



**Department of Energy**  
Western Area Power Administration  
P.O. Box 281213  
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213

**SUBJECT:** Scoping Letter for an Environmental Assessment, Identification of Historic Properties and Notice of Floodplain and Wetland Action for the Sterling Solar 1 Interconnection Project

Dear Interested Party:

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA, 36 CFR Part 800) Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) invites your participation in establishing the scope of environmental issues and studies associated with the Sterling Solar 1 Interconnection Project located near Golden Shores/Topock, Mohave 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 its Open Access Transmission Service Tariff (OATT). WAPA is responding to a request from Sterling Solar 1 LLC, to interconnect their proposed photovoltaic solar plant located near Golden Shores/Topock, Mohave County, Arizona, to WAPA's nearby electrical transmission system (*see attached map*).

Per WAPA's OATT, WAPA is required to evaluate 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.

Sterling Solar 1 LLC, proposes to build, operate, and maintain an approximately 225-megawatt (MW) photovoltaic solar energy generation facility and battery storage facility on a 2,077-acre parcel of private land (project area/area of potential effects [APE]). Construction of the facility would include solar panels, access roads, an underground electrical collection system and an on-site collection point switchyard. Sterling Solar 1, LLC's facilities are not part of WAPA's Federal action, but their potential indirect impacts/effects will be presented alongside that of the Federal action as part of a comprehensive analysis in a Draft Environmental Assessment.

WAPA anticipates that construction could begin as soon as March 2020. This start date depends on the completion of planning efforts described below and assumes that no significant environmental impacts are identified. Further information is available about the proposed project is available online at:

<https://www.wapa.gov/transmission/EnvironmentalReviewNEPA/Pages/Sterling-Solar-1.aspx>

**Environmental Planning Processes:**

WAPA proposes to 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. Sterling 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. WAPA seeks your observations about the occurrence of protected species near the project area and suggestions on ways to avoid or minimize adverse effects.
- NEPA: WAPA will serve as lead Federal agency in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment of the proposed action and its impacts. WAPA seeks your comments about alternatives and environmental issues that you would like to see presented in a Draft Environmental Assessment.
- NHPA: WAPA will serve as the lead Federal agency for Section 106 of the NHPA. WAPA seeks your suggestions about available sources of cultural resource information and applicable types of identification efforts. WAPA plans to conduct a cultural resources field survey of the project area/APE and also seeks your input about the presence of historic properties or places of religious traditional and cultural importance that may be impacted or affected by the proposed action/undertaking.

**Get Involved:**

WAPA would like to know of any environmental issues, concerns, and suggestions you may have regarding the proposed action, project area or APE. 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 to the contact listed below.

**Mail:** Western Area Power Administration, HQ  
ATTN: Andrew M. Montano, NEPA Document Manager  
P.O. Box 281213  
Lakewood, CO 80228-8213  
**Email:** [montano@wapa.gov](mailto:montano@wapa.gov)  
**Phone:** (720) 962-7253

WAPA prefers to receive your scoping comments by September 30, 2019 or be post-marked by this date. WAPA will consider late comments to the extent practicable.

**Next Steps:**

WAPA intends to use your comments to prepare a Draft Environmental Assessment, which we expect to be completed later this year. WAPA will then seek public comment on this document. WAPA looks forward to receiving your comments.

Sincerely,



Matthew Blevins  
Environmental Manager

Enclosure