



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Nevada State Office

Esmeralda 7 Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan Amendment

September 12, 2024

Virtual Public Meeting for the Esmeralda 7 PEIS and RMPA

THE MEETING WILL BEGIN SHORTLY.

Please note that this meeting is being recorded and will be available on the project website:

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2020804/530>



Meeting Agenda

- Introductions
- Ground Rules & Zoom Tips
- PowerPoint Presentation
- Question and Answer Session
- Public Comment Session



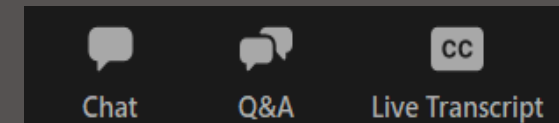
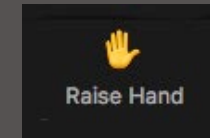
Ground Rules

- Microphones will remain on mute until the public comment session.
- Questions will be received using the Q&A box. Verbal questions may be asked during the Q&A session by raising your hand.
- Verbal comments will be restricted to two minutes.
- Please refrain from the use of inappropriate language.



Zoom Tips & Tricks

- Use the Q&A icon for the question-and-answer session
- Use the Chat icon for urgent technical questions
- Use the Raise Hand feature during the public comment session
- Closed captioning is available using the CC icon
- Mute/Unmute will be controlled by the host for the entirety of the meeting
- Phone caller instructions –*9 to raise your hand to ask a question or provide a comment
- For technical assistance, contact the following email: megan.stone@aecom.com





Introductions

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- NEPA Contractor: AECOM
- Project Applicants: US Solar Assets LLC, Nivloc Solar Energy LLC, CG Western Renewables III LLC, 335ES 8me LLC, 336SP 8me LLC, Boulevard Associates LLC, Gold Dust Solar LLC

A recording of this presentation will be available on the BLM National NEPA Register project website within 10 business days.

<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2020804/530>



Public Comment Period

On July 26, 2024, the BLM initiated a 90-day public comment period, comments must be received by **October 24, 2024**, to best inform the preparation of the Final PEIS/RMPA.

- Submit a comment online comments via the BLM NEPA Register ePlanning website:

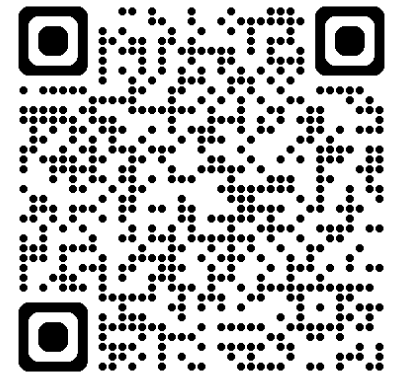
<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2020804/530>

- Send an electronic comment via email:

BLM_NV_BMDO_P&EC_NEPA@blm.gov; Subject line: “Esmeralda 7”

- Mail or hand deliver written comments to:

ATTN: Esmeralda 7 Project Manager
BLM Battle Mountain District
50 Bastian Road
Battle Mountain, NV 89820



