

Thank you for your comment, Dan Taylor.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is SolarM60062.

Comment Date: July 14, 2009 15:26:22PM  
Solar Energy Development PEIS  
Comment ID: SolarM60062

First Name: Dan  
Middle Initial:  
Last Name: Taylor  
Organization: Audubon California  
Address: 765 University Avenue  
Address 2:  
Address 3:  
City: Sacramento  
State: CA  
Zip: 95825  
Country: USA  
Email: dtaylor@audubon.org  
Privacy Preference: Don't withhold name or address from public record  
Attachment: Dan Taylor Comment.pdf

Comment Submitted:



July 14, 2009

The Honorable Kenneth L. Salazar  
Secretary  
Department of Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Steven Chu  
Secretary  
Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20585

Re: Request for extension of time for public comment period for Scoping for Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to Develop and Implement Agency-Specific Programs for Solar Energy Development, 74 Fed. Reg. 31307 (June 30, 2009)

Dear Secretary Salazar and Secretary Chu:

National Audubon Society, a non-profit organization representing more than one million members and supporters nationally, respectfully requests a 45-day extension of the comment period for *Scoping Comments for a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to Develop and Implement Agency Specific Programs for Solar Energy Development*, 74 Fed. Reg. 31307 (June 30, 2009).

On June 30, 2009, the Department of Energy and the Bureau of Land Management (“agencies”) announced the availability of “Solar Energy Study Area” maps, which highlight priority areas for utility-scale solar energy development in Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Nevada, and Utah. The maps are expected to supplement the BLM’s preparation of a draft Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (“Solar PEIS”). In conjunction with the issuance of the maps, the agencies reopened the public comment period for 30 days.

The Solar PEIS will facilitate the identification and selection of lands appropriate for solar energy development. The designation of 24 specific tracts of public land as Solar Energy Study areas at this early stage in the environmental review process provides a tremendous opportunity for Defenders and other interested stakeholders to submit detailed environmental analysis and recommendations on which areas should be designated as Solar Energy Zones and which lands should be excluded. Audubon is keenly interested in working with the agencies to assure that strong policies are in place to minimize negative environmental impacts and protect our public lands and wildlife for future generations.

The 24 study areas total 676,048 acres of land and a thoughtful analysis of the significant impacts of a project of this size and scope will require considerable time and effort. In addition to the specified study areas, the maps include an unspecified amount of BLM lands being considered for Solar Development in the PEIS. These areas were not included in the original PEIS scoping notice, and interested parties have not had any prior opportunity to comment on the environmental impacts, including impacts on wildlife species and habitats, that will result if utility scale solar projects are placed on these lands. The July 30, 2009 deadline for comments is wholly inadequate to properly analyze both the proposed study areas and the BLM lands under consideration. Granting our 45-day extension request will allow Audubon, as well as all interested stakeholders, a more sensible time frame to develop useful and substantive comments for the agencies to consider.

We appreciate the agencies' serious consideration of our request and look forward to your response. Please notify me of your decision.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Taylor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Dan Taylor*  
*Director of Public Policy*  
*Audubon California*  
*765 University Avenue*  
*Sacramento, CA 95825*  
*916.649.7600*  
*916.719.2666 (mobile)*  
*dtaylor@audubon.org*