

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Rural Utilities Service

Navajo Tribal Utility Authority: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

AGENCY: Rural Utilities Service, USDA

ACTION: Notice of Finding of No Significant Impact

PROJECT NAME: Red Mesa Solar Generation Facility and Access Road Project

SUMMARY: The Rural Utilities Service (RUS) has made a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) with respect to a request for possible financing assistance to Navajo Tribal Utility Authority (NTUA) for the construction of the Red Mesa Solar Generation Facility and Access Road Project in Red Mesa, San Juan County, Utah.

FURTHER INFORMATION: To obtain copies of the Environmental Assessment (EA) and FONSI, or for further information, contact: Ms. Suzanne Kopich,

Environmental Protection Specialist, USDA/Rural Utilities Service via e-mail:

suzanne.kopich@usda.gov or by phone, 202-961-8514. A copy of the EA and FONSI

are available to review at the agency's website:

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/resources/environmental-studies/assessments>

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The proposed project consists of a 72-megawatt (MW) solar power generating facility located within the Red Mesa Chapter, a Chapter within the Navajo Nation in San Juan County, Utah. The proposed facility would cover approximately 550.13 acres on Navajo Nation lands. The Project components would include solar modules, solar inverters, a substation, transformer and electrical components. An operations and maintenance building and an access road roughly forty (40) feet wide by sixty-six (66) feet in length will also be constructed as part of the Project. Alternatives considered by RUS and NTUA include: No Action and the proposed Project. The alternatives are discussed in the Red Mesa Solar Generation Facility and Access Road Project EA. The RUS has reviewed and approved the EA for the proposed project.

The availability of the EA for public review was announced via notice in *The Independent*, a weekly newspaper, on April 5, April 6, and April 8, 2022. A 14-day comment period was announced in the newspaper notices. The public comment period started on April 5, 2022 and ended on April 18, 2022. The EA was available for public review at the USDA website. No comments were received during the public comment period.

Based on its EA and commitments made by NTUA, RUS has concluded that the project would have no significant impact (or no impacts) to water quality, wetlands, floodplains, land use, aesthetics, transportation, or human health and safety. The proposed project will have no adverse effect on resources listed or eligible for listing on the National Register

of Historic Places. The Agency has also concluded that the proposed project will not affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat thereof. The proposed project would not disproportionately affect minority and/or low-income populations.

No potentially significant impacts resulting from the proposed project have been identified. Therefore, RUS has determined that this FONSI fulfils its obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR §§ 1500-1508), and USDA Rural Development's Environmental Policies and Procedures (7 CFR Part 1970) for its action related to the project.

RUS is satisfied that the environmental impacts of the proposed project have been adequately addressed. RUS's federal action would not result in significant impacts to the quality of the human environment, and as such will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for its action related to the proposed project.

Dated: May 6, 2022