

Thank you for your comment, Austin Puglisi.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is SolarM60008.

Comment Date: July 4, 2009 19:10:37PM
Solar Energy Development PEIS
Comment ID: SolarM60008

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This is the third of four comments I wish to make on the PEIS process.

This comment specifically discusses one power transmission project, the LADWP's proposed "Green Path North" which would cross BLM land in the Mojave Desert.

While some policy-makers insist that this project is irrelevant to the Solar PEIS, they are wrong. Even a cursory review at the location of many proposed industrial-scale projects reveals that many of these projects are on, or very close to, the favored route (the only one LADWP has surveyed) for GPN. These projects would be useless without new high-voltage transmission lines, and GPN would be much less profitable for the City of Los Angeles if these projects were denied (as they should be).

Green Path North is a high-voltage power transmission project designed purportedly to carry geothermal energy (from as-yet unbuilt facilities) to Los Angeles. The segment under most dispute runs from a substation in North Palm Springs, California to Upland, California. There is an existing, established transmission corridor along Interstate I-10 which makes an almost direct link between these endpoints. The LADWP however wishes to build a much longer GPN through the community of Desert Hot Springs, through the Big Morongo Canyon Area of Critical Environmental Concern, across roadless desert mountains in Morongo Valley, through the historic hamlet of Pioneertown, through the privately owned Pioneertown Mountains Preserve, through more desert communities and the San Bernardino National Forest.

The LADWP has publically admitted that their priority in building this transmission project is so that they own the means of transmission. Another utility, Southern California Edison, has offered to upgrade carrying capacity via the existing corridor. The LADWP has, in public meetings, and on the record, said this is unacceptable because it doesn't match their business plan.

When determining appropriate siting for industrial-scale solar projects, the BLM should reject those that are not adjacent to or very near existing power transmission infrastructure. When determining if new transmission lines are necessary, especially when they involve new rights-of-way or energy corridors, the BLM needs to be very leery of accepting proponents' claims of "need". The LADWP WANTS to build GPN through untouched BLM lands; it does not NEED to do so. While the cost to LADWP may be higher to do things the right way, it is more fair and just than LADWP shifting the true cost onto rural communities that are not in LADWP's sphere of influence (and don't wish to be).