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California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Energy Commission Complete Landmark Land Mitigation Deal for Ivanpah Solar Project

State Partners with Project Owners to Purchase Conservation Land

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), the California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) and the Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System (ISEGS) owners have finalized a landmark agreement to purchase 7,000 acres of land under the state's Advanced Mitigation Program (AMP) to satisfy the solar project's land mitigation requirements. Ivanpah is the first renewable energy project to participate in the AMP since its inception in 2010.

"Getting meaningful wildlife conservation on the ground while meeting our state and national renewable energy goals is mission-critical for our department and for the people of California," said CDFW Chief Deputy Director Kevin Hunting. "The Advanced Mitigation Program is an innovative approach to achieving these vital goals and is a shining example of what can be accomplished when government, industry and conservation partners work together."

The AMP, established by Senate Bill 34, allows solar developers to coordinate directly with the state agencies to more efficiently purchase high-value conservation lands as mitigation for large-scale renewable energy projects. The AMP represents another effort by CDFW and other state agencies to streamline the permitting process in order to achieve Governor Edmund G. Brown, Jr.'s aggressive goal of 33 percent renewable energy for the state by 2020.

"This agreement is yet another achievement in meeting California's clean energy goals," said Energy Commissioner Karen Douglas. "The AMP offers a valuable tool to effectively balance our state's need for clean, renewable energy with our continued commitment to protect sensitive and endangered species."

"Working through the State's Advanced Mitigation Program has proven to be an effective alternative for satisfying the Ivanpah project's mitigation land requirements," said Marc Sydnor, director of environmental affairs for BrightSource Energy. "We've also been able to achieve a project goal of ensuring that the land purchased is used for the highest possible purpose – to protect our state's natural legacy."

The AMP authorizes CDFW, in consultation with the Energy Commission, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to design and implement advanced mitigation actions, including the purchase of land and conservation easements to protect, restore and enhance the habitat of California Endangered Species Act-listed plants and animals. The land purchased as part of the program is pooled and can then be applied to qualifying renewable energy projects.

Through the AMP, energy developers have access to suitable, high-value conservation lands to satisfy their project's mitigation requirements. The AMP provides a more efficient process for purchasing large plots and increases the amount of quality conservation land available for habitat protection.

"Ivanpah is one of the crown jewels in NRG's solar portfolio, our single largest solar project and the world's largest solar thermal plant once completed," said Tom Doyle, president of NRG Solar. "Using innovative thermal technology, the power generated here at Ivanpah will produce enough clean power for more than 140,000 California homes and avoid the emission of 400,000 tons of carbon, helping us in the fight to arrest global climate change."

The Ivanpah owners, collectively called Solar Partners, paid \$6.2 million for the lands purchased to mitigate for the Ivanpah solar project that covers nearly 7,000 acres of desert tortoise habitat and 175 acres of state waters. They also paid an additional \$5.2 million as an endowment to provide for the long-term maintenance and management of the lands. The lands are comprised of 163 separate parcels in the Chuckwalla Desert Wildlife Management Area (DWMA) in San Bernardino County, and the Fremont-Kramer DWMA and Superior-Cronese DWMA both in Riverside County. Purchased through a grant from the CDFW, by Mojave Desert Land Trust and Transition Habitat Conservancy, two land trusts hold title and will maintain the properties, while CDFW holds a conservation easement as outlined by SB 34. Solar Partners' purchase of the mitigation land has reimbursed CDFW for all costs of acquisition and deposited an endowment for long-term maintenance and management of the properties.

For more information:

http://www.dfg.ca.gov/Climate_and_Energy/Renewable_Energy/Fee_Trust_Fund.aspx

<http://ivanpahsolar.com/>