Scan QR code for
Project website

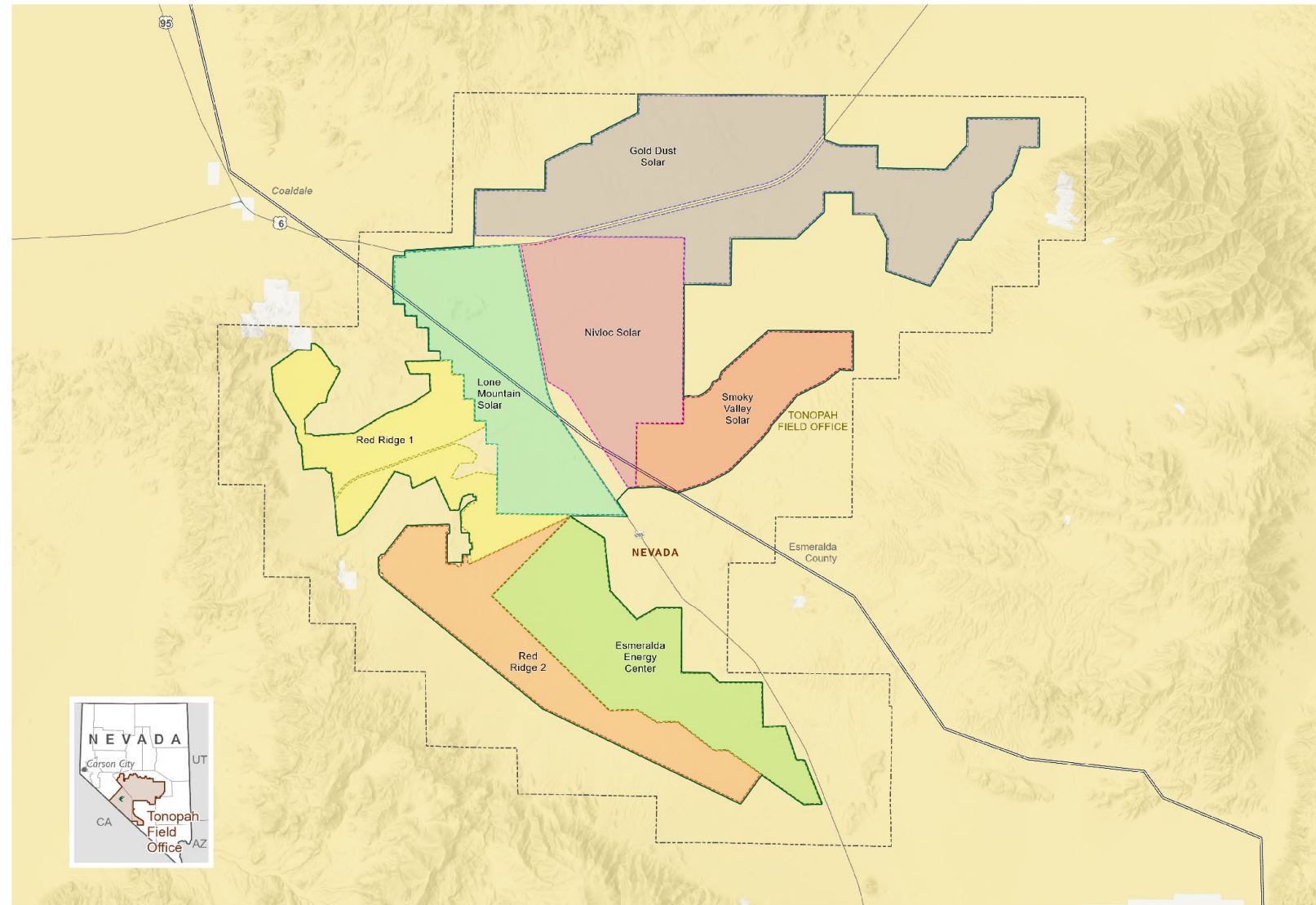


Background

- The BLM Tonopah Field Office received applications for seven ROW grants to construct, operate and maintain, and decommission utility-scale photovoltaic (PV) solar facilities with energy storage systems in Esmeralda County, Nevada. The seven proposed facilities would be geographically contiguous and encompass approximately 62,300 acres of BLM-administered lands approximately 30 miles west of Tonopah, Nevada.
- The proposed solar facilities would be adjacent to the proposed corridor for NV Energy's Greenlink West 525-kilovolt (kV) transmission project. All seven facilities would connect to the proposed Esmeralda Substation.
- The BLM is preparing a programmatic-level EIS that analyzes amending the resource management plan for visual and slope management direction.
- The programmatic-level EIS would not approve any individual right-of-way grants. Rather, a site-specific analysis for individual projects would be conducted through subsequent tiered National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation.

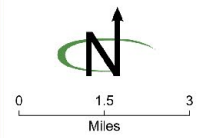


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Planning Area

- Lone Mountain Solar
- Esmeralda Energy Center
- Smoky Valley Solar
- Gold Dust Solar
- Nivloc Solar
- Red Ridge 1
- Red Ridge 2
- Planning area
- Segregation of public land
- Greenlink West Transmission Project, Final EIS proposed action
- Bureau of Land Management
- Private



Source: BLM GIS 2023, Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Battle Mountain District Office
August 06, 2024.
Esmeralda7_Maps_DEIS.aprx
No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data, or for purposes not intended by the BLM. Spatial information may not meet National Map Accuracy Standards. This information is subject to change without notification.



What is the BLM's purpose and need for this project and what decisions will be made?

