

**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Land Management**

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**Categorical Exclusion  
DOI-BLM-NV-S010-2013-0043-CX**

**January 25, 2013**

**BrightSource Energy, Inc.  
1999 Harrison Street, Suite 2150  
Oakland, California 94612  
Case File Number N-91763**

**PREPARING OFFICE**

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Bureau of Land Management  
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# **BrightSource Energy, Inc**

## **Geo-Technical Boring within Tecopa Road**

### **A. Background**

BrightSource Energy (BSE), submitted a 2920 Land Use Application and Permit (LUP) on December 21, 2012 to conduct geo-technical testing at three locations within the Tecopa Road. BSE is proposing to construct the Hidden Hills Solar Electric Generating System (HHSEGS) on private land in Inyo County, California, approximately 18 miles south of Pahrump, Nevada. Access to the HHSEGS would occur on the paved Old Spanish Highway (a.k.a. Tecopa Road). BSE has a need to investigate the road conditions and cross section in order to determine if Tecopa Road currently meets the necessary safety, operational, and regulatory standards to support increased vehicle traffic associated with construction of the proposed HHSEGS. To meet that need, BSE is requesting a permit to perform geo-technical investigation fieldwork within Tecopa Road between State Route 160 and the Nevada state line in Clark County, Nevada.

In addition to the BLM temporary use permit, BSE will obtain any and all necessary permits and authorizations from Clark County, including concurrence from the Clark County Public Works Division allowing BSE to conduct the investigation.

