

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 5, 2012

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Comment Period for the Southline Transmission Line Project extended to July 5, 2012

Las Cruces, NM -The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is extending the scoping period for the proposed Southline Transmission Line project. The scoping period, which was scheduled to end on June 4, has been extended 30 days to end July 5, 2012.

The scoping period is a chance for the public to make initial comments on a proposed project and to identify concerns and issues that should be addressed in an environmental impact statement (EIS). An EIS provides the basis for a decision on the use of public lands. BLM New Mexico is the lead agency preparing the Southline EIS. The Western Area Power Administration (Western) is a co-lead on the project.

Tom Hurshman, BLM national project manager, said the decision to extend the scoping period was the result of multiple requests by the public. "We've been asked to allow more time for comment. The BLM and Western determined that additional time was warranted considering the complexity of the proposal," he said.

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). The second segment would be an upgrade and rebuild of existing transmission lines between the Apache Substation and the Saguaro Substation, which is north of Tucson, Arizona. The proposed transmission line would cross public, state trust, and private lands.

A series of public meetings on the project were held in May in New Mexico and Arizona. A map of the proposed corridor and information about how to comment on the project are available at the BLM New Mexico project web page: <http://www.blm.gov/nm/southline>

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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