- The BLM's purpose for this federal action is to amend the visual and slope management direction in the Tonopah Resource Management Plan (RMP) in compliance with the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA). The need for this action is to fulfill the BLM's responsibility under the FLPMA and the BLM's ROW regulations to manage public lands for multiple uses, including the generation and transmission of electric energy, and to consider the long-term needs of future generations for renewable and nonrenewable resources in the Tonopah RMP planning area.
- The BLM will decide whether to amend the Tonopah RMP to facilitate solar development in the planning area. If approved, the BLM would assist in addressing the management objectives in Secretarial Order 3285A1 (March 11, 2009, as amended on February 22, 2010), which established the development of environmentally responsible renewable energy as a priority for the Department of the Interior. The BLM would not approve or deny any specific proposed ROWs to construct, operate and maintain, and decommission solar-generation and storage facilities.



Range of Alternatives

- The **Proposed Action (Alternative A)** would amend the Tonopah RMP for visual resource management and slope. It also considers applications for proposed development of photovoltaic solar facilities, including solar arrays, energy storage, roads, and electric generation intertie (gen-tie) lines within seven solar rights-of-way. Assumes 5 years for full buildout of all projects and daily construction workforce of 845 personnel.

Summary of Each Proposed Project in the Planning Area

Applicant	Project	Description
US Solar Assets LLC	Lone Mountain Solar	1-gigawatt (GW) PV and 500-megawatt (MW) battery storage system; 8,350 acres
Nivloc Solar Energy LLC	Nivloc Solar	500 MW PV and battery storage system; 8,280 acres
CG Western Renewables III LLC	Smoky Valley Solar	1 GW PV and battery storage system; 4,890 acres
335ES 8me LLC 336SP 8me LLC	Red Ridge 1 Solar Red Ridge 2 Solar	600 MW PV and battery storage system; 6,190 and 6,860 acres, respectively
Boulevard Associates LLC	Esmeralda Energy Center	1 GW PV and battery storage system; 8,360 acres
Gold Dust Solar LLC	Gold Dust Solar	1.5 GW PV and 1 GW battery storage system; 16,720 acres



Range of Alternatives

- The **Soils and Vegetation Conservation Alternative (Alternative B)** would be the same as the Proposed Action, but there would be no amendment to the Tonopah RMP to change the slope requirement for the planning area to a maximum of 10 percent. Development on slopes greater than 5 percent would be based on the additional slope criteria outlined in the 2012 Solar PEIS. In addition, applicants would limit traditional construction grading methods, which remove all vegetation and compact the soil, to a maximum of 35 percent of the proposed development area. Applicants would use mowing in the rest of the development area to leave vegetation intact. In mowed areas, vegetation would be mowed to a height of 24 inches (61 centimeters) but no less than 18 inches (46 centimeters), where justified.
- Under the **No Action Alternative (Alternative C)**, the BLM would not amend the Tonopah RMP. Future development could be constrained by the existing visual resource management classifications or slope requirements.



Environmental Resources Analyzed In Detail

- Air Quality and Climate*
- Biological Resources* (including wildlife, migratory birds, special status species, vegetation)
- Cultural Resources*
- Hydrologic Resources* (surface and groundwater)
- Geology and Minerals
- Lands and Realty
- Lands with wilderness characteristics
- Native American Concerns
- Noise
- Paleontological Resources
- Rangeland and Grazing Management
- Recreation
- Social Values, Economic Conditions, and Environmental Justice*
- Soils
- Transportation, Access, and Public Safety
- Visual Resources* (including night skies)
- Wastes and Materials
- Wild Horses and Burros

**Supplemental Environmental Reports were prepared for these resources and are available for review on the ePlanning project website.*



Measures to Reduce Effects

- ✓ Conducting site-specific Section 106 review for individual projects
- ✓ Dust Abatement Plan
- ✓ Employing cultural field monitors to monitor ground-disturbing activities
- ✓ Groundwater Monitoring and Mitigation Plan
- ✓ Integrated Vegetation, Weed, and Pest Management Plan
- ✓ Lighting Plan
- ✓ Limiting herbicide use to non-persistent, immobile substances
- ✓ Limiting travel to stabilized roads
- ✓ Noise Monitoring and Mitigation Plan
- ✓ Site Drainage Plan
- ✓ Site Reclamation and Revegetation Plan
- ✓ Spill Prevention and Emergency Response Plan
- ✓ Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan
- ✓ Traffic Management Plan
- ✓ Using weed-free seed mixes of native shrubs, grasses, and forbs
- ✓ Worker Environmental Awareness Program



