Federal Energy Corridor Designation
EIS Scoping Process
Public Meeting

Thursday, November 3, 2005
7:00 p.m.

Hilton Garden Inn
4000 North Central Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona 85012

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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Certified Court Reporter #50294
APPEARANCES:
Paul Johnson, USDA Forest Service
Jeff Holdren, U.S. Department of Interior
Jerry Pell, Ph.D., CCM, U.S. Department of Energy
Carl Rountree, Arizona Bureau of Land Management

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MR. ROUTTRE: Good evening. My name is Carl Rountree. I'm the Associate State Director for the Arizona Bureau of Land Management here in Arizona. I want to take the time to thank you all for coming out this evening and sharing your time with us to attend I think one of the last public scoping meetings for the energy corridor designation of corridors on federal lands in the 11 contiguous United States. Those lands are managed by BLM and the U.S. Forest Service.

As many of you may know, the Energy Policy Act was passed this year and one of the stipulations in the Act requires the Secretaries of Energy, Agriculture, and Interior to designate corridors for oil and gas and hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission and distribution facilities on the lands managed by federal agencies in the 11 contiguous western states.

The Act further directs the Secretaries to incorporate these designations within the land use plans or resource management plans that each of the agencies relies on in management of the many uses on their lands, and it also requires equivalent studies to be done in helping perform any environmental analyses that are necessary to complete the designation of the corridors.
For these purposes, the Department of Energy, Bureau of Land Management, and the Forest Service are in the process of preparing the West-wide Energy Corridor Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Currently when we go about considering rights-of-ways, it's usually done on a case-by-case basis, often without the benefit of prior analysis and certainly in many cases without the designation of corridors that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

The Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement is going to be taking a look at these things and evaluating programmatic-type issues with energy corridor designation as well as the first step in amending the land use plans or the existing land use plans of the federal agencies that manage those lands.

The designation of the corridors will facilitate processing of energy-related rights-of-way, applications, and the associated site-specific types of analyses. The Argon National Laboratory is assisting the Department of Interior Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service in the preparation of the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Representatives from the Department of Energy, the U.S. Forest Service, and Bureau of Land Management, as well as representatives from Argon are here this evening to
receive your comments. We certainly appreciate you taking
the time to come out and share your thoughts with and
look forward to your continued involvement in the
Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement process.

The three gentlemen on the panel are going to
be conducting the scoping session this morning -- excuse
me, evening, it's been a long day. To my immediate right
from the Department of Energy is Jerry Pell; next to him is
Paul Johnson, a representative from the Forest Service, and
on his right is Jeff Holdren from the Bureau of Land
Management Washington office. With that, I will turn it
over to Jerry.

DR. PELL: Thank you very much, Carl, I
appreciate that. As Carl mentioned, my name is Dr. Jerry
Pell, I'm with the Office of Electricity Delivery and
Energy Reliability in the Department of Energy in
Washington, we abbreviate it to just OE. As you know, in
Washington everything is either an abbreviation or acronym
or both. I'd like to give the microphone over to my
colleagues on my right first before we start, give them a
chance to make any introductory remarks they might like to
share with you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thanks, Jerry. Again, my name is
Paul Johnson and I'm representing the Forest Service here.
Normally back in Washington, I head up all the energy
initiatives for the agency and so, again, we're pleased to
be here in Phoenix and welcome to the last scoping session
meeting here, so we are looking forward to your comments.

MR. HOLDREN: Yes, I'm Jeff Holdren, Bureau of
Land Management, and this meeting is about corridor studies
and doing an environmental Environmental Impact Statement.
For BLM, corridors aren't new to us; we've been doing
right-of-way corridors through our planning systems since
the early 1970s. However, there's not a connect between
some of our own BLM offices, corridors may not line up,
plus a lot of the other federal agencies haven't been
involved in corridor planning, so there is a lot of work to
be done which hopefully through the scoping meeting,
eventual publication of the EIS, and doing our planning,
we'll be able to resolve some of these issues.

DR. PELL: Thank you both. I should mention
I've been to Arizona a number of times, both Phoenix and
Tucson, it's always a pleasure to come back, so thank you
for this opportunity to enjoy the climate here yet another
time.

I want to review a little bit of the
background. I know that Carl mentioned some of what I'm
about to say, forgive me if there's overlap, but I just
want to make sure we have this on the record. By the way,
as a housekeeping matter, if anybody had to pay for parking
this evening, we do have a validation stamp out front at
our registration desk. So if you did pay for parking, get
your parking ticket validated and you shouldn't be charged.

As Mr. Rountree mentioned, there are three
agencies that are directly involved primarily in the
preparation of this Programmatic Environmental Impact
Statement, which are the Department of Energy, the Interior
Office, the Bureau of Land Management, and Department of
Agriculture Forest Service. The Bureau of Land Management
and the Department of Energy are co-leads on the
preparation of the Programmatic Environmental Impact
Statement and the Forest Service is a cooperating agency.

We're evaluating environmental cultural issues
associated with the designation of energy corridors on
Federal lands in the 11 western states and, based upon the
results of the Environmental Impact Statement, the Bureau
of Land Management and the Forest Service would amend their
respective land use plans by designating a series of energy
corridors, which is what the Energy Policy Act legislation
specified.

