

Thank you for your comment, Austin Puglisi.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is SolarS50008.

Comment Date: June 7, 2008 21:19:18PM
Solar Energy Development PEIS
Comment ID: SolarS50008

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One utility-scale solar project in the desert sounds great, doesn't it? What about five? Fifty? Five hundred?

The BLM and other Federal agencies need to consider the cumulative effect of all the solar plants proposed in the desert, not just evaluate each one on a case-by-case basis.

The desert is NOT a "wasteland". Every acre has hundreds if not thousands of green plants, all consuming carbon dioxide. How much? How many tons "greenhouse gases" will remain in the air because they are destroyed? Answer: NOBODY KNOWS! Shouldn't this be studied before hundreds of square miles are irrevocably destroyed?

Also, many of these projects will require vast amounts of water to cool equipment, and other needs. Newsflash: the desert doesn't have a lot of water. When the water table drops, effects can be devastating many miles away. Agriculture, grazing will suffer, and homeowners' private wells may go dry. How many? Answer: NOBODY KNOWS!

One solution would be for the BLM to determine a threshold for acreage consumed by these projects, and to make the application process COMPETITIVE rather than first-come, first-served. Then priority could be given to utility projects that are more "ecofriendly" such as by:

- 1) Located in areas already disturbed by human activity and adjacent to existing transmission lines.
- 2) Require less clearing of pristine environment for energy production and transmission.
- 3) Use technologies that conserve water as much as possible.
- 4) Do not destroy "linkage" corridors essential for wildlife movement.

In summary, the desert is a fragile ecosystem and no one knows the "tipping point" beyond which it will collapse. I insist research be done into determining this "tipping point" BEFORE we've passed it, with unpredictable and perhaps devastating consequences.