Major Project Milestones



**PLANNING,
SUPPLEMENTAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
REPORTS**

SCOPING

**DRAFT
ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT
STATEMENT**

**FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT
STATEMENT**

**RECORD
OF
DECISION**

February –
October 2023

November –
December 2023

Spring – Fall
2024

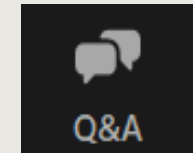
Fall 2024 –
Spring 2025

April 2025



Question and Answer Guidelines

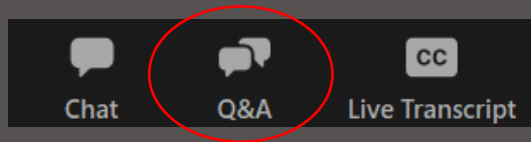
- We will respond to pre-submitted questions first.
- Submit your new question(s) in the Q&A box.
- If you are on the phone, press *9 to raise your hand.



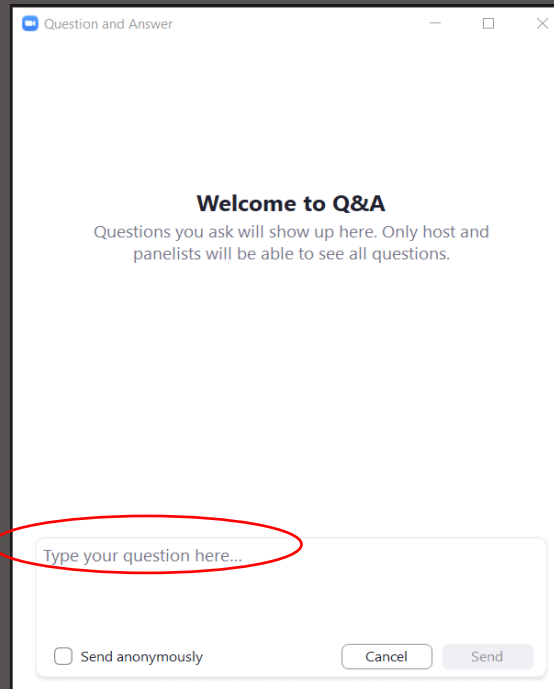


Question and Answer Session

1. Click the “Q&A” button



2. Type your question in the Q&A box



3. BLM will answer live or written

Verbal

1. Press *9 to “raise your hand” to let staff know you are ready to provide your comment.
2. The moderator will then unmute you.
3. You will be identified by the last four digits of your phone number.



Public Comment Guidelines

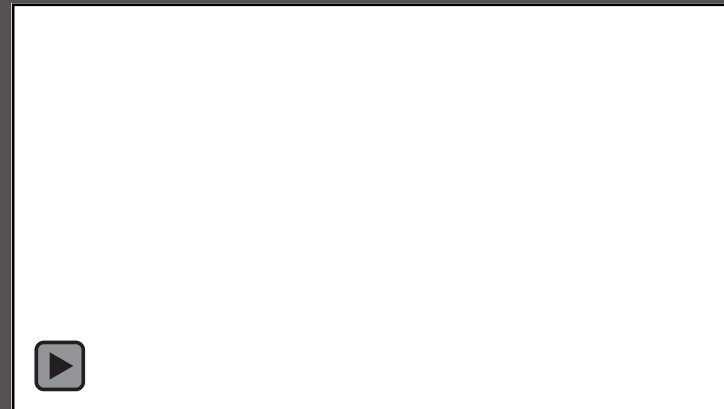
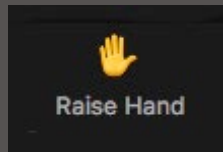
- Comments will be limited to two minutes per person.
- Questions asked during the public comment session will not be responded to.
- Refrain from use of profanity.



Public Comment Session

BLM wants to hear from all members of the public. Out of respect for everyone's participation and input, we will be using the following guidelines:

- Please be respectful of others
- Refrain from profanity
- Stay within your allotted time
- Use Raise Hand to indicate you would like to provide a comment



If guidelines are not followed, your microphone will be muted, and we will move to the next person.



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

Contact Information:

Project Website: <https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/2020804/510>

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Mailing address:

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Battle Mountain District Office
50 Bastian Road
Battle Mountain, NV 89820

Contact:

Scott Distel, Project Manager, telephone: (775) 635-4093