

Dated: February 8, 1999.

William E. Burrow,

Acting Leader, Information Management Group, Office of the Chief Information Officer.

Office of Educational Research and Improvement

Type of Review: New.

Title: Research on Charter School Finances.

Frequency: On occasion.

Affected Public: Not-for-profit institutions; State, local or Tribal Gov't, SEAs or LEAs.

Reporting and Recordkeeping Hour

Burden:

Responses: 693.

Burden Hours: 671.

Abstract: This two-year study explores how state and district policies, as well as charter school practices, affect charter schools' cost-effectiveness and quality. Funding equity and adequacy are assessed. This study proposes to inform policymakers at the federal, state, and local level of the precise effects of varied approaches to charter school finance.

[FR Doc. 99-3459 Filed 2-11-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4000-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

[Docket No. PP-197]

Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and To Conduct Public Scoping Meetings and Notice of Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement; Public Service Company of New Mexico

AGENCY: Department of Energy (DOE).

ACTION: Notice of intent to prepare an environmental impact statement and to conduct public scoping meetings.

SUMMARY: Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) has applied to the Department of Energy (DOE) for a Presidential permit to construct two transmission lines originating at the switchyard of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station (PVNGS) near Phoenix, Arizona, and extending approximately 160 miles to the south along one of three alternative routes, where they would cross the United States (U.S.) border with Mexico in the vicinity of Nogales, Arizona. South of the border, the lines would extend approximately 60 miles into Mexico and terminate at an existing substation located in the City of Santa Ana, in the Mexican State of Sonora. The proposed transmission lines may be either alternating current (AC) or direct current (DC). DOE has determined that

the issuance of the Presidential permit would constitute a major Federal action that may have a significant impact upon the environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). For this reason, DOE intends to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to address reasonably foreseeable impacts from the proposed action and reasonable alternatives.

The purpose of this Notice of Intent is to inform the public about the proposed action, announce the plans for six public scoping meetings in the vicinity of the proposed transmission lines, invite public participation in the scoping process, and solicit public comments for consideration in establishing the scope and content of the EIS. Because the proposed project may involve an action in floodplains or wetlands, the EIS will include a floodplains and wetlands assessment and floodplains statement of findings in accordance with DOE regulations for compliance with floodplains and wetlands environmental review requirements (10 CFR Part 1022).

DATES: DOE invites interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public to submit comments or suggestions to assist in identifying significant environmental issues and in determining the appropriate scope of the EIS. The public scoping period starts with the publication of this Notice in the **Federal Register** and will continue until March 15, 1999. Written and oral comments will be given equal weight, and DOE will consider all comments received or postmarked by March 15, 1999, in defining the scope of this EIS. Comments received or postmarked after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

Dates for the public scoping meetings are:

1. March 8, 1999, 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Nogales, Arizona
2. March 8, 1999, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m., Tucson, Arizona
3. March 9, 1999, 2:00 to 4:00 p.m., Sells, Arizona
4. March 9, 1999, 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., Ajo, Arizona
5. March 10, 1999, 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Gila Bend, Arizona
6. March 10, 1999, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m., Casa Grande, Arizona

DOE will publish additional notices of the dates, times, and locations of the scoping meetings in local newspapers in advance of the scheduled meetings. Any necessary changes will be announced in the local media.

Requests to speak at a public scoping meeting(s) should be received by Mrs.

Ellen Russell at the address indicated below on or before March 3, 1999. Requests to speak may also be made at the time of registration for the scoping meeting(s). However, persons who submitted advance requests to speak will be given priority if time should be limited during the meeting.

ADDRESSES: Written comments or suggestions on the scope of the EIS and requests to speak at the scoping meeting(s) should be addressed to: Mrs. Ellen Russell, Office of Fossil Energy (FE-27), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-0350; phone 202-586-9624, facsimile: 202-287-5736, or electronic mail at Ellen.Russell@hq.doe.gov.

