



Department of Energy
Western Area Power Administration
Desert Southwest Customer Service Region
P.O. Box 6457
Phoenix, AZ 85005-6457
OCT 24 2018

SUBJECT: Scoping Letter for an Environmental Assessment, Historic Properties Review and Notice of Floodplain and Wetland Action for WAPA's Arizona Solar 1 Interconnection Project (DOE/EA-2098)

Dear Interested Party:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) seeks your participation and involvement in establishing the scope of environmental issues and studies associated with the Arizona Solar 1 Interconnection Project located near Salome, La Paz County, Arizona.

Proposed Action

WAPA is a Federal power-marketing agency within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) that operates and maintains transmission lines and associated facilities in accordance with the Federal Power Act, Section 211, and our Open Access Transmission Service Tariff. WAPA is responding to a request from AZ Solar 1, LLC, to interconnect their proposed photovoltaic solar plant located near Salome, La Paz County, Arizona to WAPA's electrical transmission system via the Little Harquahala to Harcuvar 115-kilovolt Transmission Line (see attached map). WAPA evaluates interconnection requests based on available transmission capacity, the safety and reliability of the bulk electrical system, and the results of the environmental planning processes; WAPA lacks authority over the requester's electrical generation methods, equipment or location.

WAPA invited Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Lake Havasu Field Office and Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) Phoenix Area Office to be cooperating agencies in the environmental planning process. The transmission line is located on BLM land in an existing right-of-way held by Reclamation.

If the interconnection request is approved, WAPA would enter into an interconnection agreement to 1) install and maintain two new pole structures in the existing transmission line easement; 2) add and maintain the less than 500-foot-long connections across BLM land from transmission line to the new structures and into applicant's switchyard; 3) modify existing right-of-way documents to support these connections as needed; and 4) review the reliability features of applicant's switchyard equipment.

AZ Solar 1, LLC proposes to build, operate, and maintain an approximately 32.5-megawatt photovoltaic solar energy generation facility on up to 480-acre parcel of private land. An optional 27.5 megawatt of photovoltaic solar energy generation and an optional 10 megawatt battery storage facility may be added to the parcel based on market considerations. Although the total nameplate capacity of the planned facility and the optional installation totals approximately 60 megawatts, Arizona Solar 1, LLC plans to operate the facility such that the annual output is equal to or less than 50 average megawatts. Construction of the facility would include solar

panels, access roads, an underground electrical collection system and an on-site collection point switchyard. AZ Solar 1, LLC's facilities are not part of the Federal action, but their impacts will be presented alongside that of the Federal action as part of a comprehensive analysis in a Draft Environmental Assessment.

We anticipate that construction could begin as soon as Summer 2019. This start date depends on the completion of planning efforts described below and assumes no significant environmental impacts are identified. Further information is available online at:

<https://www.wapa.gov/regions/DSW/Environment/Pages/Arizona-Solar-1-Interconnection-Project.aspx>

Environmental Planning Processes

WAPA will address the following planning requirements and seeks your input:

- **Clean Water Act & Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management:** WAPA will assess the proposed action's impacts, if any, to waters of the U.S., floodplains, and wetlands and comply with the requirements of applicable U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permits. Arizona Solar 1, LLC may separately apply for and abide by such permits for their facilities. We seek your input about floodplains located near the project area and ways to avoid or minimize impacts.
- **Endangered Species Act:** WAPA will serve as lead Federal agency and will evaluate threatened, endangered and other special status species and their habitat that could be affected by the proposed action and consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as needed. WAPA will conduct a biological review of areas impacted. We seek your observations about the occurrence of protected species near the project area and suggestions on ways to avoid or minimize adverse effects.
- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** WAPA will serve as lead Federal agency in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment of the proposed action and its impacts. We seek your comments about alternatives and environmental issues that you would like to see presented in a Draft Environmental Assessment.
- **National Historic Preservation Act:** WAPA will serve as the lead Federal agency for Section 106 consultations with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer, Indian tribes, and consulting parties for the proposed action. We plan to conduct an archaeological field survey. WAPA seeks your suggestions about available sources of cultural resource information and applicable types of identification efforts.

Get Involved

We would like to know of any issues, concerns, and suggestions you may have regarding the proposed action. Your comments will help define issues and alternatives for consideration in the environmental review processes mentioned above. Comments can be provided in writing or by phone at the contact listed below. Comments can also be submitted in person at the public scoping meeting.

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WAPA's AZ Solar 1 Interconnection Project (DOE/EA-2098)

Mail: Western Area Power Administration, Desert Southwest Region
ATTN: Matthew Bilsbarrow, NEPA Document Manager
PO Box 6457
Phoenix, AZ 85005

Email: DSW-EA2098PublicComment@wapa.gov

Phone: (602) 605-2536

WAPA prefers to receive your scoping comments by November 26, 2018 or be post-marked by this date. WAPA will consider late comments to the extent practicable.

Come to the Open House

WAPA will host an open house meeting to give you an opportunity to ask questions, learn about the proposed action and the environmental planning processes, and submit comments. The meeting will be held:

Thursday November 8, 2018, 5:30-7:30 pm
Centennial Public Library (Centennial Community Center)
69725 Centennial Rd.
Wenden, AZ 85357

Next Steps

We intend to use your comments to prepare a Draft Environmental Assessment, which we expect to complete by February 22, 2019. We will then seek public comment on this document.

We look forward to receiving your comments and hope that you will be able to attend the public scoping meeting.

Sincerely,



Sean Berry,
Environmental Manager

Enclosure (map)

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