



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

**JAN 19 2010**

Dear Interested Party:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Western Area Power Administration (Western), is considering whether to provide partial financing in the amount of \$354 million for the southern portion of the Southwest Intertie Project (SWIP-South) which consists of approximately 235 miles of 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line. SWIP-South would extend from Harry Allen substation near Las Vegas, Nevada, northward to the proposed Thirtymile substation near Ely, Nevada. Partial financing of SWIP-South is being considered under the provisions of Western's Transmission Infrastructure Program which was created to implement Section 402 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act). Under the Recovery Act Western was given authority to borrow funds from the U.S. Treasury to construct, finance, facilitate, plan, operate, maintain, and/or study construction of new or upgraded electric power transmission lines and related facilities.

The Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) was the lead agency in the preparation of the *Southwest Intertie Project Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan Amendment* (July 1993). BLM also prepared the *Southwest Intertie Project Southern Portion Environmental Assessment* (July 2008). Western did not participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) because Western was not considering partial financing of the project nor was the Recovery Act then law. Western's potential funding of the SWIP-South does not change the environmental impacts as analyzed in the BLM environmental documents. Western has performed an independent evaluation of both BLM environmental documents and has determined that both meet the requirements of the DOE National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures (10 CFR 1021).

The attached Cover Sheet addresses Western's purpose and need, its proposed action, and a discussion of intentional destructive acts. Western is proposing to adopt the BLM's previous EIS and EA to meet its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The BLM's EIS/EA and the cover sheet together serve as Western's EIS NEPA documentation for the proposed SWIP-South financing.

Western is hereby adopting both the *Southwest Intertie Project Final Environmental Impact Statement and Proposed Plan Amendment* (July 1993) and *Southwest Intertie Project Southern Portion Environmental Assessment* (July 2008) as DOE/EIS-0443. In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the National Environmental Policy Act regulations Western is not re-circulating the EIS or EA as a draft because the actions covered by the original EIS and EA are substantially the same. The cover sheet and BLM's NEPA documents are available on Western's website at <http://www.wapa.gov/dsw/environment/SWIP.htm>. Western will issue a Record of Decision on whether to provide partial financing to the SWIP-South project no sooner than 30 days after the Environmental Protection Agency publishes its Notice of Availability in the Federal Register.



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If you have any questions, please contact Matthew Blevins, Corporate Services Office NEPA Document Manager, at 720-962-7261, or [blevins@wapa.gov](mailto:blevins@wapa.gov), if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



C. Shane Collins  
Natural Resource Manager

cc:

Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance, GC-54