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Comments Sought on Draft EIS for Southline Transmission Line Project

Las Cruces, NM -The Draft Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS, for the proposed Southline Transmission Line Project was released today by the Bureau of Land Management and the Western Area Power Administration.

Southline Transmission, LLC, proposes building the 360-mile line from near Las Cruces, NM, to Tucson, AZ. The line would cross BLM-managed public land, state land, and private property. Southline indicates the line would improve reliability of the electrical grid and help facilitate renewable energy markets in the region.

With the release of the Draft EIS, the BLM and Western are commencing a 90-day comment period. The comment period ends July 10, 2014. Members of the public will have the opportunity to learn about the proposed project at a series of public hearings in New Mexico and Arizona. They can also make comments on the Draft EIS at the meetings.

Here is the schedule for the meetings:

Las Cruces, NM

May 6 5:30–8 p.m.

Ramada Las Cruces Hotel and Conference Center
201 E. University Avenue
Las Cruces 88005

Deming, NM

May 7 5:30–8 p.m.

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

Lordsburg, NM

May 8 5:30–8 p.m.

Lordsburg Special Events Center
502 W. 2nd Street
Lordsburg 88045

Benson, AZ

May 20 5:30–8 p.m.

Benson Community Center
705 W. Union Street
Benson 85602

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Willcox, AZ

May 21 5:30–8 p.m.

Willcox Community Center

312 W. Stewart Street

Willcox 85643

Tucson, AZ

May 22 5:30–8 p.m.

El Rio Neighborhood Center

1390 W. Speedway Blvd.

Tucson 85746

Southline Transmission plans to construct a high-voltage power line in two segments. The first segment, 240 miles long, would be a new double-circuit 345-kilovolt (kV) line from a substation in Afton, New Mexico (south of Las Cruces), to the Apache Substation south of Willcox, Arizona. The second segment would be an upgrade and a rebuild of 120 miles of existing transmission lines between the Apache Substation and a substation north of Tucson.

The Draft EIS and maps showing the proposed routes can be viewed at www.blm.gov/nm/st/en/prog/more/lands_realty/southline_transmission.html. Information on making comments on the Draft EIS is also available on the website.

BLM New Mexico and Western are co-leads in preparing the EIS. Western is a power-marketing agency within the Department of Energy. As part of its mission, Western studies power system requirements; plans for transmission line upgrades and additions; facilitates and finances transmission projects; and constructs, owns, operates, and maintains transmission infrastructure.

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land under a mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield.

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