Your participation, as Carl said, is very
important because we depend on you to help us define the
scope of the study, and that's precisely why we call it
public scoping, because we really do use your input to
define what should be within the scope of the report.
The specific portion of the Energy Policy Act that's involved here is Section 368, and that particular language specifies the 11 western states, federal land, and they also specify oil, gas, and hydrogen pipelines and electricity transmission and distribution facilities. And in reviewing the Congressional language, the agencies have determined that designating corridors constitutes a major federal action which may have a significant impact upon the environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA as it's better known by many of you.

And that's what led to the initiation of this Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. And I will emphasize it is indeed programmatic as opposed to what many of you may be more familiar with, which is a project-specific EIS. This will not get down to the level of specificity that you would in a project-specific document.

There are four ways for you to participate in the process and to submit your comments. It makes no difference which way you elect to use; all comments will be given equal weight. It's just a question of whichever is the more convenient and easiest for you. The four ways are coming here tonight and speaking before us, submitting your comments electronically either by e-mail or through the
Internet, regular mail, or by facsimile.

The one method I do discourage is regular mail because, as a result of the Anthrax scare that we went through in D.C., all mail coming into DOE now goes through Anthrax screening, which has two detrimental effects; one is it delays the mail about two weeks and the other is, when you get it, it often is destroyed because it uses a thermal process, I believe it’s an X-ray process, and if it’s a Xerox document, it tends to fuse the carbon particles, and when you take it out of the envelope, it’s one big fused lump. So if you’re going to send mail to us, please do so using one of the overnight services like Federal Express or Emery Air Freight or United Package Service.

MR. JOHNSON: UPS.

DR. PELL: UPS, you know what I mean. As Carl said, it’s been a long day, it’s been a long two weeks, this is my 13th day of being on the road for these meetings. So the comment period closes officially on November 28. We do take comments that come in late to the extent that they can be considered. In other words, if the analysis is still in progress, we will consider late comments, but I would encourage you to please assist us by getting your comments in by the deadline so we have benefit of your thoughts as early as possible.
And I will now lead into the presentation portion of the meeting. I would first like to ask the audience if there's anybody here that's an elected official that would like to be recognized or speak before us this evening, either federal, state, local, or Indian tribal.

Okay. Since I don't see anybody rising to the occasion, to date I have one preregistrant from this evening's meeting that indicated a desire to speak, Mr. George Fischbach with the US Army Yuma Proving Ground. If you'd care to come to the podium, please, and assist the court reporter by spelling your name for her, I'd appreciate it.

MR. GEORGE FISCHBACH: My name is Fischbach, F-I-S-C-H-B-A-C-H, George. I'm the Director of Public Works at the US Army Proving Ground in Yuma, Arizona. I'm here representing my garrison manager, who is in Washington D.C. and couldn't be here this evening. I have just a few short comments.

First of all, we are currently blessed and/or cursed, depending on how you look at it, with four electrical corridors running through Yuma Proving Ground and two gasoline corridors running through Yuma Proving Ground. We are blessed because our relationship with the agencies who have those corridors has been very, very good, they've been most cooperative, and I expect to continue to
see the cooperation as this goes forward.

We are cursed in that the corridors are tending
to crowd together to one another right now, so there isn't
a whole lot of room for expansion. Our biggest thing that
we wish to express here at this meeting this evening is
that we are very concerned that, when these corridors are
designated, that they continue to avoid interfering with
our basic mission, which is to support all of the troops
that are fighting the wars in various places.

Yuma Proving Ground is the place where
everything that goes overseas gets tested, and we do have
corridor locations that will avoid the test ranges and, if
they are used, we would be happy to entertain another
corridor through there, but putting corridors through
places that destroy our ability to test is
counterproductive. That's all I need to say. Thank you.

DR. PELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Fischbach.

You may wish to note that the Defense Department and, for
that matter, also the Department of Commerce, both of these
agencies are working with us and hopefully they will
represent your concerns to us as the work progresses. But
I very much appreciate your being with us here this
evening.

Mr. Fischbach was the only one who registered
outside. Is there anybody here that didn't register that
would like to speak? This is your occasion to share with
us your thoughts and to forever immortalize your name in a
federal document. So I would certainly encourage you to
avail yourself of the opportunity to wax poetic.

Nobody wishes to speak? I tell you what we'll
do then. If you're sure you really don't want to come to
the microphone, we'll go off the record, we'll close out
the official public transcript, and we'll just engage in Q
and A or just friendly conversation. We'll be with you for
a little while anyway and you're welcome to stay with us
and share your thoughts off the record. So with that,
having said that, I will thank my court reporter for her
assistance and we are now officially off the record.

(Adjourned at 7:15 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Deborah Moreash, RPR, Certified Court Reporter for the State of Arizona, certify:

That the proceedings had upon the foregoing public meeting are contained in the shorthand record made by me thereof and thereafter reduced to print by computer-aided transcription under my direction; and that the foregoing 12 pages constitute a full, true, and correct transcript of said shorthand record, all done to the best of my skill and ability.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am in no way related to nor employed by any of the parties hereto nor am I in any way interested in the outcome hereof.

Dated this 4th day of November, 2005.

[Signature]

DEBORAH L. MOREASH, RPR
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For the State of Arizona

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