



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management  
**News Release**

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**BLM Initiates Environmental Review of PV Solar Project in California Desert**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has published a Notice of Intent (NOI) to conduct an environmental review on the impacts of a proposed solar photovoltaic (PV) generating facility in Riverside County, California.

First Solar Inc., has requested a right-of-way (ROW) authorization to develop a solar PV generating facility with a proposed output of 550 megawatts and a project footprint of approximately 4,410 acres. The PV generating facility (solar farm) and most of the corridor for the project's 230-kilovolt (kV) generation interconnection (gen-tie) transmission line will be located on BLM-administered lands.

The proposed project will include the solar farm, an on-site substation, the 230 kV gen-tie line within the transmission corridor, and a planned 230- to 500-kV Red Bluff substation. The Red Bluff substation will connect the project to the Southern California Edison (SCE) regional transmission grid. The proposed project is located in Riverside County approximately six miles north of the rural community of Desert Center, California on BLM-administered lands.

BLM, as the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act, will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to analyze the site-specific impacts of the proposed grant of the ROW and may include an amendment to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan.

The EIS will analyze a large number of controversial site-specific impacts including air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, water resources, geological resources and hazards, hazardous materials handling, land use, noise, visual resources and transmission system engineering and transmission line safety.

Publication of the NOI initiates a public scoping process for the EIS and possible plan amendment. Comments on issues may be submitted in writing until Friday, February 12, 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 to develop the EIS. A public scoping meeting will be held on January 28 from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. at the University of California Riverside – Palm Springs Campus in the Heckman Building located at 75-0800 Frank Sinatra Drive, Palm Desert, CA 92211.

Comments on issues and planning criteria related to the First Solar Desert Sunlight Solar Farm Draft EIS/PA may be submitted by any of the following methods:

- 1) Website: <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/fo/palmsprings.html>,
- 2) Email: [CAPSSolarFirstSolarDesertSunlight@blm.gov](mailto:CAPSSolarFirstSolarDesertSunlight@blm.gov),
- 3) Fax: (760) 833-7199, or
- 4) Mail: Allison Shaffer, Project Manager, Palm Springs South Coast Field Office, BLM, 1201 Bird Center Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92262. For information contact Allison Shaffer, BLM project lead at (760) 833-7100.

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