

Bureau of Land Management Solar Energy Development

Draft Programmatic EIS Comments

0700 South Cass Ave--EVS-900

Argonne, Illinois 60439

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Back in the 80s, the Bureau came out with a very good plan for the southwest desert, one that gave us consideration and conservation of our resources. The beautiful scenery and the wonderful calm and serenity of much of the desert lands are treasures that should be preserved and protected for the future, as well as for those who have come to live here in search of those qualities.

However, the population explosion in this part of the country is threatening to overrun and destroy its appeal. Careful planning is needed, with an eye to the future of the desert and everywhere else that the demand for greatly expanded electric power wherever the utilities want to go needs to be controlled.

For this purpose, a new BLM plan should be drawn up, with the participation of all parties concerned. Either around a big round table, or by electronic communication, people from all of the regions where controversies are going on about power facilities and transmission corridors should be brought together to meet with government leaders and utility executives to talk about their problems and figure out ways for the utilities to expand without ruining the habitat of people along the way.

One way to help achieve this is for the greatest possible application of solar roof-top power generation either for residences or for commercial buildings. Solar water heaters are an excellent way to use less electricity. I have heard that a new technology allows for night-time use of solar energy, without batteries.

Solar generation does not interfere with scenic beauty as wind does. It does not make noise as wind does; and does not need maintenance of noisy machines; and it DOES NOT KILL BIRDS. It just sits there quietly and does its job. I know, I have an array in my backyard--on the ground.

There are ways to reduce the number of new transmission corridors that may be needed. One would be to require all utilities to use the new technology for 500KV lines to carry double the load of the old ones, and perhaps to replace the old lines with these new lines.

Another idea is to rearrange some of the grid arrangements. Allow huge power guzzlers, like Las Vegas to build a solar plant as near as possible in the open desert to the east and then run a short transmission corridor just to Las Vegas for its electricity. Then release the power that has been used there to some other grid that does not have land near it to build a big solar plant. This could possibly reduce the number of new power plants that might otherwise be needed. Perhaps other similar arrangements could be made with big cities that use a great deal of power.

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Arrangements such as this might enable the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to bring in power from a shorter distance than faraway Imperial Valley, disturbing scenic views, pleasant living rural areas, Flora and Fauna Preserve areas, etc. along hundreds of miles all the way from Imperial Valley

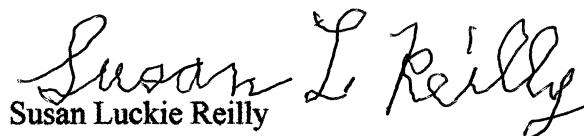
Some areas should be off limits to transmission corridors--scenic treasures such as National Parks, State Parks, Preserves for flora and fauna Indian Reservations, recreation and health resorts with pleasant rural lifestyle living, etc. The desert's beauty and serenity should not be torn up and spider webbed with transmission lines to feed the big cities' urban sprawls with ever more power. We who live in the Morongo Basin area of San Bernardino County ask that B:LM declare our Gateway to the Joshua Tree National Park "off limits" to transmission corridors., that is the Morngo Basin

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power is considering a transmission route through the west end of the Morongo Basin. Please see the enclosed papers for further details. They probably could use a more direct route to Los Angeles (none of the power will benefit the Morongo Basin). The existing I- 10 corridor goes directly to the Los Angeles megalopolis. They should use that, instead of making a big detour around it through part of the Morongo Basin.

Please do not allow the pleasant human habitat of the desert to be all messed up with power facilities and transmission corridors wherever the utilities wish to put them.

Solar plants would be good in barren places where there is little water, since they do not need water for cooling .

Sincerely,


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Enc.

In 1980 the California Energy Commission decided that the huge electric transmission line being proposed to run the length of the Morongo Basin was instead to be routed around east and south of the Joshua Tree National Monument (now Park) where there was already a transmission line. This followed an 11-year battle by the unified Morongo Basin citizens to keep the line out of here. Then these same citizens requested the Bureau of Land Management to require such lines to follow existing routes, and not to spider-web all over the desert. In its area plan for the desert soon after that, the BLM designated specific transmission line routes to be followed for any new lines.

Since that time, changes have been made in the Desert Plan; and now, we in the Morongo Basin are faced with the possibility of a new transmission line cutting through the west end of the Basin to carry power for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power--no benefit to us. As the result of L.A.'s population explosion, it needs more electric power.

However, there is a more direct route to take that power along the I-10 corridor to Los Angeles extend their congested, polluted urban sprawl for so many miles, they should bear the impact of the lines to get it there, and not shove it off on scenic, healthy, vacation type rural communities disturbing their pleasant way of life. The route DWP calls "Green Path" and apparently favors would probably go right through Morongo Valley and the Preserves of Big Morongo Canyon and Pipes Canyon, bisecting Pioneer Town, and crossing Pipes Canyon before entering Flamingo Heights and Landers, and possibly Johnson Valley, affecting communities from Palm Springs to Hisperia.

For more information

Visit The California Desert Coalition at www.cadeser.co.org
Or write to them at P.O. Box 1508, Yucca Valley, CA. 92286
Or call the CDC Hotline at (760 365-0900).