

United States Government

Department of Energy

memorandum

Western Area Power Administration

DATE: **AUG - 5 2014**

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: **G0400**

SUBJECT: **Determination to Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Interconnection Agreement for Longview Solar's Cliffrose Solar Energy Project, South of Kingman, Mohave County, Arizona**

TO: **Ron Moulton, G0000, Phoenix, AZ**

Western proposes to approve Longview Solar's request to interconnect their Cliffrose Solar Energy Project to Western's Griffith Substation. Longview Solar determined that the project's average annual output is less than 50 megawatts. The proposed solar energy plant is located on private land approximately 10 miles south of Kingman, near Exit 37 (Griffith Road) along Interstate 40.

As we begin environmental activities, we request you approve the attached Determination to Prepare an Environmental Assessment. Mr. Matthew Bilsbarrow will be the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Document Manager for the Environmental Assessment (EA). If you have any questions, please contact me at (602) 605-2524.



Linda Marianito
Environmental Manager

attachment

DETERMINATION TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Name of Project: Cliffrose Solar Energy Interconnection Project

Location: South of Kingman, Mohave County, Arizona

Description of the Proposed Action: Western Area Power Administration, Desert Southwest Region, (Western) proposes to approve Longview Solar's request to interconnect the Cliffrose Solar Energy Project and Western's Griffith Substation and enter into an interconnection agreement. The agreement's purpose is to ensure that the interconnection request will not degrade existing transmission reliability and service. Western relies on feasibility, system, and facility studies to identify system upgrades, additions, or configurations necessary to accommodate a proposed interconnection. The Federal Power Act, Section 211 requires that transmission service be provided upon request if capacity is available.

Based on the studies completed to date, Western plans to install new equipment, add an additional bay, and reconfigure existing equipment at Griffith Substation to support this request. Western may need to add, move, or modify structures associated with the Griffith Peacock and Griffith McConnico 230-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Lines. Western owns the Griffith Substation parcel and holds an easement for an access road across private land between the substation and Apache Road. It occurs in the southwest quarter of Section 6 in Township 19 North, Range 17 West on the Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian (GSRBM). A construction schedule has not yet been established.

Longview Solar plans to build, operate, and maintain a 45 megawatt photovoltaic solar energy generation facility. They determined that on an annual basis the output is less than 50 average megawatts. The facility includes following components:

- Installing approximately 195,000 solar panels on 350 acres of land;
- Installing underground collection lines from each panel to a collection point switchyard;
- Constructing an on-site collection point switchyard covering between 2 and 4 acres;
- Erecting a perimeter chain-link fence around the solar energy plant and collection point switchyard;
- Constructing approximately 2 miles of overhead 230-kV transmission line to tie together collection point and Griffith Substation switchyards;
- Acquiring rights-of way for the generation tie line and any access roads.

The planned facility is located on private land approximately 10 miles south of Kingman near Exit 37 along Interstate 40. It occurs within the existing 1-40 industrial corridor and is zoned for heavy industrial/manufacturing uses by Mohave County. It is situated within portions of Section 13 in Township 19 North, Range 18 West on the GSRBM. Longview Solar plans to have the facility in service by December 2016.

Longview Solar's facility is subject to State and local approvals prior to construction. These approvals include a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility from the Arizona Corporation Commission and Mohave County planning and zoning.

Western's action, per 10 CFR 1021.104, consists of approving an interconnection request, entering into an interconnection agreement, and installing system upgrades, additions or configurations.

Class of Action from Department of Energy (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations: Appendix C7 states "Establishment and implementation of contracts, policies, marketing plans, or allocations plans for the allocation of electric power that do not involve (1) the addition of new generation resources greater than 50 average megawatts (2) major changes in the operating limits of generation resources greater than 50 average megawatts, or (3) service to discrete new loads of 10 average megawatts or more over a 12 month period. This applies to power marketing operations and to siting, construction, and operation of power generation facilities at DOE sites." The items listed in Appendix C are classes of actions that normally require Environmental Assessments (EAs), but not necessarily Environmental Impact Statements.

Appendix C7 applies to the proposed action because the interconnection agreement involves the addition of new generation at a level of 50 average megawatts per year or less.

Determination: Based on the provision in Section 1021.342 of the DOE National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures, I have determined that an EA will be prepared to assess the impacts of the proposed action. Based on the analysis of the EA, Western will either prepare a finding of no significant impact and proceed with the action, or Western will prepare an environmental impact statement if the EA reveals the potential for significant environmental impacts.



Ron Moulton
Acting Regional Manager

3/5/14
Date