

United States Department of the Interior



IN REPLY REFER TO:

PXAO-1500

2.1.4.13

BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

Lower Colorado Region

Phoenix Area Office

6150 West Thunderbird Road

Glendale, AZ 85306-4001

SEP 11 2019

MEMORANDUM

To: All Interested Persons, Organizations and Agencies

From: Leslie A. Meyers
Area Manager

Acting For

Subject: Notice of Availability of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Proposed Construction of a Photovoltaic (PV) Solar Plant and the Interconnection of its Electrical Transmission System to the Little Harquahala to Harcuvar 115-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line near Salome, La Paz County, Arizona

The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), with the Bureau of Reclamation as a cooperating agency, prepared an Environmental Assessment for the proposed construction of a PV solar plant near Salome, Arizona, and interconnection to the electrical transmission system. The nearest transmission line to the proposed solar facility is the Little Harquahala to Harcuvar 115-kV Transmission Line, that was built by Reclamation and operated by WAPA. Adjacent to the proposed solar facility; the transmission line runs approximately north-south on lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in an existing right-of-way held by Reclamation. Reclamation has adopted the EA and prepared a separate FONSI for Reclamation actions regarding the proposed action. Reclamation has determined that the proposed project does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. The final EA and FONSI can be viewed at: <http://www.usbr.gov/lc/phoenix/> and paper copies are also available upon request by calling Sonia Holloway, Secretary, at 623-773-6251 or sholloway@usbr.gov.

A scoping notice for the project was issued on October 28, 2018, with comments due on November 26, 2018. Scoping letters were mailed to 59 agencies, organizations, and interested parties, 10 tribes, and approximately 1,200 landowners in the Salome area to inform them of the project and scoping period, and to request input on the federal action. WAPA published two newspaper advertisements in the *Parker Pioneer* (on October 24, 2018 and November 7, 2018) publicizing the scoping notice and open house. Forty people attended the public scoping meeting held on November 8, 2018, in Salome, Arizona. In addition, at the request of the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the agencies (WAPA, BLM, and Reclamation) held a scoping meeting with representatives of the Colorado River Indian Tribes on November 21, 2018, in

Parker, Arizona. Scoping comments were accepted via telephone, email, U.S. mail, and in person at the scoping meeting. A total of 16 submittals were received from 11 individuals, 2 businesses, 2 state government agencies, and 1 tribe. Input received during scoping concerned a range of environmental and impacts analysis issues.

WAPA published the Draft EA on March 9, 2019, and accepted public comments from March 29, 2019 to April 29, 2019. Notices of the Draft EA publication were mailed to 56 agencies, organizations, and interested parties, 10 tribes, and 36 landowners on the project mailing list. Flyers announcing the Draft EA were posted at the Salome Post Office and McMullen Valley Chamber of Commerce. Two newspaper advertisements were published in the *Parker Pioneer* (on April 3, 2019 and April 17, 2019) and two review copies of the EA and ten CDs were available at the Centennial Public Library in Salome, Arizona. Two comment letters regarding the Draft EA were received, one from the Arizona Game and Fish Department and one from the Colorado River Indian Tribes. The primary topics raised in the comments include wildlife fencing, historic resources, tribal resources, and mitigation. The draft EA was revised in response to the comments received.

Reclamation has determined that the proposed action will not significantly impact the environment, therefore an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

For additional information regarding this matter, please contact Mr. Dominic Graziani, Environmental Protection Specialist, at 623-773-6216 or via email at dgraziani@usbr.gov.