



BLM NEWS RELEASE

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BLM Extends Public Comment Period for Draft Solar PEIS by 30 Days

For Immediate Release

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The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced a 30-day extension of the public comment period for the Draft Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Draft Solar PEIS), a joint effort with Department of Energy. The study is a comprehensive environmental analysis that has identified proposed “solar energy zones” on public lands in six western states that are most suitable for environmentally sound, utility-scale solar energy production.

The agencies had allowed 90 days for the public to comment on the draft plan. Because of numerous requests, the agencies are extending the comment period by 30 days beyond March 17, the original closing date.

The comment period will now run until April 16, 2011. No additional public meetings will be held during the extended public comment period.

The Draft Solar PEIS assessed the environmental, social, and economic impacts associated with solar energy development on lands managed by the BLM in Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah.

Under the study’s Preferred Alternative, the BLM would establish a new Solar Energy Program that would standardize and streamline the authorization process. The plan would also establish mandatory design features for solar energy development on BLM-managed lands.

The BLM would also establish Solar Energy Zones (SEZ’s) within the lands available for solar development right-of-way applications. These are areas that have been identified as most appropriate for development, containing the highest solar energy potential and fewest environmental and resource conflicts. The proposed SEZ’s would provide directed, landscape-scale planning for future solar projects and allow for a more efficient permitting and siting process.

The preferred method of commenting on the Draft Solar PEIS is by written submissions using the online form available at <http://solareis.anl.gov>. Comments can also be mailed to: Solar Energy Draft Programmatic EIS, Argonne National Laboratory, 9700 S. Cass Avenue - EVS/240, Argonne, Illinois 60439.

The BLM manages more land - over 245 million acres - than any other Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The Bureau, with a budget of about \$1 billion, also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.