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BLM Begins Evaluation of the Proposed Southline Electrical Transmission Line in Southern New Mexico and Arizona

Las Cruces, NM -The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has scheduled a series of meetings on the Southline Transmission Line, which is proposed to run through southern New Mexico and Arizona.

The public meetings are part of the scoping process in preparation for an environmental impact statement (EIS). Scoping is to identify issues and concerns related to the proposed project.

Each of the meetings will be from 5:30 to 8 p.m. The format will be open house with project specialists available for questions. A presentation on the project begins at 6 p.m. Here is the meeting schedule:

May 8

Mesilla Valley Days Inn & Suites
901 Avenida de Mesilla
Las Cruces, NM 88005

May 9

Mimbres Valley Special Events Center
2300 E. Pine Street
Deming, NM 88030

May 10

Dugan-Tarango Middle School
1352 Hardin Street
Lordsburg, NM 88045

May 15

Quality Inn Willcox
1100 W. Rex Allen Drive
Willcox, AZ 85643

May 16

Benson Unified High School
360 S. Patagonia Street
Benson, AZ 85602

May 17

Palo Verde Magnet High School
1302 S. Avenida Vega
Tucson, AZ 85710

The BLM published a notice of intent (NOI) in the Federal Register on April 4, 2012. The NOI is an announcement that the BLM will prepare an EIS on the proposed electrical transmission line. The publication of the NOI starts a 60-day scoping period, which runs through June 4, 2012.

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Southline Transmission, LLC, proposes constructing a high-voltage power line in two segments. The first segment would be a new double circuit 345-kilovolt line from a substation in Afton, New Mexico, (south of Las Cruces) to a substation in Apache, Arizona (south of Willcox). This 225-mile segment would provide up to 1,500 megawatts of capacity. The second segment would be an upgrading and rebuilding of about 130 miles of existing transmission lines between the Apache Substation and the Saguaro Substation northwest of Tucson. It would provide capacity for an additional 1,000 megawatts of electricity.

The line would cross Federal lands managed by the BLM and other agencies, and state, and private lands. BLM New Mexico is the lead agency in preparing the EIS and in considering potential amendments to Federal land use plans that the project may require. Western Area Power Administration, a power-marketing arm of the Department of Energy, is a co-lead with BLM New Mexico.

The NOI is available at the BLM's project web site: <http://www.blm.gov/nm/southline>

Comments on the project can be made at the meetings. The BLM will also accept comments by mail, e-mail or fax.

Mail comments can be sent by mail to:

Bureau of Land Management
Las Cruces District Office
Southline Transmission Project
Attention: Frances Martinez
1800 Marquess Street
Las Cruces, NM 88005

E-mail comments can be sent to:
Blm_nm_southline@blm.gov
Fax: (575) 525-4412

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM's mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2014, the BLM generated \$5.2 billion in receipts from public lands.

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