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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT Yuma TS-8 to San Luis 69kV Project

U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Yuma Area Office

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, and based on the following, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that implementation of the Proposed Action to construct a 69kV transmission line and the SW-3 Substation would not result in a significant impact on the quality of the human and natural environment.

The proposed project would start at Arizona Public Service's (APS) approved TS-8 Substation (located in southern Yuma, Arizona), continue to the proposed SW-3 Substation (located near County 23rd and Avenue F just east of San Luis Arizona), and end at the existing San Luis Substation. The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) provides the analysis necessary for Reclamation to make the determination in granting a right-of-use authorization to APS to cross Federal withdrawn lands. The EA should be used as a companion document to this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to provide additional transmission lines and a substation to help APS meet the energy requirements of its existing and future customers in the area south of Yuma and in the City of San Luis in southern Arizona. Due to this tremendous growth, APS's electrical infrastructure is nearing its present capacity.

The Proposed Action proposes to co-locate the new 69kV facilities within existing distribution facility rights-of-way, on single-pole structures. In addition, APS proposes to combine existing 12kV and 34.5kV transmission lines with the new 69kV transmission line, in order to consolidate facilities, where appropriate. Reclamation owns the 34.5kV line that would be co-located with the new 69kV facilities. Where not located on Federal lands, Reclamation holds the associated rights-of-way for the 34.5kV line. Yuma County Water Users Association (YCWUA), under contractual obligation to the United States, is responsible for operation and maintenance of the line.

The analysis presented in the EA focused on those resource areas identified as potentially impacted by the alternatives considered, including the No Action alternative. Those resources were aesthetics, air quality, biological, cultural resources, and noise. Based on the location and nature of the project, no effects were determined to have the potential to occur to prime and unique farmlands, Indian trust assets, socioeconomic, or present any environmental justice issues. The potential for impacts to air quality, hazardous materials, biological, and cultural resources were considered negligible because of stringent regulatory and best management practices.

Reclamation has identified several best management practices (BMPs) to minimize or avoid adverse effects that may result from the Proposed Action. A brief summary of the environmental commitments and practices committed under the EA are listed below.

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- Ensure a “dulled” or “deglared” finish on towers can be applied to reduce visibility of the transmission line in the landscape.
- The amount of traffic and vehicle speeds on dirt roads would be limited during construction activities and dust would be abated by watering or another appropriate dust-abatement measure.
- To offset impacts to the Flat-tailed Horned Lizard (FTHL), compensation will be provided in accordance with the FTHL Management Strategy Plan. Additionally, a field biological monitor and other BMP’s as described in section 3.3.3 of the EA will be provided.
- Cultural resources will be protected in accordance with section 3.4 of the EA. A determination of no historic properties affected was made by Reclamation.
- Where practical, existing access roads will be utilized to enter and exit the work area.
- A site-specific spill contingency plan will include reporting guidelines and training of employees in the use of the required equipment, in addition to proper handling and storage of potentially hazardous materials.

Based on analysis of the environmental impacts, BMPs, and environmental commitments as presented in the EA, Reclamation has concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action does not pose a significant adverse impact to the quality of the human and natural environment.

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Date