



BEFORE THE ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
1516 NINTH STREET, SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
1-800-822-6228 – WWW.ENERGY.CA.GOV

APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION
For the **BLYTHE SOLAR
POWER PROJECT**

DOCKET No. 09-AFC-6

**NOTICE OF ENERGY COMMISSION INFORMATIONAL HEARING
ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING MEETING AND PUBLIC SITE VISIT
AND
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT SCOPING MEETING**

On August 24, 2009, Solar Millennium, LLC and Chevron Energy Solutions (Applicants), submitted an Application for Certification (AFC) to the Energy Commission to construct the Blythe Solar Power Project (BSPP), a solar thermal power plant facility located approximately two miles north of U.S. Interstate-10 (I-10) and eight miles west of the City of Blythe in an unincorporated area of Riverside County, California. The Energy Commission has exclusive state-level jurisdiction to license this project and is considering the proposal under a 12-month review process established by Public Resources Code section 25540.6. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is conducting its own concurrent process to determine whether to approve a Right of Way (ROW) grant sought by the Applicants which will extend across approximately 9,400 acres of public lands owned by the federal government.

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that the Energy Commission has designated a Committee of two commissioners to conduct proceedings on the Application. The Committee has scheduled a public Informational Hearing and Site Visit to discuss the proposed Project and the BLM will conduct a Public Scoping Meeting as described below:

MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2010
Site Visit begins (bus leaves City Hall) at 3:30 p.m.
Public Informational Hearing/Scoping Meeting begins at 5:00 p.m.

**Blythe City Hall Council Chambers
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, California 92225**

(Map and Agenda Attached)

Before the Informational Hearing/Scoping Meeting, members of the public are invited to join the Committee and the BLM on a tour of the proposed site. The Applicants will provide transportation to and from the site. For reservations, contact the Energy Commission's Public Adviser's Office at (916) 654-4489 or 1-800-822-6228 or e-mail: [\[publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us\]](mailto:publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us). Please make your reservation prior to noon **Tuesday, January 19, 2010**, so that we can assure you a space.

NOTE: A Site Visit and Informational Hearing for the **Rice Solar Energy Project** (RSEP), proposed to be built on a site approximately 50 miles north of Blythe, will also take place at Blythe City Hall on January 25, 2010. Please see the Revised Notice issued separately for details about the RSEP Site Visit and Informational Hearing.

Background

On November 18, 2009, the Energy Commission determined the application to be complete. Energy Commission staff will now determine whether the proposed project complies with applicable laws related to public health and safety, environmental impacts, and engineering requirements. This Informational Hearing/Scoping Meeting is co-sponsored by the Energy Commission and BLM to inform the public about the Project and to invite public participation in the review process.

As the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Energy Commission is responsible for reviewing and ultimately approving or denying all applications to construct and operate thermal electric power plants, 50 MW and greater, in California. The Energy Commission facility certification process carefully examines public health and safety, environmental impacts and engineering aspects of proposed power plants and all related facilities such as electric transmission lines and natural gas and water pipelines.

Under federal law, the BLM is responsible for processing applications for rights-of-way to authorize the proposed project and associated transmission lines and other facilities to be constructed and operated on land it manages. In processing applications, the BLM must comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), which requires that federal agencies consider the environmental impacts associated with such projects.

Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), the BLM and the Energy Commission staff intend to conduct a joint environmental review of the BSPP in a single NEPA/CEQA process. It is in the interest of the BLM and the Energy Commission to share in the preparation of a joint environmental analysis of the proposed project to avoid duplication of Staff efforts, to share Staff expertise and information, to promote intergovernmental coordination at the local, state, and federal levels, and to facilitate public review by providing a joint document and a more efficient environmental review process.

Purpose of the Informational/Scoping Hearing

This Informational Hearing/Scoping Meeting provides an opportunity for members of the community in the project vicinity to obtain information, to offer comments and concerns, and to view the project site. The Applicants will explain plans for developing the BSPP and the related facilities and Energy Commission staff will explain the administrative licensing process and Staff's role in reviewing the Application. The BLM staff will also explain the role of their agency in the joint process as is described in BLM's **Notice of Intent to Prepare Two Environmental Impact Statements/Staff Assessments**, attached to this Notice as **Attachment A**.

