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BLM Publishes Final EIS on Proposed Wind Energy Project near Searchlight

LAS VEGAS -- A Final Environmental Impact Statement for a proposed wind energy facility near Searchlight, Nev., was released Dec. 14, starting a 30-day review period before a final decision on the project is made. The BLM's notice was available on the Federal Register electronic desk on Friday and it will be published on Dec. 18.

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Las Vegas Field Office released the EIS, which recommends cutting the size of the original proposal from 161 wind turbines to 87. That change and others came through extensive public comments periods on the Draft EIS as well as discussions with the area tribes and State and federal agencies.

The Searchlight Wind Energy, LLC proposal is to construct and operate a wind energy generating facility, which would produce approximately 200 megawatts of electricity and deliver power to the electrical transmission grid by 2015. In addition to the wind turbines, the proposed project would require the construction of pad mounted transformers at the base of each turbine, underground collection lines, new access roads, two electrical substations, an overhead transmission line connecting the two substations, an electrical interconnection facility/switchyard owned and operated by Western Area Power Administration, an operations and maintenance building, and temporary and permanent laydown areas. Three meteorological masts would remain on the site to measure the wind speed and direction over the life of the project.

The right-of-way application area encompasses approximately 18,789.71 acres of BLM-administered public lands along U.S. Route 95. The permanent footprint of the project, as proposed, would be approximately 163 acres.

The Final EIS is available for public inspection at the BLM Southern Nevada District Office. Printed or electronic copies of the Final EIS are available by request from the BLM Southern Nevada District Office, 4701 N. Torrey Pines Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89130, phone (702) 515-5173, or email: BLM_NV_SNDO_SearchlightWindEnergyEIS@blm.gov. Interested persons may also review the Final EIS on the Internet at

http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/fo/lvfo/blm_programs/energy/searchlight_wind_energy.html.

For more information, please call Gregory Helseth, at 702-515-5173.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, recreational and other activities on BLM-managed land contributed more than \$130 billion to the U.S. economy and supported more than 600,000 American jobs. The Bureau is also one of a handful of agencies that collects more revenue than it spends. In FY 2012, nearly \$5.7 billion will be generated on lands managed by the BLM, which operates on a \$1.1 billion budget. The BLM's multiple-use mission is to sustain the health and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. The Bureau accomplishes this by managing such activities as outdoor recreation, livestock grazing, mineral development, and energy production, and by conserving natural, historical, cultural, and other resources on public lands.

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