### **BLM Office: Las Vegas Field Office**

LLNVS00560L51010000 FX0000 LVRWF1204400

**Lease/Serial/Case File No. : N-91763**

**Proposed Action Title/Type: Geo-technical Boring Sites within Tecopa Road**

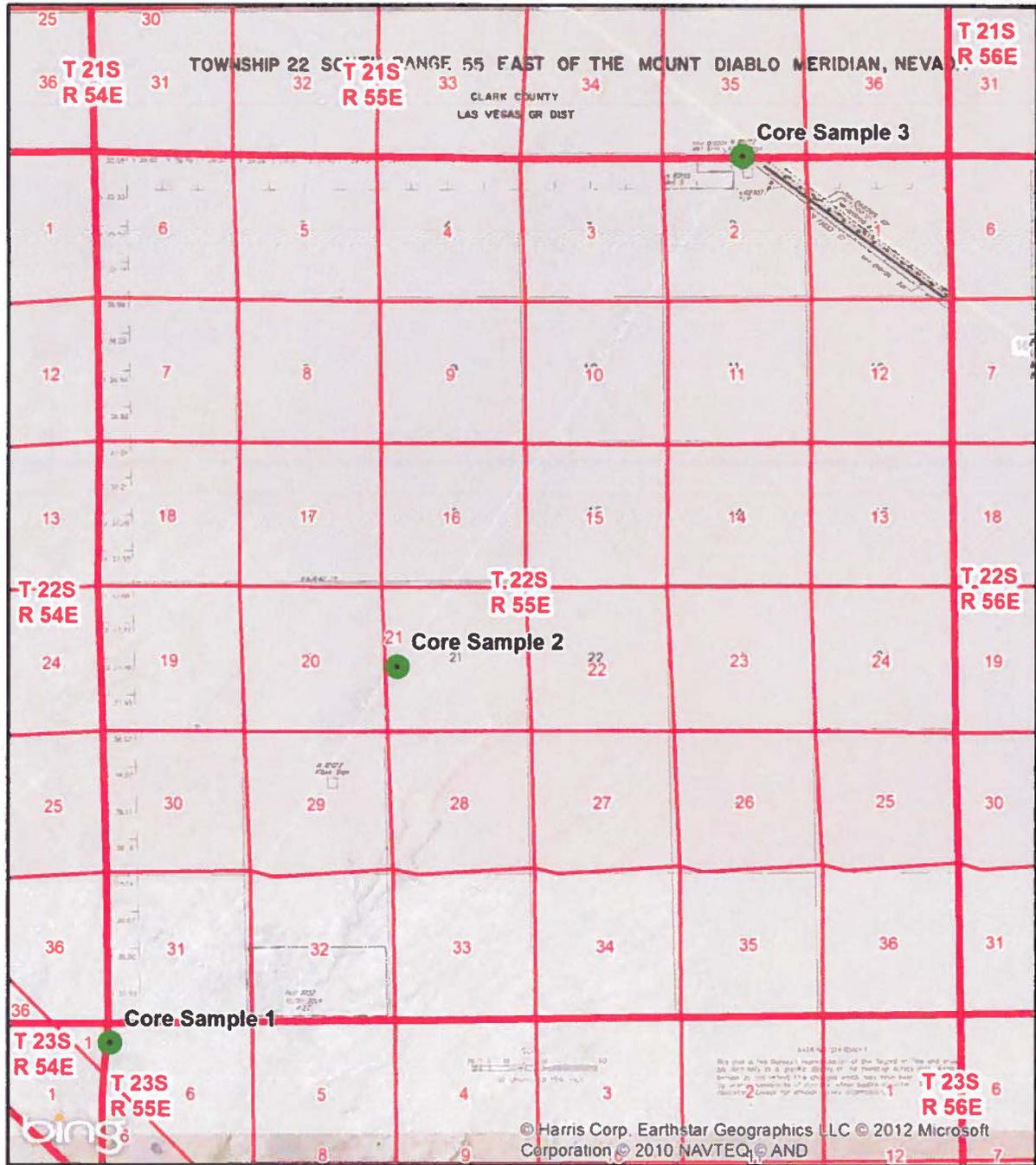
### **Location of Proposed Action:**

Mount Diablo Meridian

T. 23 S., R. 54 E., Section 1, NE 1/4

T. 22 S., R. 55 E., Section 21, SW 1/4

T. 21 S., R. 55 E., Section 35, SE 1/4



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: green;">●</span> Core Samples Location</li> <li><span style="border: 2px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Township Boundary</li> <li><span style="border: 1px solid red; display: inline-block; width: 15px; height: 10px; margin-right: 5px;"></span> Section Boundary</li> </ul>	<p>1:70,000</p> <p>0 500 1,000 meters</p> <p>0 2,000 4,000 feet</p>	<p><b>SWCA</b> ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS</p> <p>N</p>	<p>Sources: Esri, DeLorme, TomTom, USGS, Esri Japan,</p>
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Exploratory core samples will be drilled using a truck-mounted drill rig (e.g., Diedrich D-120 weighing approximately 28,000 pounds, 8 feet wide, and 29 feet long, or similar). In addition, two support pickup trucks will be used to transport personnel, equipment, and samples. Other equipment and vehicles consist of one small generator, one portable coring machine, one delivery truck for traffic control devices, and one or two vehicles for traffic control. During the field activities, there will be up to eight workers on-site, including one driller, two driller's assistants, one field logger, two people to set up traffic control, and two flaggers to execute traffic control.

Prior to drilling, the contractor will core the existing roadway with a 6 to 8 inch diameter core barrel using the portable coring machine. Drilling and sampling will then be completed with the truck-mounted drill rig using hollow-stem augers to sample/evaluate subsurface conditions to a maximum depth of approximately 10 feet below the ground surface. Once drilling is complete, each borehole will be backfilled immediately with flowable bonded aggregate fill approved for use by the Clark County Department of Public Works and the surface will be patched with a quick-setting concrete plug. The three sample locations are shown in Figure 1.

### **Access and Disturbance**

Each core sample location will be visited once to conduct the drilling activity and any necessary activity to restore or mitigate any damage resulting from the drilling activities. All sampling will take place within the existing paved road surface of Tecopa Road and will extend no more than 500 feet along the road at each sample location. Therefore, there will be no new ground disturbance associated with the proposed geo-technical investigation and no new access or cross-country travel will be required. The 500 foot area at each sample location is required for maneuvering the drilling equipment around the drill sites within the road surface and to allow for adequate traffic control. All support vehicles will also remain on the existing road during activities. The boring will be backfilled with flowable bonded aggregate fill approved for use by Clark County Public Works and the surface will be patched with a quick-setting concrete plug.

### **Site Reclamation**

Because the core sample locations are within the paved road surface, no site reclamation will be necessary. Each work area will be kept in an orderly condition and free of trash throughout the drilling activities. All refuse and trash would be collected in closed containers until removed from the site and disposed of in an approved manner. Any waste oils, chemicals, and spill clean-ups would be hauled to a site authorized for disposal of such materials.

### **Staging Areas**

The crew will meet at the intersection of Tecopa Road and State Route 160 before traveling to each sample location. All drilling activities will be completed within one work day and equipment will not need to be stored on-site or staged nearby.

### **Schedule of Activities**

Once permitted, drilling for all three sample areas is expected to take no more than 1 day to complete, between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Each core sample will take approximately 2 hours to complete. In the event that boring may need to occur at other times to accommodate unforeseen circumstances, a window of approximately 3 months, from January 7, 2013 through April 7, 2013, is being requested.

**Table 1. Exploration Locations**

Core Samples	Access	Latitude	Longitude	Aliquot Part Township (T), Range (R)	Temporary Disturbance (acres)
Core Sample 1	Tecopa Road	35.5858170	-115.5058621	T. 23 S., R. 54 E., Section 1	0.014
Core Sample 2	Tecopa Road	36.113538	-115.4847397	T. 22 S., R. 55 E., Section 21	0.014
Core Sample 3	Tecopa Road	36.417623	-115.469636	T. 21 S., R. 55 E., Section 35	0.014
<b>Total</b>					<b>0.042</b>

**B. Land Use Plan Conformance**

**Land Use Plan Name:**

Record of Decision for the Approved Las Vegas Resource Management Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement.

**Date Approved/Amended:**

October 5, 1998

**The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions) :**

**Land Management**

Objective

Land Use Authorizations

**LD-2.** All public lands within the planning area, unless otherwise classified, segregated or withdrawn, and with the exception of Areas of Critical Environmental Concern and Wilderness Study Areas, are available at the discretion of the agency, for land use leases and permits under Section 302 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and for airport leases under the authority of the Act of May 24, 1928 as amended.

