

without addressing specific elements. We considered all of the information and recommendations for improvement included in the comments and made appropriate changes to the draft policy. We also made some additions and clarifications to the policy that were not addressed in the public comments, but were discovered through internal briefings and reviews during the policy revision period.

Dated: April 7, 2014.

**Daniel M. Ashe,**

*Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Land Management

[CACA-048669, LLCAD07000,  
L51010000.ER0000.LVRWB10B4050]

#### Notice of Availability of the Record of Decision for the San Diego Gas & Electric Ocotillo Sol Solar Project and California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment, Imperial County, CA

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability.

**SUMMARY:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announces the availability of the Record of Decision (ROD) and approved plan amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) for the San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) Ocotillo Sol Solar Project in Imperial County, California. The Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Land and Minerals Management, approved the ROD on April 7, 2014, which constitutes the final decision of the Department of the Interior.

**ADDRESSES:** Copies of the Ocotillo Sol Solar Project ROD/approved CDCA plan amendment are available upon request at the BLM El Centro Field Office at 1661 S. 4th Street, El Centro, CA 92243, at the BLM California Desert District Office at 22835 Calle San Juan de los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553, or via the Internet at the following Web site: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/elcentro/nepa/ocotillosol.html>.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Noel Ludwig, BLM Project Manager, telephone 951-697-5368; address BLM California Desert District Office, 22835 Calle San Juan de Los Lagos, Moreno Valley, CA 92553; or email [nludwig@blm.gov](mailto:nludwig@blm.gov). Persons who use a telecommunications device for the deaf (TDD) may call the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339

to contact the above individual during normal business hours. The FIRS is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to leave a message or question with the above individual. You will receive a reply during normal business hours.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The applicant, SDG&E, filed an application for a right-of-way (ROW) grant authorization to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission the Ocotillo Sol project, a 20-megawatt (MW) (peak load) solar photovoltaic (PV) power plant facility, on 115 acres of BLM-administered public lands in Imperial County, California, including a 15-acre temporary construction laydown area. The site for the solar facility would be adjacent to the existing Imperial Valley Substation (IVS), approximately 5 miles north of the United States-Mexico border, 9 miles southwest of El Centro, and 82 miles east of San Diego. The proposed project site is located within the BLM's CDCA, the BLM's Yuha Basin Area of Critical Environmental Concern, and the Yuha Desert Management Area for the flat-tailed horned lizard. A portion of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail lies approximately 5 miles southwest of the project site at its closest point, and runs approximately north-south. The Jacumba Mountains Wilderness Area lies 11.7 miles to the west of the project site. The Agency Selected Alternative retains the 100-acre solar facility from the proposed project, but reduces the laydown area from 15 acres to 2 acres; this was described in the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) as Alternative 3: Reduced Construction Footprint, and identified as the Preferred Alternative.

All proposed project components, including the temporary 2-acre construction laydown area, would be located on BLM-administered lands subject to a ROW grant. The proposed Ocotillo Sol project components would include the PV modules and mounting structures, a maintenance building with an associated parking area, internal roads, inverters, transformers, and the combining switchgear. An existing road to the IVS would provide access to the proposed project site. New minor internal roads would be constructed between the module rows. The interconnection to the IVS would be via underground trench. Once approved and operational, the proposed Ocotillo Sol project is expected to have an average generating capacity of 15 to 18 MW, depending on the specific technology chosen, with a peak output of 20 MW.

In addition to mitigation and monitoring measures applied to all large ground disturbance projects on BLM land, the following are several of the key mitigation measures included in the ROD:

- Flat-tailed horned lizard translocation and monitoring plan;
- Burrowing owl mitigation and monitoring plan;
- Flat-tailed horned lizard exclusionary fence monitoring plan;
- Compensatory mitigation for flat-tailed horned lizard habitat losses;
- Wildlife mortality monitoring plan and mitigation measures; and
- An Archaeological Resources Monitoring and Discovery Plan, Tribal Participation Plan, and Long-Term Archaeological Management Plan.

The project site is located in the California Desert District within the planning boundary of the CDCA Plan, which is the applicable resource management plan for the project site and surrounding areas. The CDCA Plan, while recognizing the potential compatibility of solar energy generation facilities with other uses on public lands, requires that all sites associated with power generation or transmission not already identified in the Plan be considered through the BLM's land use plan amendment process. As a result, prior to approval of a ROW grant for the Ocotillo Sol Solar Project, the BLM must amend the CDCA Plan to allow the solar energy generating project on that site. The approved amendment to the CDCA Plan specifically revises the CDCA Plan to allow for the development of the Ocotillo Sol Solar Project and ancillary facilities on land managed by the BLM.

In addition to the ROW grant and plan amendment, the ROD also authorizes the temporary closures of existing routes for purposes of construction and maintenance of the underground transmission line for the Project as described in the ROD.

A Notice of Availability of the proposed plan amendment/final EIS for the Ocotillo Sol Solar Project was published on July 26, 2013 (78 FR 45268). Publication of the Notice of Availability for the plan amendment/final EIS initiated a 30-day protest period for the proposed amendment to the CDCA Plan. At the close of the 30-day period, no written protests were received. Simultaneously with the protest period, the Governor of California conducted a 30-day consistency review of the proposed plan amendment to identify any inconsistencies with State or local plans, policies or programs; no inconsistencies were identified.