The locations of the scoping meetings are:

1. Americana Motor Hotel, 639 North Grand Avenue, Nogales, Arizona.
2. Plaza Hotel and Conference Center, 1900 E. Speedway Boulevard, Tucson, Arizona.
3. Council Chambers, Tohono O'odham Nation, Sells, Arizona.
4. Ajo Community Center in the E. S. Bud Walker Park, 290 5th Street, Ajo, Arizona.
5. Gila Bend Unified School District #24, Logan Auditorium, 308 N. Martin, Gila Bend, Arizona.
6. Francisco Grande Resort, 26000 Gila Bend Highway, Casa Grande, Arizona.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For information on the proposed project or to receive a copy of the Draft EIS when it is issued, contact Mrs. Russell at the address listed in the **ADDRESSES** section of this notice.

For general information on the DOE NEPA review process, contact: Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW., Washington, DC 20585-0119; Phone: 202-586-4600 or leave a message at 800-472-2756; Facsimile: 202-586-7031.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background and Need for Agency Action

Executive Order 10485, as amended by Executive Order 12038, requires that a Presidential permit be issued by DOE before electric transmission facilities may be constructed, connected, operated, or maintained at the U.S. international border. The Executive Order provides that a Presidential permit may be issued after a finding that the proposed project is consistent with the public interest. In determining

consistency with the public interest, DOE considers the impacts of the project on the reliability of the U.S. electric power system and on the environment. The regulations implementing the Executive Order have been codified at 10 CFR §§ 205.320–205.329. Issuance of the permit indicates that there is no Federal objection to the project, but does not mandate that the project be completed.

On December 28, 1998, PNM, a regulated public utility, filed an application for a Presidential permit with the Office of Fossil Energy of DOE. PNM proposes to construct two transmission lines on a single right-of-way extending approximately 160 miles from the switchyard adjacent to the PVNGS, located approximately 30 miles west of Phoenix, Arizona, to the U.S.-Mexico border in the vicinity of Nogales, Arizona. South of the border, PNM would extend the lines approximately 60 miles to the Santa Ana Substation, located in the City of Santa Ana, Sonora, Mexico, and owned by the Comision Federal de Electricidad (CFE), the national electric utility of Mexico.

In its application, PNM states that it is considering designing the transmission lines for either AC or DC operation. PNM also states in its application that it may use a phased approach for construction; i.e., one line might be installed initially and the second line added some time in the future.

If the AC option is chosen, a back-to-back AC/DC/AC converter station would be constructed within the U.S. in the vicinity of the U.S.-Mexico border. The AC transmission line(s) would be operated at 345 kV between the PVNGS and the back-to-back converter station and at 230 kV between the converter station and CFE's Santa Ana Substation. Each line would have an electrical transfer capability of approximately 400 megawatts (MW). If a phased approach is used, the two lines would be constructed on two separate sets of support structures, but on the same right-of-way. If both AC lines are constructed at the same time, both electrical circuits would be installed on a single set of support structures.

If the DC option is selected, an AC/DC converter station would be installed at each end of the proposed line(s); i.e., within or near the PVNGS in the U.S., and at the Santa Ana Substation in Mexico. If PNM elects to use a phased approach, the DC line would initially be operated as a mono-pole DC line (one conductor) and have a nominal operating voltage of ± 400 kV, with an electrical transfer capability of between

400 MW and 500 MW. With the addition of the second line (second conductor), the resulting interconnection would be upgraded to bi-pole ± 400 kV operation, with a transfer capability of between 800 MW and 1000 MW.

PNM has identified three alternative corridors for construction of the cross-border transmission lines. Each of the three proposed alternative corridors begins at the PVNGS switchyard and is approximately two miles wide. However, when constructed, the transmission lines are expected to use a right-of-way of no more than 150 to 200 feet in width. The first alternative corridor extends south from the PVNGS switchyard approximately 130 miles within the U.S. to the U.S.-Mexico border, crossing the Barry M. Goldwater Air Force Range and the western boundary of the Tohono O'odham Nation. The second alternative corridor proceeds slightly east and south from the PVNGS switchyard and extends approximately 160 miles within the U.S., crossing the middle to eastern area of the Tohono O'odham Nation. The third alternative corridor extends southeasterly from the PVNGS switchyard to an area south of Tucson, Arizona, where it turns south to Nogales, Arizona. This corridor is approximately 250 miles long within the U.S. Each of the three proposed alternative corridors would cross approximately 25 linear miles of 100-year floodplains.

