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News Release

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Environmental Review Process Begins for Solar Project in Imperial County

The U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), together with the California Energy Commission (CEC), today published a notice announcing that the agencies intend to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement/Staff Assessment (EIS/SA) for the Stirling Energy Systems' Solar Two Project in Imperial County.

The project, to be located about 14 miles west of El Centro, involves about 6,500 acres, including 6,140 acres of BLM public lands and 360 acres of private lands. The project site is just south of Plaster City between the Union Pacific Railroad and Interstate 8. Stirling has submitted an application to BLM requesting a right-of-way to construct and operate an electric generating facility using concentrated solar thermal power to generate at least 750 megawatts of power, enough to meet the needs of 750,000 people.

BLM El Centro Field Manager Vicki Wood said the publication of the notice in the Federal Register initiates a 30-day public scoping period, during which the public can submit comments on issues to be addressed in the EIS/SA. Under California law, CEC is responsible for thermal power plants over 50 megawatts and is the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act. BLM is the lead agency under the federal National Environmental Policy Act.

Wood said the agencies expect to hold at least one public meeting at a time and date to be announced shortly. She also explained that the proposed project will require an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. According to Stirling's application, the proposed project would be built in two phases, and ultimately consist of 30,000 25-kilowatt power dishes utilizing "Suncatcher" technology consisting of a solar concentrator dish approximately 38-feet high by 40-feet wide. Related structures include transmission lines, access roads, water lines, and other facilities.

Comments should be sent to Christopher Meyer, Project Manager/CEC, 1516 Ninth Street, MS-15, Sacramento, CA 95814, CMeyer@energy.state.ca.us Further information can be obtained from Meyer and Lynda Kastoll, BLM, 1661 So. 4th St., El Centro, CA 92243 (760) 337-4421, Lynda_Kastoll@ca.blm.gov Agencies websites also contain information on the project: <http://222.energy.ca.gov/sitingcases/solartwo/> and <http://www.ca.blm.gov/elcentro>

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