Project Description

Solar Millennium, LLC and Chevron Energy Solutions, the joint developers of this project, propose to construct, own, and operate the BSPP. The Project is a concentrated solar thermal electric generating facility with four adjacent, independent, and identical solar plants of 250 megawatt (MW) nominal capacity each for a total capacity of 1,000 MW nominal.

The Project will utilize solar parabolic trough technology to generate electricity. With this technology, arrays of parabolic mirrors collect heat energy from the sun and refocus the radiation on a receiver tube located at the focal point of the parabola. A heat transfer fluid (HTF) is heated to high temperature (750°F) as it circulates through the receiver tubes. The heated HTF is then piped through a series of heat exchangers where it releases its stored heat to generate high pressure steam. The steam is then fed to a traditional steam turbine generator where electricity is produced.

The Project site is located approximately two miles north of U.S. Interstate-10 (I-10) and eight miles west of the City of Blythe in an unincorporated area of Riverside County, California. The Blythe Airport is about one mile south of the site. The Applicants have applied for a ROW grant from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management for about 9,400 acres of flat desert terrain. The total area that will be disturbed by project construction and operation will be about 7,030 acres. The area inside the Project's security fence, within which all project facilities will be located, will occupy approximately 5,950 acres.

The engineering and environmental details of the proposed project are contained in the AFC. Copies of the AFC are available at the local public agencies that are involved in the review process and at the following local libraries: Palo Verde Valley District Library, Lake Tamarisk Library, Cathedral City Branch Library, Riverside Main Library, and the Coachella Branch Library.

Other libraries with copies of the AFC are the Fresno County Library; San Diego Public Library; UCLA, University Research Library; Barstow Branch Library; San Bernardino County Library; Humboldt Library; San Francisco Public Library; the Energy Commission's Library in Sacramento; and the California State Library in Sacramento.

Proposed Schedule and Issues Identification Report

To assist the parties and public in understanding the process, Energy Commission staff shall file a proposed schedule for review of the AFC. Staff shall also file an Issues

Identification Report summarizing the major issues. The proposed schedule and Staff's report shall be filed **no later than noon on January 15, 2010**. The Applicants shall file its response, if any, **no later than noon on January 22, 2010**.

Public Adviser and Public Participation

The Energy Commission Public Adviser's Office is available to assist the public in participating in the application review process. For those individuals who require general information on how to participate, please contact the Public Advisers Office at (916) 654-4489 or 1-800-822-6228 or e-mail: [**publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us**].

If you have a disability and need assistance to participate in this event, contact Lourdes Quiroz at (916) 654-5146 or e-mail: [**lquiroz@energy.state.ca.us**].

Further Information

Questions of a legal or procedural nature should be directed to Raoul Renaud, the Hearing Officer, at (916) 651-2020 or e-mail: [**rrenaud@energy.state.ca.us**].

Technical questions concerning the Project should be addressed to Alan Solomon, the Staff Project Manager, at (916) 653-8236 or e-mail: [**asolomon@energy.state.ca.us**].

Technical questions concerning the BLM permitting process should be addressed to Holly L. Roberts, Project Manager or Allison Shaffer, BLM Project Manager at Palmsprings-South Coast Field Office, BLM, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, California, 92262, (760) 833-7149 or e-mail: [**CAPSsolar blythespp@blm.gov**].

Media inquiries should be directed to the Office of Media and Public Communications at (916) 654-4989 or e-mail: [**mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us**].

Information concerning the status of the Project, as well as notices and other relevant documents may be viewed on the Energy Commission's Internet web page at: [**www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases solar_millennium_blythe**]

Dated: January 11, 2010, at Sacramento, California.

KAREN DOUGLAS
Chairman and Presiding Member
Blythe Solar AFC Committee

JEFFREY BYRON
Commissioner and Associate Member
Blythe Solar AFC Committee

**Blythe City Hall Council Chambers
235 N Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225**



Monday, January 25, 2010
Site Visit begins (bus leaves City Hall) at 3:30 p.m.
Public Informational Hearing/Scoping Meeting begins at 5:00 p.m.

