

Finding of No Significant Impact Sunrise II Power Project Right-Of-Way

AGENCY: Department of Energy (DOE)

ACTION: Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

SUMMARY

Sunrise Power Company, LLC (Sunrise), has planned the modification of an existing power plant project to increase its generation capacity by 265 megawatts by 2003. The initial Sunrise facility was constructed in accordance with a license issued by the California Energy Commission (CEC) on December 6, 2000 and brought 320 MW of much needed power to commercial operation in June 2001. The Governor of the State of California issued recent Executive Orders to provide for emergency permit streamlining of projects that can help alleviate the current California energy crisis. Specifically, Executive Order D-25-01 directed the CEC to expedite processing amendments such as the Sunrise II modification that would increase generating capacity from 320 MW to 585 MW by summer 2003. As part of the modification, an approximately 15.3 mile water line will be installed. Additionally, improvements to West Kern Water District's (WKWD) Pumping Station "B", located on DOE land, will occur. Sunrise has requested a right-of-way grant for the construction of the water supply line on U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and DOE lands.

Pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the potential impacts of the proposed action were analyzed in an Environmental Assessment (EA-1434) with the BLM acting as lead agency. Based on the analysis of the potential environmental impacts contained in the Environmental Assessment (EA), BLM has determined that significant impacts are not expected and an environmental impact statement is not required. The DOE, acting as a cooperating agency, has adopted the BLM's EA and is consequently issuing this FONSI.

COPIES OF THE EA ARE AVAILABLE FROM:

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:

The proposed action is to authorize a right-of-way grant for the construction of an approximately 15.3 mile water supply line that will commence at Sunrise II in Section 23, Township (T) 31 South (S), Range (R) 22 East (E) and end at Section 13, T31S, R24E near the western intersection of Golf Course Road and State Route (SR) 119. Additionally, the proposed action is to also authorize improvements of WKWD Pumping Station "B" on DOE land Section 32, T31S, R24E. The water line route would follow an existing water pipeline right-of-way corridor, except 2.7 miles where it follows SR 33 and a portion of the project's existing natural gas pipeline and follows Route E/E2/L approaching Golf Course Road. The water line route traverses approximately 1.2 miles of BLM land (Section 32, T31S, R23E, and Section 14, T31S, R24E) and 2.1 miles of DOE land (Section 34, T31S, R23E and Section 32, T31S, R24E) including approximately 1.4 acres adjacent to WKWD Pump Station B. The permanent right-of-way width would be 75 feet for the water supply line.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

Western Kern County is classified as non-attainment with respect to federal and state ambient air quality standards (AAQSs) for ozone and PM₁₀. The area is in attainment for all other criteria pollutants. The water supply line, the proposed action that is the subject of the EA, will not have any air quality impacts because it is a buried pipeline. Best achievable control measures (BACM) will be implemented for fugitive dust control during construction of the water supply line.

Average annual water requirements for Sunrise II will be approximately 3,900 acre-feet of water per year from WKWD. This represents approximately 29 percent of the 1997/1998 water year demand for the district and approximately 11 percent of the projected maximum demand for the district. No significant impacts to surface water quality or quantity are anticipated during construction or operation of Sunrise II.

Following a field trip of the approximately 15.3 mile fresh water pipeline route and inspection of each stream crossing, California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) made a determination of "No Resources at Risk" for the stream crossings along the length of the pipeline.

Construction of the approximately 15.3 mile water supply line will temporarily disturb approximately 139.7 acres. The water line route follows an existing water line right-of-way for all except 2.7 miles where it follows SR 33 and a portion of the project's natural gas pipeline, and approximately 1 mile of the route approaching Golf Course Road. Total temporary disturbance on federal lands is 30.3 acres. Total disturbance on private lands (approximately 12.1 miles) will be 109.4 acres. Most of the impacts of this project are within habitats previously or currently disturbed by on-going oil field activities. This project does not greatly increase the baseline level of disturbance in the existing oil fields or along the proposed water line corridor. The project applicant has proposed to compensate for the habitat loss associated with the direct impacts of Sunrise II through the purchase and funding for management of replacement habitat in the Lokern Natural Area.

The Native American prehistoric resources in the vicinity of the project exist in a contemporary environment that bears little resemblance to that which existed prior to the development of the oilfields. With the loss of integrity for both the historic and prehistoric environmental context for cultural resources, it is unlikely that the proposed action will result in substantive indirect impacts on cultural resources. The project will not impact any cultural resources on DOE lands.

Impacts to cultural resources would be expected to occur only during construction activities. Since operations and maintenance activities generally occur on facilities for which cultural resources have already been addressed, no potential for impact is anticipated.

No paleontological resources were identified during the field surveys. However, should paleontological resources be encountered, the incorporation of the existing conditions of certification and the approved Paleontological Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (PRMMP), which will ensure that potential impacts to sensitive paleontological resources are minimized. Therefore, no potentially significant impacts to paleontological resources are expected from construction of Sunrise II or the water supply line.

There are no offsite visual resource impacts from the Sunrise II physical structures, because the only offsite component, an approximately 15.3 mile water supply line, will be buried.

There has been previous disturbance of soils at the Sunrise II plant site and along portions of the water supply line corridor caused by previous oil and gas production activity, road construction, and other water pipeline installation. With the incorporation of the Conditions of Certification for the simple cycle facility to the proposed combined cycle project, the Sunrise II impacts to soils along the water line are insignificant.

DETERMINATION:

Approval of the proposed Sunrise II Power Project Right-of-Way in California for construction of a water supply line on DOE lands does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of human environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act. This finding is based on the analyses in the EA. Therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed action is not required.

Issued at Bakersfield, California, this _____ day _____ 2002.

James C. Killen
Director
Naval Petroleum Reserves
in California