Management Direction

LD-2-a. Land use lease or permit applications and airport lease applications will be addressed on a case-by-case basis, where consistent with other resource management objectives and local lands uses. Special terms and conditions regarding use of the public lands will be developed as applicable.

**C. Compliance with NEPA:**

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 2, Appendix 1, or 516 DM 11.9,

**E. Realty:**

(19) Issuance of short term (3 years or less) rights-of-way or land use authorizations for uses such as storage sites, apiary sites, and construction sites where the proposal includes rehabilitation to restore the land to its natural or original condition.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

**Applicant Proposed Mitigation Measures:**

The geo-technical contractor will provide and store, in a place easily accessible, shovels and 5 pound ABC dry powder carbon monoxide fire extinguisher during all activities. Individual trucks and/or equipment shall contain fire protection equipment.

The geo-technical contractor shall have notification numbers readily available for all employees in case of fire.

Hazardous material shall not be drained onto the ground or into streams or drainage areas. Totally enclosed containment shall be provided for all trash. All construction waste including trash and litter, garbage, solid waste, petroleum products, and other potentially hazardous materials shall be removed to a disposal facility authorized to accept such materials.

Vehicles refueling and servicing activities will be performed in Pahrump or Las Vegas, Nevada. Spill preventative and containment measures or practices will be incorporated as needed.

All vehicles and equipment movement shall be restricted to Tecopa Road.

A traffic control plan will be prepared and approved by the Clark County Department of Public Works. Traffic control measures shall be put into place to manage all vehicle traffic during drilling activities will include:

- Traffic control will close off one travel lane and direct traffic onto the other travel lane with flaggers at each end of closure.
- Traffic safety devices will include a combination of : flaggers, cones, barrels, directional barricades, and signage.
- Each closure will be approximately 500 feet long.
- The total duration at each location is anticipated to be 2 to 3 hours.
- The traffic control set-up will be moved between the three sample locations as drilling is completed.

Boreholes will be backfilled with flowable bond aggregate fill approved for use by Clark County Department of Public Works and the surface will be patched with a quick-setting concrete plug.

The applicant must work with Department of Air Quality, Clark County for dust control permit, for soil disturbing activity and use of heavy equipment and other permit(s) for the use of a portable generator.

Avoid or minimize all types of travel through weed-infested areas. If a problem is identified and avoidance or removal is not possible, the project proponent shall set up inspection and equipment cleaning sites to prevent the spread of weeds upon departure.

Limit ground disturbance to the minimum necessary to safely construct and operate the Proposed Project. The applicant would avoid creating soil conditions that promote weed germination and establishment.

Project related equipment (i.e. undercarriages and wheel wells) will be cleaned of all mud, dirt, and plant parts before each tour. Project workers shall inspect, remove, and dispose of weed seed and plant parts found on their clothing and personal equipment, bag the product and dispose of in a dumpster. Disposal methods may vary depending on the project.

The desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) is the only federally protected species with the potential to occur in the project area and will be considered in accordance with management policies set forth by the BLM and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

- Should a desert tortoise enter the area of activity, activities will immediately stop until such time as the animal has left the area of its own accord.
- A litter-control policy will be implemented to minimize predation on tortoises by ravens, coyotes, or other predators drawn to the project area. This policy will include the use of covered, predator-proof trash receptacles at the end of each workday, and proper disposal of trash in a designated solid waste disposal facility.
- Workers will be instructed to check underneath all vehicles before moving them as tortoises often take cover underneath parked vehicles.
- The above action has a no affect determination for the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), or any other listed species or designated critical habitat.
- The drill site is located in a paved road therefore there will be no new disturbance. Undisturbed lands surrounding the project area range from very low to moderate density tortoise habitat. The workers and any rerouted vehicles will remain only on the existing road and road shoulder.
- This notice will serve as the Section 7 Determination and no additional paperwork will be provided (Sec 7 Log # NV-052-13-049)
- All holes should be reclaimed according to NRS and NAC regulations and reclaimed immediately after drilling. If groundwater is intercepted, holes will need to be reclaimed appropriately.

I considered the proposed project: to bore three geo-technical exploratory core holes to a depth of 10 feet within the paved Tecopa Road. This action affords BSE the opportunity to investigate the road conditions and cross section to determine if Tecopa Road currently meets the necessary safety, operational, and regulatory standards to support increased vehicle traffic associated with the construction of proposed HHSEGS site. The boring will take place between State Route 160 and the Nevada state line in Clark County, Nevada. (see Figure 1) The proposed project is temporary in nature. At the end of the LUP period, the area will be decommissioned and returned to/or near its original condition.

**D. Approval and Contact Information**

JAN 28 2013

*acting for*  
Vanessa L. Hice

Date

Assistant Field Manager,  
Division of Lands

**Contact Person**

Mrs. Brenda Wilhight, Realty Specialist

Bureau of Land Management

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