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Public Meetings Set for Proposed Ocotillo Express Wind Project in Imperial County

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) announced today public meetings as part of the environmental review process for a wind energy project in Imperial County, Calif. The meetings will be held Wednesday, Aug. 24, and Thursday, Aug. 25, in El Centro and Ocotillo. The Wednesday meeting will be in the City of El Centro Chamber Room, 1275 Main St., El Centro, Calif.; the Thursday meeting will be held in the Ocotillo Community Center, 266 West Imperial Hwy, Ocotillo, Calif. Both meetings begin at 6 p.m.

Ocotillo Express LLC has applied to the BLM for a right-of-way on public lands to construct a wind generation power plant facility approximately five miles west of Ocotillo that could generate up to 465 megawatts, enough to power about 140,000 homes.

The project would be located on 12,436 acres of mostly BLM-managed public land. A small portion of the project is located on lands under the jurisdiction of Imperial County. In addition to wind turbines, related structures would include transmission lines, a substation, storage yard, office space, and an operation/maintenance shop space.

The BLM and Imperial County have prepared a joint draft California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment and draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report to analyze the site-specific impacts of the proposed project. The document, which may be viewed online at: <http://blm.gov/jqjd>, analyzes the site-specific impacts on air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, water resources, geological resources and hazards, hazardous materials handling, land use, noise, visual resources.

Public comments will be accepted for 90 days, ending Oct. 5, 2011. During the comment period, the BLM and the county will solicit public comment on issues, concerns, potential impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures that should be addressed in the final analysis of the proposed action.

Further details on the proposed wind energy project can be found at the website listed above, or by contacting Cedric Perry at (951) 697-5388, or e-mail caocotillo@blm.gov.