

Categorical Exclusion Documentation

A. Background

BLM Office: El Centro Field Office
1661 S. 4th Street El Centro, CA 92243

DOI-BLM-CA-D070-2016-0001-CX
Case File #'s: CACA-56344 and CACA-56371

Project Title

L.H. Renewables, LLC, Gold Basin Wind Type I Site Testing Project

Location

Legal Description: Total Project Area

San Bernardino Meridian, California,
Township 12 South, Range 20 East,
section 20, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$;

Township 13 South, Range 19 East,
section 15, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$.

Meteorological Tower Locations

Met Tower	Latitude and Longitude	Area	Legal Description
OV1 CACA-56371	33.1055 Degrees N, 114.8907 Degrees W	6.5 Acres	T12S, R20E, Section 20, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ SW $\frac{1}{4}$
GB 2 CACA-56344	33.0377 Degrees N, 114.9501 Degrees W	6.5 Acres	T13S, R19E, Section 15, SE $\frac{1}{4}$ NE $\frac{1}{4}$

Total project area: 13.0 acres

Total ground disturbance: Less than 1 acre

Description and Rationale, Including any Stipulations

LH Renewables, LLC (LH Renewables) proposes to maintain, operate, and decommission two (2) meteorological (met) towers previously authorized and constructed under two Type II Project right-of-way (ROW) grants: CACA-051947, previously issued to LH Renewables, and CACA-047751, formerly issued to Oro Valley Power, LLC. The two met towers together would be operated, maintained, and decommissioned under ROW grants CACA-056344 and 56371, which will be Type I ROW grants.

The project is requested by the applicant to collect data on wind velocity and duration to determine the feasibility of a full-scale wind energy project. The proposal is described in the applicant's application (for SF-299) and Plan of Development (POD), which are attached to this CX as Appendix A. Stipulations required of the applicant are attached as Appendix B.

As both towers are within 0.5 mile of State Highway 78, both towers would be accessed via existing short bladed roads connecting to this highway. No new roads or road improvements would be included in this project.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Both met towers are within the Northern Colorado Desert (NECO) Area portion of the California Desert Conservation Area (BLM 1980, as amended). This area is managed to provide for a variety of uses including renewable energy, wildlife conservation, and recreation. Recreational activity in the area includes camping, hunting, hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, mountain biking, wildlife viewing, photography, and OHV use. The met towers are situated just east of State Highway 78, west of Black Mountain in Imperial County, California. Met towers are consistent with the allowable uses within this area under the NECO Plan.

C. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act

The action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9,

E-19; Issuance of short-term (3 years or less) rights-of-way or land use authorizations for such uses 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 for this action 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 (see attached).

I considered this plan conformance and NEPA compliance record and have determined that the proposed project is in conformance with the approved land use plan(s) and that no further environmental analysis is required.

D. Signature

 //Signed//
Thomas F. Zale
Field Manager

 11/02/2015
Date

E. Contact

For more information, contact Veronica Vogan, BLM Realty Specialist, at 760-337-4422 or vvogan@blm.gov.