

## Transmission:

### Revised Solar Plan Makes the Connection

**The Interior Department's revised solar energy plan for public lands will ensure existing transmission capacity can be accessed and needed new transmission will be developed in a timely manner.**

Transmission is a major obstacle facing large-scale solar projects in the West. The Interior Department's revised solar energy plan capitalizes on existing and proposed infrastructure. By concentrating development in appropriate areas, designation of solar energy zones will improve transmission planning. Through the revised plan's variance process, the BLM retains flexibility to capitalize on existing and already planned transmission.

*The proposed solar plan is a major step forward in energy planning for the U.S., and particularly for the development of solar energy on public lands in Nevada. As both a former Nevada Consumer Advocate and a member of the Nevada PUC, I know that the best approaches to energy production and consumer protection involve forward-looking, long term solutions. By establishing clearly defined zones for future solar energy development, a regional road map for clean energy planning is finally achievable.*

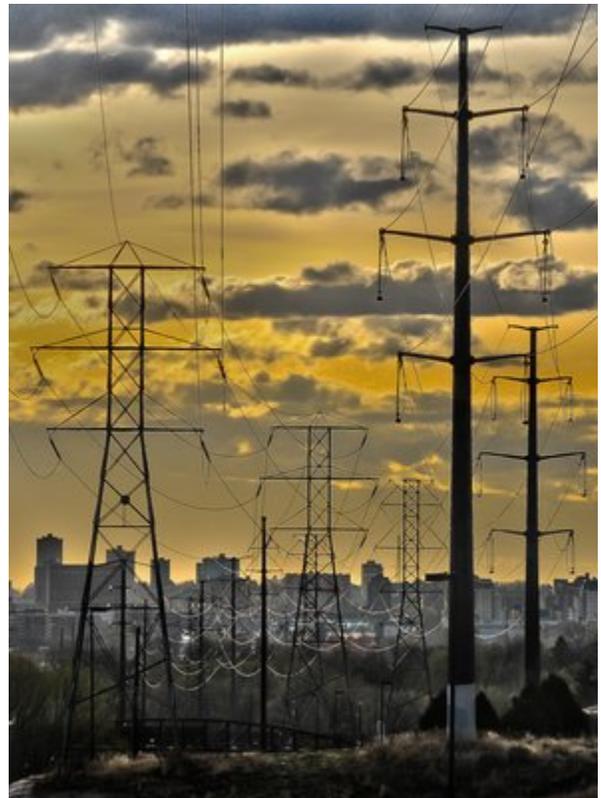
—Tim Hay, former Nevada Consumer Advocate and Public Utility Commissioner

**Transmission is a major constraint on new solar project development in the west.** If transmission planning is not adequately factored into project planning, solar projects may be greatly delayed or become infeasible. Solar developers likely need to have a demonstrated ability to reach the potential purchasers in order to acquire financing.

*BLM's intent in identifying SEZs has been to find areas well suited to utility-scale solar energy production, with few impediments to solar facility construction and operation, where the BLM would prioritize solar energy and associated transmission infrastructure development.*

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**The revised plan prioritizes existing infrastructure, getting solar energy online faster and cheaper.** Like any energy industry, solar energy developers have shown a strong preference to locating their generation projects near existing transmission lines, especially lines with existing capacity, and preferably very near an existing substation on a line with capacity. Guiding development to zones that meet these conditions minimizes the cost of connecting their projects to the transmission grid and avoids the need to finance transmission system upgrades to create the needed capacity.



Power lines running into Denver, Colorado. Photo courtesy of DOE/NREL (Credit: Dennis Schroeder).

*Clean Line Energy Partners supports the Interior Department's coordinated effort to designate solar energy zones promoting development. The zones will allow transmission planners to focus their efforts strategically on preferred areas, including corridors and already disturbed lands.*

**—Jim Glotfelty, Executive Vice President for transmission developer Clean Line Energy Partners**

**The revised solar energy plan can accommodate market changes through variance applications, allowing developers to take advantage of available capacity outside zones.** The proposed variance process will allow developers to identify and propose projects that utilize existing transmission infrastructure and designated transmission corridors.

**The revised plan will drive new transmission development by clustering projects in clearly defined locations.**

The order in which projects proceed, and their relative timing, can have a large impact on how the transmission system develops which, in turn, has a large impact on future development. Solar project development in a zone ensures that multiple solar generation projects are developed close in space and time, greatly increasing the likelihood that one or a few large transmission lines would be constructed to carry the generation to market.



Trough solar power plants in California's Mojave Desert. Photo courtesy of DOE/NREL (Credit: Warren Gretz).

*The proposed solar program helps to lay the foundation for a clean energy economy here in Arizona and across the West. I know from my years on the state Corporation Commission that smart up-front planning is needed to guide solar projects to low-conflict zones and to prioritize transmission expansion.*

**—Kris Mayes, former Chair of the Arizona Corporation Commission**

**By providing both the certainty to plan new transmission and the flexibility to take advantage of unexpected developments, the revised solar energy plan will get projects online faster making it easier for states in the Southwest meet their renewable energy targets.**

*...Challenges include permitting and siting transmission infrastructure interconnecting with renewable energy projects, which the Solar PEIS seeks to address. SCE supports the administration's efforts to streamline the approval of solar energy project applications, and the necessary transmission system infrastructure to support such generation...*

**—Southern California Edison**

