

DETERMINATION TO PREPARE AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Name of Project: Arizona Solar 1 Interconnection Project

Location: West of Salome, La Paz County, Arizona

Description of the Proposed Action: Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Desert Southwest Region (DSW), proposes to approve Arizona Solar 1 LLC's application to interconnect their proposed facility to the Little Harquahala to Harcuvar 115-kilovolt Transmission Line, which WAPA operates and maintains on behalf of the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) for the Central Arizona Project, and enter into an interconnection agreement. The agreement's purpose is to ensure that the request will not degrade existing transmission reliability and service. WAPA 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, WAPA plans 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 Bureau of Land Management (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. Reclamation holds an easement for the transmission line from BLM. WAPA plans to consult with BLM and Reclamation to determine their level of involvement in this project. The proposed interconnection would occur in the east half of Section 13 in Township 5 North, Range 14 West on the Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian (GSRBM). A construction schedule for WAPA's action has not yet been established.

Arizona Solar 1 LLC plans to build, operate, and maintain an approximately 32.5 megawatt photovoltaic solar energy generation facility. An optional 27.5 megawatt of photovoltaic solar energy generation may be added 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 includes the following components:

- Installing solar panels up to 480 acres of land;
- Installing underground collection lines from each panel to a collection point switchyard;
- Creating access roads within the facility for construction and maintenance; and
- Constructing an on-site collection point switchyard covering between 2 and 4 acres.

The facility would be located on private land approximately two miles west of Salome situated within portions of Section 18 in Township 5 North, Range 13 West on the GSRBM. The applicant plans to put the facility into service by December 2019.

Arizona Solar 1 LLC's facility is subject to state and local review prior to construction, such as planning and zoning approval by La Paz County, Arizona.

WAPA's action, as defined in 10 CFR 1021.104, consists of approving an interconnection request, entering into an interconnection agreement, and implementing project-related transmission system upgrades, additions or configurations.

Class of Action from Department of Energy (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Procedures (10 CFR 1021): The items listed in Appendix C are classes of actions that normally require Environmental Assessments (EA), but not necessarily Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). Appendix C7 states "Establishment and implementation of contracts, policies, marketing and allocations plans related to electric power that involve (1) the interconnection of, or acquisition of power from, new generation resources that are equal to or less than 50 average megawatts..."

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

Determination: Based on the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures, I determined that WAPA will prepare an EA to assess the proposed action. Based on the analysis in the EA, WAPA will either prepare a finding of no significant impact and proceed with the action, or prepare an EIS if the EA reveals the potential for significant environmental impacts.



Ronald E. Moulton
Senior Vice President and
Desert Southwest Regional Manager



Date