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BLM Announces Second Extension of Public Comment Period for Draft Solar PEIS

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today announced a two-week extension of the public comment period for the Draft Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (Draft Solar PEIS), a joint effort with the Department of Energy.

The agencies had previously provided for a 120-day public comment period on the Draft Solar PEIS. Because of numerous requests, the agencies are extending the comment period by an additional two weeks beyond April 16, 2011.

The comment period will now run until May 2, 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. The study has identified proposed "solar energy zones" on public lands in those six states that are most suitable for environmentally sound, utility-scale solar energy production.

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.

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