



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

SUBJECT: Scoping Letter for Environmental Assessment for Western's Ridgenose Solar Energy Interconnection Project (DOE/EA-1990)

Dear Interested Party:

This letter invites you to provide input on environmental issues associated with the proposed Federal action described below.

Western Area Power Administration (Western) is a Federal power-marketing agency within the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) that operates and maintains transmission lines and associated facilities. Western is responding to a request from Longview Solar, to interconnect their proposed Ridgenose Solar Energy Project to Western's Liberty-Parker 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The solar facility would interconnect to the transmission line at a point directly south of the proposed facility (0.25 mile) or through Arizona Public Service's Eagle Eye substation (0.8 miles west) (see attached map). If the interconnection request is approved, Western may need to add, move, or modify structures in the existing transmission line; and add new equipment, possibly including a new switchyard and interconnection line. Western will prepare an Environmental Assessment of the Federal action for public review

Longview Solar, is proposing to construct a 100 megawatt photovoltaic solar power facility and associated 230-kV transmission line on a site approximately five miles southwest of Aguila, Maricopa County, Arizona, adjacent to and south of U.S. Highway 60 (see attached map). The facility would be located on a 1,100-acre parcel of State Trust land. As part of this proposed project, Longview Solar has requested to interconnect to Western's transmission system.

The Arizona State Land Department, Arizona Corporation Commission's Transmission Line and Power Plant Siting Committee, and Maricopa County are additional permitting authorities for the project. Longview Solar'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 the environmental assessment. As part of the Project planning tasks, Western will address the following issues before construction can begin:

- **Cultural Resources:** An intensive pedestrian (Class III) survey of the Project area will be conducted. Western will serve as a lead to consult with the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), tribes, and consulting parties regarding this Project. The Arizona State Land Department, Arizona Corporation Commission's Transmission Line and Power Plant Siting

Committee, and Maricopa County may consult separately with the SHPO, Indian tribes, and interested parties under the State Historic Preservation Act regarding permits for Longview Solar's facilities.

- **Biological Resources:** An onsite biological resource assessment will be conducted, and will evaluate potential impacts to threatened, endangered, and other special-status species and their habitat.
- **Floodplains and Wetlands Review:** Impacts to floodplains and wetlands will be assessed, and the Project will comply with the applicable requirements of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Clean Water Act Section 404 requirements.
- **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** Western will serve as lead Federal agency in the preparation of an environmental assessment for this Project.

Project-related construction activities could begin in late 2015, provided the above-mentioned tasks are completed and no significant environmental effects are identified. Project information is available online:

<http://www.wapa.gov/dsw/environment/RidgenoseSolarInterconnectionProject.html>

We would like to know of any issues, concerns, and suggestions you may have regarding the Federal action. Your comments will help define issues and alternatives for consideration in the environmental review process. Comments can be provided in writing, by phone, or in person at the public scoping meeting (information below). Please submit your comments by October 10, 2014.

Mail: Western Area Power Administration

ATTN.: Sean Heath, NEPA Document Manager

PO Box 6457

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Western and Longview Solar will host a public open house to allow the public and interested parties an opportunity to learn about the Project, the NEPA process, and to ask questions. The meeting will be held at the following date, time, and location.

Wednesday, September 17, 2014, 6:00–8:00 pm

Wickenburg Community Center

160 N. Valentine Street, Wickenburg, Arizona 85390

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Marianito". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Linda Marianito

Environmental Manager

Attachment (map)

