



Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
Desert Southwest Customer Service Region
P.O. Box 6457
Phoenix, AZ 85005-6457

MAY - 1 2000

Dear Interested Parties:

Western Area Power Administration (Western), a power marketing agency of the Department of Energy, operates its transmission system under its Open Access Transmission Service Tariff, which provides open and non-discriminatory access to all transmission. Wisvest Corporation, a non-regulated subsidiary of Wisconsin Energy Corporation, has approached Western concerning an interconnection to Western's transmission system in the Blythe, California area.

Wisvest proposes to construct and operate a 520-megawatt natural gas-fired thermal power plant on 76 acres of private land immediately east of the airport on the west edge of Blythe. The plant will consist of natural gas-fired turbine and steam turbine generators, heat recovery steam generators and exhaust stacks, cooling towers, administrative support buildings, water systems, an electrical switchyard, and evaporation ponds for cooling water discharge. Water for cooling will be supplied by wells at a rate of approximately 2,200 gallons per minute. Natural gas may come from interstate pipeline sources in Yuma County, Arizona; alternative routes for the pipelines could come from interstate natural gas pipelines adjacent to the project.

In order to accommodate the interconnection, Western would need to reconfigure short segments of its transmission lines as they approach the Blythe Substation, located approximately 600 feet east of the proposed plant site. No segment reconfiguration would need to be longer than about 1,000 feet, consisting of perhaps one to two spans of conductor and overhead ground wire.

Western will consider the environmental impacts of the power plant proposal in its decision-making. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the implementing procedures of the Department of Energy, Western proposes to initiate the environmental assessment process. The project is also subject to the siting regulations of the California Energy Commission. The Energy Commission's responsibilities are similar to those of a lead state agency under the California Environmental Quality Act. In order to make use of the expertise of both agencies, Western and the Energy Commission have agreed to combine their analyses. This joint review will carefully examine public health and safety issues, environmental resource impacts, and engineering aspects of the proposed power plant as well as all related facilities such as electric transmission lines and natural gas pipelines.

The Energy Commission has sent out a notice indicating an upcoming informational hearing and site visit on May 4, in Blythe, California. Western, as a participant in the environmental review, will be present at this meeting to take public comments on the project. The results of this and future meetings will assist the agencies in determining whether there are any significant impacts to environmental, safety or health issues that would arise as a result of

construction or operation of this project. This information will also be used to determine under what set of conditions the project may be constructed and operated.

Western encourages you to provide comments on this project. You may direct questions or comments to either Western or the Energy Commission; all input will be shared. The following persons can be contacted for more information about this proposal and to take comment.

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Sincerely,



John Holt
Environmental Manager

cc:
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