

3.0 Closure

This section addresses the issue of closure of the facility, both temporary and final closure (e.g., at the end of the facility's operating life).

Summary

Facility closure can be either temporary or permanent; the following paragraphs address both. Temporary closure is defined as stopping operations longer than would be required for routine maintenance, overhaul, or replacement of major plant equipment. Temporary closure could result from facility damage following natural occurrences (e.g., earthquake), fire, or for short-term economic reasons. Permanent closure is defined as stopping operations with no intention of restarting. Permanent closure could result from a combination of facility age and economic considerations, from damage considered beyond repair or for other reasons. A Decommissioning Plan will be prepared, reviewed and approved by the regulatory agencies and put into effect when permanent closure occurs.

3.1 Temporary Closure

If a temporary closure occurs, security will be maintained 24 hours per day at the Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP or Project) and the California Energy Commission (CEC), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and other responsible agencies will be notified. Temporary closure activities will differ depending on whether or not a release of hazardous materials is involved.

If there is no actual or threatened release of hazardous materials, a contingency plan will be implemented for the temporary halting of facility operations. The contingency plan will be developed before operations and its purpose is to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards (LORS) and appropriate protection of public health, safety, and the environment. Depending on the expected duration of the temporary shutdown, the contingency procedures implemented may include draining and properly disposing of chemicals from storage tanks and other facility equipment, safe shutdown of all facility equipment, and other measures as needed to ensure protection of onsite workers, the public, and the environment.

If the temporary closure does involve an actual or threatened release of hazardous materials, the procedures followed will be those provided in the Hazardous Materials Business Plan that will be developed for the Project (see Section 5.6, Hazardous Materials Handling). Procedures will include, at a minimum:

- Measures to control the release of hazardous materials;
- Notifications required to the appropriate agencies and the public;
- Emergency response procedures; and
- Training requirements for BSPP personnel in hazardous materials release response and control.

When all issues related to the hazardous materials release have been resolved, temporary closure will proceed as described above for temporary closure without a hazardous materials release.

3.2 Permanent Closure

The planned operational life of the Project is 30 years, but the facility conceivably could operate for a longer or shorter period depending on economic or other circumstances. If the Project remains economically viable, it could operate for more than 30 years, which would defer environmental impacts associated with closure and with the development of replacement power generating facilities. However, if the facility were to become economically non-viable before 30 years of operation, permanent closure could occur sooner. In any case, a Decommissioning Plan will be prepared and put into effect when permanent closure occurs. As in the case of a temporary closure, security for the Project will be maintained on a 24-hour basis during permanent closure and the CEC and other responsible agencies will be notified of the decommissioning schedule and plans.

The procedures provided in the decommissioning plan will be developed to ensure compliance with applicable LORS, and to ensure public health and safety and protection of the environment. The Closure Plan will be submitted to the CEC and BLM for review and approval prior to a planned closure. Depending on conditions at the time, permanent closure measures may range from extensive "mothballing" to the complete removal of Project equipment and other structures.

In general, the Project Decommissioning Plan will address:

- Proposed decommissioning measures for the Project and all associated facilities;
- Activities necessary for site restoration/revegetation if removal of all equipment and facilities is needed;
- Recycling of facility components, collection and disposal of hazardous wastes, and resale of unused chemicals to other parties;
- Decommissioning alternatives other than full site restoration;
- Costs associated with the planned decommissioning activities and where funding will come from for these activities; and
- Conformance with applicable LORS.

Because it is not possible to predict at the present time what conditions will exist when decommissioning decisions must be made, details of the planned decommissioning process will be developed and provided to the CEC and BLM in the future when more information is available.