Project activities would include clearing rights-of-way and access roads, digging tower footings, setting transmission towers, hanging transmission wires, and modifying existing substation(s).

The PNM application, including associated maps and drawings, can be downloaded in its entirety from the Fossil Energy web site (www.fe.doe.gov); choose regulatory programs, then electricity regulations, then pending proceedings). PNM states that there are no firm contracts in place for the sale of power to Mexico using the proposed transmission lines. Prior to commencing electricity exports to Mexico using the proposed lines, PNM, or any other electricity exporter, must obtain an electricity export authorization from DOE pursuant to section 202(e) of the Federal Power Act.

Identification of Environmental Issues

A purpose of this notice is to solicit comments and suggestions for consideration in the preparation of the EIS. As background for public comment, this notice contains a list of potential environmental issues that DOE has

tentatively identified for analysis. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive or to imply any predetermination of impacts. Following is a preliminary list of issues that may be analyzed in the EIS:

(1) Socioeconomic impacts of development of the land tracts and their subsequent uses;

(2) Impacts to protected, threatened, endangered, or sensitive species of animals or plants, or their critical habitats;

(3) Impacts to floodplains and wetlands;

(4) Impacts to cultural or historic resources;

(5) Impacts to human health and safety;

(6) Impacts on air, soil, and water;

(7) Visual impacts;

(8) Disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority and low-income populations; and

(9) Environmental impacts within Mexico.

The EIS will also consider alternatives to the proposed transmission lines, including, to the extent practicable:

(1) No Action Alternative: The EIS will analyze the impacts associated with "no action." Since the proposed action is the issuance of a Presidential permit for the construction of the proposed transmission lines, "no action" means that the permit would not be issued. However, not issuing the permit would not necessarily imply maintenance of the status quo. It is possible that the applicant and/or the Mexican government may take other actions if the proposed transmission lines are not built. The No Action Alternative will address the environmental impacts that are reasonably foreseeable to occur if the Presidential permit is not issued.

(2) Construction of a powerplant in the U.S. closer to the U.S.-Mexico border with a shorter transmission line extending to the border, an alternative concept for supplying electric power to the target region.

Scoping Process

Interested parties are invited to participate in the scoping process both to refine the preliminary alternatives and environmental issues to be analyzed in depth, and to eliminate from detailed study those alternatives and environmental issues that are not significant or pertinent. The scoping process is intended to involve all interested agencies (Federal, state, county, and local), public interest groups, Native American Tribes, businesses, and members of the public. Potential Federal cooperating agencies include the U.S. Department of the

Interior (including the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Fish and Wildlife Service), the U.S. Air Force, the International Boundary and Water Commission, and the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Public scoping meetings will be held at the locations, dates, and times indicated above under the **DATES** and **ADDRESSES** sections. These scoping meetings will be informal and conducted as discussions between attendees and DOE. The DOE presiding officer will establish only those procedures needed to ensure that everyone who wishes to speak has a chance to do so and that DOE understands all issues and comments. Speakers will be allocated approximately 10 minutes for their oral statements. Depending upon the number of persons wishing to speak, DOE may allow longer times for representatives of organizations. Consequently, persons wishing to speak on behalf of an organization should identify that organization in their request to speak. Persons who have not submitted a request to speak in advance may register to speak at the scoping meeting(s), but advance requests are encouraged. Should any speaker desire to provide for the record further information that cannot be presented within the designated time, such additional information may be submitted in writing by the date listed in the **DATES** section. Both oral and written comments will be considered and given equal weight by DOE. Meetings will begin at the times specified and will continue until all those present who wish to participate have had an opportunity to do so.

