Western Area Power Administration

Construction and Operation of the Quartzsite Solar Energy Project, La Paz County, AZ (DOE/EIS–0440)

AGENCY: Western Area Power Administration, DOE.

ACTION: Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and To Conduct Scoping Meetings; Notice of Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement.

SUMMARY: The Western Area Power Administration (Western), an agency of the DOE, intends to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) for the proposed Quartzsite Solar Energy Project (Project) in La Paz County, near Quartzsite, Arizona. Quartzsite Solar Energy, LLC (QSE) has applied to Western to interconnect the proposed Project to Western’s power transmission system. Western is issuing this notice to be notified via e-mail of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary.

For information on DOE’s NEPA review procedures or status of a NEPA review, contact Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director of NEPA Policy and Compliance, GC–54, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585, telephone (202) 586–4600 or (800) 472–2756.

For information on BLM’s participation, contact Eddie Arreola, Supervisory Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, One North Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85004, telephone (602) 417–9505, fax (602) 417–9454, or e-mail Quartzsite_Solar@blm.gov.

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

SUMMARY: The Western Area Power Administration (Western) has applied to Western to interconnect the proposed Project to Western’s power transmission system. Western is issuing this notice to be notified via e-mail of new filings and issuances related to this or other pending projects. For assistance, contact FERC Online Support.

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary.

For information on BLM’s Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement, contact Eddie Arreola, Supervisory Project Manager, Bureau of Land Management, One North Central Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85004, telephone (602) 417–9505, fax (602) 417–9454, or e-mail Quartzsite_Solar@blm.gov.

For general information on DOE’s NEPA review procedures or status of a NEPA review, contact Ms. Carol M. Borgstrom, Director of NEPA Policy and Compliance, GC–54, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585, telephone (202) 586–4600 or (800) 472–2756.

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Quartzsite, Arizona. The substation would be approximately 300 x 400 feet, or about 2 to 3 acres. An on-site temporary laydown area would be used during the construction phase of the Project. The laydown areas, outside of the solar facility boundary, total approximately 30 acres and would be used for storage and assembly of proposed Project components and for temporary construction trailers.

**Proposed Agency Action and Alternatives**

Western’s proposed actions are to build a new substation and to interconnect the proposed Project to Western’s transmission system at the substation described above.

Western will also consider the no-action alternative in the EIS. Under the no-action alternative, Western would deny the interconnection request and would not build a new substation. For the purpose of impact analysis and comparison in the EIS, it will be assumed that the Applicant’s proposed Project would not be built and the environmental impacts associated with construction and operation would not occur.

**Agency Responsibilities**

Because interconnection of the proposed Project would incorporate a major new generation resource into Western’s power transmission system, Western has determined that an EIS is required under DOE NEPA implementing procedures, 10 CFR part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix D, class of action D6. Western would be the lead Federal agency for preparing the EIS, as defined at 40 CFR 1501.5. The proposed Project would include construction of a new electrical generating facility, substation and transmission line across lands managed by the BLM; therefore, the BLM has agreed to be a cooperating agency for preparation of the EIS. Western will invite other Federal, State, local, and tribal agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to environmental issues to be cooperating agencies on the EIS, as defined at 40 CFR 1501.6. Such agencies may also make a request to Western to be a cooperating agency by contacting Ms. Barger at the address listed above in the **ADDRESSES** section. Because the proposed Project may involve action in floodplains or wetlands, this NOI also serves as a notice of proposed floodplain or wetland action, in accordance with DOE regulations for Compliance with Floodplain and Wetlands Environmental Review Requirements at 10 CFR 1022.12(a). The EIS will include a floodplain/wetland assessment and, if required, a floodplain/wetland statement of findings will be issued with the Final EIS or Western and BLM’s Records of Decision (ROD).

**Environmental Issues**

This notice is to inform agencies and the public of Western’s intent to prepare an EIS and solicit comments and suggestions for consideration in the EIS. To help the public frame its comments, the following list contains potential environmental issues preliminarily identified for analysis in the EIS:

1. Impacts on protected, threatened, endangered, or sensitive species of animals or plants.
2. Impacts on migratory birds.
3. Introduction of noxious weeds, invasive and non-native species.
4. Impacts on recreation and transportation.
5. Impacts on land use, wilderness, farmlands, and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
6. Impacts on cultural or historic resources and tribal values.
7. Impacts on human health and safety.
8. Impacts on air, soil, and water resources (including air quality and surface water impacts).
10. Socioeconomic impacts and disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority and low-income populations.

This list is not intended to be all-inclusive or to imply any predetermination of impacts. Western invites interested parties to suggest specific issues within these general categories, or other issues not included above, to be considered in the EIS.

**Public Participation**

The EIS process includes a public scoping period; public scoping meetings; public review and hearings on the draft EIS; publication of a final EIS; and publication of a ROD. The public scoping period begins with publication of this notice and closes February 16, 2010. At the conclusion of the NEPA process, Western will prepare a ROD. Persons interested in receiving future notices, Project information, copies of the EIS, and other information on the NEPA review process should contact Ms. Barger at the address listed above in the **ADDRESSES** section. The purpose of the scoping meetings is to provide information about the proposed Project, review Project maps, answer questions, and take written comments from interested parties. All meeting locations will be handicapped-accessible. Anyone needing special accommodations should contact Ms. Barger to make arrangements.

The public will have the opportunity to provide written comments at the public scoping meetings. Written comments may also be sent to Ms. Barger by fax, e-mail, or U.S. Postal Service mail. To help define the scope of the EIS, comments should be received by Western no later than February 16, 2010.


Timothy J. Meeks,
Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

[Docket No. PF10–2–000]

Northern Border Pipeline Company; Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Assessment for the Planned Princeton Lateral Project, Request for Comments on Environmental Issues, and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting


The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the Princeton Lateral Project involving construction and operation of facilities by Northern Border Pipeline Company (Northern Border) in Bureau County, Illinois. This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will help the Commission staff determine what issues need to be evaluated in the EA. Please note that the scoping period will close on February 8, 2010.

Comments may be submitted in written form or verbally. Further details on how to submit written comments are provided in the Public Participation section of this notice. In lieu of or in addition to sending written comments, we invite you to attend the public