Mailed to Lists: POS, 7366, 7367, 7368, 7369

ATTACHMENT A

Notice of Intent To Prepare Two Environmental Impact Statements/Staff Assessments for... Page 1 of 3

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR **BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**
California

[Federal Register: November 23, 2009 (Volume 74, Number 224)]
[Notices]
[Page 61169-61171]

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
[CACA 048810 and CACA 048811, LLCAD06000 L5101 ER0000 LVRBW09B26000]

Notice of Intent To Prepare Two Environmental Impact Statements/Staff Assessments for the Proposed Chevron Energy Solutions/Solar Millennium Palen and Blythe Solar Power Plants, Riverside County, CA and Possible Land Use Plan Amendments

SUMMARY: In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended, and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Palm Springs South Coast Field Office, Palm Springs, California, together with the California Energy Commission (CEC), intend to prepare two Environmental Impact Statements (EIS)/Staff Assessments (SAs), which may include an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan (1980, as amended) and by this notice are announcing the beginning of the scoping process to solicit public comments and identify issues.

DATES: This notice initiates the public scoping process for the Draft EIS/SAs and possible plan amendment. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until December 23, 2009. The dates and locations of scoping meetings, information hearings, and site visits will be announced at least 15 days in advance through local media and the BLM Web site at: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings.html> and the CEC Web sites at http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solar_millennium_palen/index.html and http://www.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solar_millennium_blythe/index.html. To be considered in the Draft EIS/SAs, all comments must be received prior to the close of the scoping period or 15 days after the last public meeting, whichever is later. We will provide additional opportunities for public participation upon publication of the Draft EIS/SAs.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments on issues and planning criteria related to the Proposed Chevron Energy Solutions/Solar Millennium Palen and Blythe Solar Power Plants EIS/SAs and CDCA Plan amendment by any of the following methods:

E-mail: asolomon@energy.state.ca.us, CAPSSolarPalen@blm.gov, or CAPSSolarBlythe@blm.gov.

Fax: (760) 833-7199.

Mail or hand delivery: Alan Solomon, Project Manager, Siting, Transmission and Environmental Protection Division, CEC, 1516 Ninth Street, MS-15, Sacramento, California 95814 or Holly L. Roberts, Project Manager, Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, BLM, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, California 92262.

The administrative record of this proposal may be examined at the Palm Springs South Coast Field Office during normal business hours.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For further information or to have your name added to our mailing list, contact Alan Solomon, CEC project manager at telephone (916) 653-8236, or address 1516 Ninth Street, MS-15, Sacramento, CA 95814, or e-mail asolomon@energy.state.ca.us; or Allison Shaffer, BLM project manager at telephone (760) 833-7100, or address Palm Springs-South Coast Field Office, BLM, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, California 92262, or e-mail CAPSSolarPalen@blm.gov or CAPSSolarBlythe@blm.gov. Information on participating in the CEC's review of the project may also be obtained through the CEC's Public Advisor's Office at (916) 654-8236 or toll free in California, (800) 822-6228, or by e-mail: publicadviser@energy.state.ca.us. News media inquiries should be directed to the CEC's media office at (916) 654-4989, or mediaoffice@energy.state.ca.us. You can also subscribe to an email notification list of all notices at: <http://www.energy.ca.gov/listservers>.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Chevron Energy Solutions/Solar Millennium (CESSM) has applied for two separate right-of-way (ROW) authorizations to construct and operate the Palen and Blythe solar thermal power plants in eastern Riverside County, California with an expected combined capacity of 1,452

http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/info/fed_reg_archives/2009/november/BlythPalen_NOI.print.... 12/1/2009

megawatts (MW) using solar parabolic trough generating stations. Approximately 10,100 acres of BLM-administered public land are needed to develop the two projects.

Pursuant to the BLM's CDCA Plan, sites associated with power generation or transmission not identified in the CDCA Plan will be considered through the plan amendment process. Under Federal law, the BLM is responsible for processing requests for ROWs to authorize solar projects and associated transmission lines and other associated facilities on the land it manages. Under California law, the CEC is responsible for reviewing applications for certification (AFC) filed for thermal power plants over 50 MW. The CEC also serves as lead agency for the environmental review of such projects under CEQA. On August 24, 2009, CESSM submitted to the CEC AFCs for the Palen and Blythe projects.

