

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Carson City District Office

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION
ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL**

Project Lead: Erik Pignata
Field Office: Sierra Front
Lead Office: Sierra Front

Case File/Project Number: NVN 090984

Applicable Categorical Exclusion (cite section): 516 DM 11.9 Appendix 4 – 154, Other, J. #3: “Conducting preliminary hazardous materials assessments and site investigations, site characterization studies and environmental monitoring. Included are siting, construction, installation and/or operation of small monitoring devices such as wells, particulate dust counters and automatic air or water samples.”

NEPA Number: DOI-BLM-NV-C020-2012-0051-CX

Project Name: CEC Comstock Wind Testing Type 2

Project Description: The applicant has applied for a wind testing and monitoring project area very similar to the Great Basin Wind Testing Type 2 that recently expired. All met towers were removed from the project area. Four new met tower locations are proposed on the following public lands:

T. 17 N., R. 21 E., MDM:

Met Tower #1: E½SW¼

T. 16 N., R. 20 E., MDM:

Met Tower #2: lot 2 of the NE¼

Met Tower #3: W½SE¼

Met Tower #4: E½SE¼

The free standing towers would be 60 meters high and approximately 6 inches in diameter. They would be erected on removable steel plates and use anchors with guy wires to remain in place. No concrete foundations are necessary. Installation takes place using standard pick-up trucks. Attached to the masts are anemometers to measure wind speed. Power is gathered by solar

panels also affixed to the masts. Existing roads and trails will be utilized for installation of the towers.

This would be a standard FLPMA Wind Testing and Monitoring Project right-of-way, Type 2, for three years. Construction would begin within a few days after an authorization is granted. Erection of the towers with gages and solar panels would take no more than one day each to complete; the total construction period is estimated to be one to two days for all four towers. Periodic maintenance visits will be necessary throughout the life of the project, with no more than monthly visits anticipated.

The project area is not within preliminary general or priority habitat for the greater sage-grouse.

Applicant Name: Clean Energy Center, LLC (CEC)

Project Location (include Township/Range, County):

See Exhibit A, attached

Washoe, Storey, and Carson City counties

BLM Acres for the Project Area: 4,090.49

Land Use Plan Conformance (cite reference/page number): LND-7, #6: "Exchanges and minor non-Bureau initiated realty proposals will be considered where analysis indicates they are beneficial to the public."

Name of Plan: Carson City Field Office Consolidated Resource Management Plan (2001)

Special Stipulation:

a. The holder shall contact the BLM and obtain approval from the authorized officer before beginning any activity that is a substantial deviation from this grant or that will cause new surface disturbance.

Screening of Extraordinary Circumstances: The following extraordinary circumstances apply to individual actions within categorical exclusions (43 CFR 46.215). The BLM has considered the following criteria:

(Specialist review: initial in appropriate box)

<i>If any question is answered 'yes' an EA or EIS must be prepared.</i>	YES	NO
1. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on public health or safety? (project lead/P&EC)		ESP
2. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (EO 11990); floodplains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds (EO 13186); and other ecologically significant or critical areas? (wildlife biologist, hydrologist, outdoor recreation planner, archeologist)		mc ABC RGC D2D
3. Would the Proposed Action have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA 102(2)(E)]? (project lead/P&EC)		ESP
4. Would the Proposed Action have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks? (project lead/P&EC)		ESP
5. Would the Proposed Action establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects? (project lead/P&EC)		ESP
6. Would the Proposed Action have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects? (project lead/P&EC)		ESP
7. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the NRHP as determined by the bureau or office? (archeologist)		RGC
8. Would the Proposed Action have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the list of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species? (wildlife biologist, botanist)		BT D2D
9. Would the Proposed Action violate federal law, or a State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment? (project lead/P&EC)		ESP
10. Would the Proposed Action have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (EA 12898)? (project lead/P&EC)		ESP
11. Would the Proposed Action limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007)? (archeologist)		RGC
12. Would the Proposed Action contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and EO 13112)? (botanist)		BT

SPECIALISTS' REVIEW: During ID Team consideration of the above Proposed Action and extraordinary circumstances, the following specialists reviewed this CX:

Erik Pignata, Realty Specialist

Arthur Callan, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Niki Cutler, Hydrologist

Rachel Crews, Archaeologist

Pilar Ziegler, Wildlife Biologist/BLM Sensitive Species - Wildlife

Dean Tonenna, Botanist - Natural Resource Specialist/BLM Sensitive Species - Plants

Brian Buttazoni, Planning & Environmental Coordinator

CONCLUSION: Based upon the review of this Proposed Action, I have determined that the above-described project is a categorical exclusion, in conformance with the LUP, and does not require an EA or EIS. A categorical exclusion is not subject to protest or appeal.

Approved by:



Leon Thomas
Field Manager
Sierra Front Field Office

8-20-12

(date)

Exhibit A

Clean Energy Center, LLC

Legal Land Description for NVN 090984 with acreage

Comstock Wind Testing Type 2 with Meteorological Tower Locations and Acreage

Mount Diablo Meridian

T. 16 N., R. 20 E.,	Acres:
sec. 1, lots 1 and 2 of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$;	161.47
sec. 2, lots 1 and 2 of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ (most located in lot 2 of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$), E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;	361.85
sec. 3, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ (most located in the W $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$);	160.00
sec. 10, NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$ (most located in the E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$);	280.00
sec. 11, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;	360.00
sec. 14, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ (only those portions within Washoe County);	50.00
sec. 15, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$, SE $\frac{1}{4}$;	280.00
sec. 22, NE $\frac{1}{4}$;	160.00
sec. 23, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;	120.00
sec. 26, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.	40.00

	1,973.32
T. 17 N., R. 20 E.,	Acres:
sec. 13, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, N $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;	280.00
sec. 24, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;	160.00
sec. 25, E $\frac{1}{2}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;	160.00
sec. 36, lots 1 to 3, inclusive, 7, 8, 11 to 15, inclusive.	423.80

	1,023.80
T. 17 N., R. 21 E.,	Acres:
sec. 17, lots 4, 5, and 12;	120.00
sec. 18, lots 2 to 4, inclusive, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$, E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$ (most located in the E $\frac{1}{2}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$), E $\frac{1}{2}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$, SW $\frac{1}{4}$ SE $\frac{1}{4}$;	363.36
sec. 18, lots 1 to 3, inclusive, 7, 8, 13, and 14;	326.54
sec. 30, lots 1 to 4, inclusive, and 23;	203.53
sec. 31, lots 1 and 16.	79.94

	1,093.37

The areas described aggregate 4,090.49 acres, more or less