule is completed.

Because this decision is approved by the Secretary of the Interior, it is not subject to administrative appeal (43 CFR 4.410(a)(3)).

Authority: 40 CFR 1506.6.

Robert V. Abbey,

Director, Bureau of Land Management.

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