Draft EIS Schedule and Availability

The Draft EIS is scheduled for completion by October 1999, at which time its availability will be announced in the **Federal Register** and public comments again will be solicited.

Those individuals who do not wish to submit comments or suggestions at this time but who would like to receive a copy of the Draft EIS for review and comment when it is issued should notify Mrs. Russell at the address above.

The Draft EIS will be made available for public inspection at several public libraries or reading rooms in Arizona. A notice of these locations will be provided in the **Federal Register** at a later date.

Issued in Washington, DC, on February 9, 1999.

Peter N. Brush,

*Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary,
Environment, Safety and Health.*

[FR Doc. 99-3508 Filed 2-11-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board, Nevada Test Site

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: Pursuant to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463, 86 Stat. 770) notice is hereby given of the following Advisory Committee meeting: Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB), Nevada Test Site.

DATES: Wednesday, March 3, 1999: 5:30 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

ADDRESSES: U.S. Department of Energy, Nevada Support Facility, Great Basin Room, 232 Energy Way, North Las Vegas, Nevada.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kevin Rohrer, U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Environmental Management, P.O. Box 98518, Las Vegas, Nevada 89193-8513, phone: 702-295-0197.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Purpose of the Board: The purpose of the Advisory Board is to make recommendations to DOE and its regulators in the areas of environmental restoration, waste management, and related activities.

Tentative Agenda

5:30 p.m.—Call to Order
5:40 p.m.—Presentations
7:00 p.m.—Public Comment/Questions
7:30 p.m.—Break
7:45 p.m.—Review Action Items
8:00 p.m.—Approve Meeting Minutes
8:10 p.m.—Committee Reports
8:45 p.m.—Public Comment
9:00 p.m.—Adjourn

Copies of the final agenda will be available at the meeting.

Public Participation: The meeting is open to the public. Written statements may be filed with the Committee either before or after the meeting. Individuals who wish to make oral statements pertaining to agenda items should contact Kevin Rohrer, at the telephone number listed above. Requests must be received 5 days prior to the meeting and reasonable provision will be made to include the presentation in the agenda. The Designated Federal Officer is

empowered to conduct the meeting in a fashion that will facilitate the orderly conduct of business.

Minutes: The minutes of this meeting will be available for public review and copying at the Freedom of Information Public Reading Room, 1E-190, Forrestal Building, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday-Friday, except Federal holidays. Minutes will also be available by writing to Kevin Rohrer at the address listed above.

Issued at Washington, DC, on February 8, 1999.

Rachel M. Samuel,

Deputy Advisory Committee Management Officer.

[FR Doc. 99-3553 Filed 2-11-99; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board, Monticello Site

AGENCY: Department of Energy.

ACTION: Notice of open meeting.

SUMMARY: This notice announces a meeting of the Environmental Management Site-Specific Advisory Board (EM SSAB), Monticello. The Federal Advisory Committee Act (Pub. L. 92-463, 86 Stat. 770) requires that public notice of these meetings be announced in the **Federal Register**.

DATE AND TIME: Wednesday, February 17, 1999; 7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.

ADDRESS: San Juan County Courthouse, 2nd Floor Conference Room, 117 South Main, Monticello, Utah 84535.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Audrey Berry, Public Affairs Specialist, Department of Energy, Grand Junction Projects Office, P.O. Box 2567, Grand Junction, CO, 81502 (970) 248-7727.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: *Purpose of the Board:* The purpose of the Board is to advise DOE and its regulators in the areas of environmental restoration, waste management, and related activities.

Tentative Agenda: Updates on repository; Monticello surface and groundwater; reports from subcommittees on local training and hiring; and health and safety, and future land use.

Public Participation: The meeting is open to the public. Written statements may be filed with the Committee either before or after the meeting. Individuals who wish to make oral statements pertaining to agenda items should contact Audrey Berry's office at the