The Palen site is 10 miles east of Desert Center, California and a half mile north of Interstate 10; the Blythe site is eight miles west of Blythe, California and three miles north of Interstate 10. The Palen facility will be constructed in two phases, while the Blythe facility will be constructed in four phases.

The proposed Palen Solar Power Project would consist of two parabolic trough solar thermal power plants, each of which would have a solar field comprised of rows of parabolic mirrors focusing solar energy on collector tubes. The tubes would carry heated oil to a boiler, which would then send steam to a turbine. The two phases would generate approximately 484 MW of electricity. The two power plants would share administrative buildings, parking areas, maintenance buildings, switch yards, bioremediation areas, wastewater treatment facilities, access and maintenance roads, and perimeter fencing. The project would also include a natural gas pipeline, communication lines, and a 230 kV transmission line. The total expected project footprint would be approximately 3,800 acres. During construction, the project would require approximately 1,100 acre-feet of water for dust control and soil compaction. During operation, the project would require approximately 300 acre-feet of water per year. CESSM proposes to use water from new wells.

The proposed Blythe Solar Power Project would consist of four parabolic trough solar thermal power plants similar to the Palen project. The four power plants would generate approximately 968 MW of electricity. All four plants would share administrative buildings, parking areas, maintenance buildings, switch yards, bioremediation areas, wastewater treatment facilities, access and maintenance roads, and perimeter fencing. The project would also include a natural gas pipeline, communication lines, and a 500 kV transmission line. The total expected project footprint would be approximately 6,300 acres. During construction, the project would require approximately 3,100 acre feet of water for dust control and soil compaction. During operation, the project would require approximately 600 acre-feet of water per year. CESSM proposes to use water from new wells. If approved, both projects would begin construction in late 2010. The purpose of the public scoping process is to determine relevant issues that will influence the scope of the environmental analysis, including alternatives, and guide the process for developing the EISs. The BLM has identified the following preliminary issues: special area designations, air quality, biological resources, hazardous materials, recreation, cultural resources, water resources, geological resources, land use, noise, paleontological resources, public health, socioeconomics, soils, traffic and transportation, and visual resources.

Authorization of these proposals may require amendment of the CDCA Plan. By this notice, the BLM is complying with requirements in 43 CFR 1610.2(c) to notify the public of potential amendments to land use plans, subject to the findings of the EISs. If a land use plan amendment is necessary, the BLM will integrate the land use planning process with the NEPA process for these projects.

The BLM will use the NEPA commenting process to satisfy the public involvement process for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470f) as provided for in 36 CFR 800.2(d)(3). Native American Tribal consultations will be conducted and Tribal concerns will be given due consideration, including impacts on Indian trust assets. Federal, State, and local agencies, along with Tribes and other stakeholders that may be interested or affected by the BLM's decision on this project, are invited to participate in the scoping process and, if eligible, may request or be requested by the BLM to participate as a cooperating agency.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment--including your personal identifying information--may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Authority: 40 CFR 1501.7 and 43 CFR 1610.2.

Tom Pogacnik, Deputy State Director for Natural Resources, BLM California State Office.
[FR Doc. E9-27961 Filed 11-20-09; 8:45 am]



BEFORE THE ENERGY RESOURCES CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

AGENDA

**RICE SOLAR ENERGY PROJECT
BLYTHE SOLAR POWER PROJECT
PALEN SOLAR POWER PROJECT**

**CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION INFORMATIONAL HEARINGS
U. S. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING MEETINGS
AND
PUBLIC SITE VISITS**

MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2010

Blythe City Hall Council Chambers
235 N. Broadway
Blythe, California 92225

- 1:15 p.m.*** Rice Solar Energy Project site visit begins (bus leaves City Hall).
- 3:30 p.m.*** Blythe Solar Power Project and Palen Solar Power Project site visits begin (bus leaves City Hall).
- 5:00 p.m.*** All buses return to Blythe City Hall. Presentations and discussions concerning matters common to Blythe Solar Power Project, Palen Solar Power Project, and Rice Solar Energy Project.
- 7:00 p.m.*** Presentations and discussions regarding the Rice Solar Energy Project.
- 8:00 p.m.*** Presentations and discussions regarding the Blythe Solar Power Project and Palen Solar Power Project.