

Thank you for your comment, Donna Lytle.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is SolarM60192.

Comment Date: September 13, 2009 09:34:38AM
Solar Energy Development PEIS
Comment ID: SolarM60192

First Name: Donna
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Privacy Preference: Don't withhold name or address from public record
Attachment: Donna's solar comment letter.doc

Comment Submitted:

Please see attachment for my comments.

Solar Energy PEIS
Argonne National Laboratory
9700 South Cass Avenue – EVS/900
Argonne, Illinois 60439

RE: Comments to the Solar Programmatic Environmental Impact Study

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in protest to the proposed solar area in Dry Lake Valley North. I disagree strongly with a large portion of this area being designated as a future solar site. In fact, the only section I believe should become a possible site is the Ely Springs allotments since the owner (Vidler Water) of those allotments expressed a wish to place solar facilities on his portion of the area.

There are several reasons for my protest. First of all, from the Simpson allotment all the way to the top northern boundary makes up our total winter/spring grazing allotment. Not only does our entire cattle herd spend the cold winter months in this area, but it also serves as the calving grounds for our cattle since the temperatures are a bit more moderate than any other locations we have. Without this land, our ranching operation would go out of business, along with four other large ranches in Lincoln County. Since our family has been in the business for over 150 years, not only would these consequences destroy our heritage, they would also be detrimental to the economy of Lincoln County since we ranchers make up a large portion of the tax base. Not only would our winter grazing lands become useless, but our summer ranges would also be of no use to us since we no longer would have cattle to use them. Our herd numbers are dependent on the numbers of cattle we are able to place in the Dry Lake Valley since it is impossible to purchase feed or to physically undertake that burden for the large numbers we are able to locate in Dry Lake. Because of the recent Wayne Hage court decision, I believe it would also be very costly for the government or for the developer to compensate us for our range improvements and for our numerous vested water rights.

In addition to the great financial burden placed on all parties involved, there would also be great environmental impacts. Our portion of the Dry Lake Valley makes up some of the best winter grazing areas in all of Nevada, primarily because of the abundance of white sage. Once this plant is destroyed, studies have shown that there is very little or no success with trying to reintroduce it to an area. Additionally, because of the soil type that exists in the area, any disturbance to the vegetation there would turn the area into a dust bowl. Already there is much dust that circulates throughout these sections. In fact, I believe the prevalent amount of dust already present in the area would not mix well with the solar equipment.

Presently we have a 31-mile pipeline that brings water to 5 reservoirs throughout our allotment. These reservoirs not only provide water for our cattle, but they also supply the wildlife and the wild mustang herd in this area with water. Without our water rights and our pipeline, these reservoirs would become dry, and the wild horse herds and wildlife

would suffer greatly. We also have two wells located at two of the reservoirs that are included in the range improvements made by members of these local ranching families. Again, compensation would be extremely expensive.

At a recent meeting at the Caliente BLM, local ranchers met with Wells McGiffert, the Ely BLM Renewable Energy Project Manager, and proposed alternate sites. I urge you strongly to consider these proposed sites and to redefine any of the current locations that detrimentally impact local ranchers. Moreover, Nevada has numerous sites with little or no impact that invite solar developers to take advantage of. I would first urge you to place these sites on any private lands that are inviting developers; for example, Harvey Whitmore's Coyote Springs, a Lincoln County development, has set aside over 8,000 acres for solar development. I am also wondering why the huge area of the Nevada Test Site has not been considered for these projects since it is currently managed by the government and has the perfect resources available to accommodate these sites; this area would also eliminate negative impacts to individuals who enjoy or rely upon the multiple use aspect of public lands. I believe your findings will guide all future developers to the sites which you select. Please give the areas careful consideration before selecting them in order to minimize adverse effects to everyone.

Sincerely,

Donna Lytle

Lytle Ranches and Permittee in the Dry Lake Valley North proposed solar area