Because this decision has been approved by the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Land and Mineral Management, it is not subject to administrative appeal (43 CFR 4.410(a)(3)).

**Authority:** 40 CFR 1506.6.

**Neil Kornze,**

*Director.*

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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### Bureau of Reclamation

[14XR5173F7, RX12056050000004, RR02142500]

#### Notice of Intent To Prepare a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report and Notice of Scoping Meeting for the Proposed North Valley Regional Recycled Water Program

**AGENCY:** Bureau of Reclamation, Interior.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of the Interior, through the Bureau of Reclamation, and the Del Puerto Water District, propose to prepare a draft Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the North Valley Regional Recycled Water Program. The North Valley Regional Recycled Water Program would provide recycled water from the Cities of Turlock and Modesto via the Central Valley Project's Delta-Mendota Canal to the Del Puerto Water District for irrigation purposes, and could further provide annual Incremental Level 4 water to south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta Central Valley Project Improvement Act designated wildlife refuges for wetlands.

**DATES:** Submit written comments on the scope of the draft EIS/EIR by May 28, 2014.

A public scoping meeting will be held on May 13, 2014, 3:00–7:00 p.m., in Modesto, California.

**ADDRESSES:** Written comments on the scope of the draft EIS/EIR should be sent to Mr. Benjamin Lawrence, Bureau of Reclamation, 1243 N Street, SCC-412, Fresno, California 93721, or via email to [blawrence@usbr.gov](mailto:blawrence@usbr.gov).

The public scoping meeting will be held at the Modesto City Hall, 1010 10th Street, Modesto, CA 95354.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Mr. Benjamin Lawrence, Natural Resources Specialist, Bureau of Reclamation at the above address, via email at

[blawrence@usbr.gov](mailto:blawrence@usbr.gov), or at 559-487-5039. Information about the project is also available on the project Web site: <http://www.nvr-recycledwater.org/>.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Del Puerto Water District (DPWD) and the Cities of Turlock and Modesto (Cities) (Partner Agencies) propose to implement a regional solution to address water supply shortages within DPWD's service area on the west side of the San Joaquin River in San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced Counties, south of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Delta). Specifically, the project proposes to deliver 59,000 acre feet per year of recycled water produced by the Cities via the Delta-Mendota Canal. Recycled water would be conveyed from Modesto and Turlock through pipelines from their wastewater treatment facilities, crossing the San Joaquin River, and ending at the Delta-Mendota Canal. The recycled water would then be conveyed directly to DPWD customers or to San Luis Reservoir for storage during low water demand periods. In addition to uses within DPWD's service area, this project also proposes to provide water to Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA)-designated Refuges located south of the Delta to meet their need for water supply. This draft EIS/EIR assesses the environmental effects of the North Valley Regional Recycled Water Program (or Proposed Action).

The objective of the Proposed Action is to maximize use of a sustainable, alternative water supply for the region that addresses reductions in water supplies from the Central Valley Project (CVP) and offsets pressure on groundwater use. Specifically, the objectives of the project are as follows:

- Establish an alternative, reliable, long-term water supply of 59,000 acre feet per year of recycled water for DPWD;
- Maximize the beneficial use of recycled water to DPWD customers and south of Delta CVPIA wildlife refuges;
- Maximize Project Partners' control of operations and delivery of water;
- Maximize use of existing facilities for treatment/delivery of recycled water;
- Acquire a long-term reliable Incremental Level 4 water supply, as defined in CVPIA Section 3406(d)(2), for south of Delta CVPIA wildlife refuges;
- Avoid or minimize, through incorporation of design constraints and management practices, impacts to environmental resources such as surface water, groundwater levels, land subsidence, groundwater quality and biological resources including sensitive species;

- Deliver agricultural water to DPWD at a cost that supports regional economic sustainability.

#### Purpose and Need

One of the authorized purposes of CVP is to provide water for irrigation and domestic use within California's Central Valley. In recent years, south of the Delta CVP contractors and CVPIA wildlife refuges have experienced a reduction in CVP water allocations from historical amounts due to drought conditions and Delta pumping restrictions. As a CVP contractor, DPWD has a need to establish alternative, reliable long-term agricultural water supplies to offset this reduction in supply. Also CVPIA Section 3406(d)(2) directs the Bureau of Reclamation to acquire and provide Incremental Level 4 water to all CVPIA designated wildlife refuges in the Central Valley. The purpose of making the Cities' recycled water available to DPWD is to provide an additional source of water south of the Delta, which can be used to meet both agricultural and Refuge wildlife needs.

#### Environmental Issues and Resources To Be Examined

The draft EIS/EIR will include analysis and disclosure of the effects on the quality of the human and physical environment that may occur as a result of implementation of the project. Issues to be addressed may include, but are not limited to, impacts on biological resources, hydrology, water quality, historic and archaeological resources, air quality, noise, traffic, safety, hazardous materials and waste, visual resources, socioeconomics, and environmental justice.

#### Special Assistance for Public Meetings

If special assistance is required to participate in the scoping meeting, please contact Mr. Benjamin Lawrence at 559-487-5039, or via email at [blawrence@usbr.gov](mailto:blawrence@usbr.gov). A telephone device for the hearing impaired (TTY) is available at 800-735-2929.

#### Public Disclosure

Before including your address, phone number, email 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.