Thank you for your comment, Austin Puglisi.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is SolarM60007.

Comment Date: July 4, 2009 18:53:31PM
Solar Energy Development PEIS
Comment ID: SolarM60007

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This is the second of four comments I wish to make on the PEIS process.

This comment covers land use, visual resources, socioeconomic resources, environmental justice, and health/safety.

American citizens who live in rural areas throughout the United States are being asked to pay a disproportionate cost of developing renewable energy. The residents of the deserts in California, Nevada, and Arizona are facing irreversible changes to their neighborhoods for little benefit.

"Visual resources" in the desert means much mor ethan being able to look out our windows without seeing power lines. Most of the rural communites in the Mojave Desert, especially those near Joshua Tree National Park and Death Valley National Park, depend on tourism. Desert tourism depends entirely on stark beauty, wildlife not found elsewhere, and wide open vistas. All of these will be marred if industrial-scale solar projects are built on pristine desert land. The negative effects will extend far beyond the boundaries of the BLM lands under consideration. Acitivities that will be detrimentally impacted include camping, hiking, legal off-road vehicle riding, movie and television production, birdwatching, and visits by artists who find inspiration fromt he desert. Yet almost all of the power generated by these projects will be transmitted to Los Angeles, Las Vegas, and Phoenix.

Safety is also an issue of concern in the desert. Many of the proposed solar projects are on remote lands with little or no law enforcement. Already the BLM in California is unable to stem vandalism, theft, violence, and arson. When new roads (necessary for construction) open up even mor eremote areas, who will police them? When earthquakes, terrorist acts, or wildfire threaten the remote transmission lines, who will protect them?

Localized power generation would ensure that those who stand most to benefit from new power generation would be the ones to pay the true cost. A distrubuted power gird is also a more resilient one, less vulnerable to widespread outages.

In some situations this would require rooftop solar power, or feed-in tarrifs without caps, or multiple medium-sized projects instead of a few giant ones. But it is the right thing to do.