

RESOLUTION 2011-18
RESOLUTION DECLARING CONDITIONAL SUPPORT OF THE SUNZIA
SOUTHWEST TRANSMISSION PROJECT

WHEREAS, New Mexico is rich in renewable energy resources, and state and local communities stand to benefit greatly from the creation of new jobs, economic development, and resulting revenues from taxes and the necessary provision of local governmental services; and

WHEREAS, the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project (SunZia) proposes to construct up to two high voltage 500 kV electrical transmission lines and related interconnecting substations within an area lying between central Arizona and central New Mexico, which will provide new delivery capacity for existing and developing renewable energy resources, primarily wind, solar and geothermal projects in New Mexico; and

WHEREAS, New Mexico's renewable energy development resources are located primarily in the central and southern part of the state where available transmission capacity is extremely limited, and SunZia will provide up to 4,500 megawatts of needed transmission capacity; and

WHEREAS, the existence of SunZia creates an opportunity for the development and construction of future wind and solar generation projects and related jobs that would otherwise not occur without transmission lines; and

WHEREAS, renewable energy projects are good for the environment and help to minimize our dependence upon foreign oil, reduce air pollution and diversify energy generation sources; and

WHEREAS, SunZia has submitted a right-of-way application to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the project and BLM is currently preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); and

WHEREAS, the EIS will provide a detailed analysis of potential environmental impacts of the project and a range of mitigation measures to such impacts, including numerous reasonable routing alternatives; and

WHEREAS, the BLM has conducted nine public scoping meetings in New Mexico and fourteen total scoping meetings throughout SunZia's study area, has expanded the project study area on three occasions and extended the length of the initial scoping period to address initial public and military comments, has held other community meetings to request public input and identify possible issues of concern that may result from the project and more public meetings will be held after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is released by the BLM for public review and comment; and

WHEREAS, the BLM is seeking comments on specific issues and concerns related to alternative routes for the project's transmission facilities, affected environmental resources, or related matters; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Defense has provided input on alternative routes to the BLM, and has indicated that the most northerly route alternative through Lincoln County would not conflict with their military missions in and around the White Sands Missile Range; and

WHEREAS, SunZia has expressed a willingness to accommodate the Department of Defense by agreeing to the most northerly route alternative through Lincoln County, in the event that such northerly route is selected and identified by the BLM as part of the preferred project route in the EIS; and

WHEREAS, statements from local governing bodies such as this County Commission are very important to development of a complete record for the EIS.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that this County Commission encourages the development of renewable energy generation and transmission projects in the state of New Mexico, and when possible specifically within Lincoln County; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this County Commission supports the construction and operation of additional transmission infrastructure to provide capacity for New Mexico's renewable energy projects; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this County Commission urges the BLM to include the most northerly route through Lincoln County in the preferred project route identified in the EIS; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in the event the most northerly route through Lincoln County is part of the preferred project route identified by the BLM in the EIS, that the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners endorses the construction and operation of the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, and urges all cooperating agencies to judiciously expedite SunZia's EIS in order to expand regional economic development opportunities in New Mexico, by creating the necessary transmission capacity to deliver New Mexico's renewable energy resources to western customers and markets.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED this 20th day of December 2011.

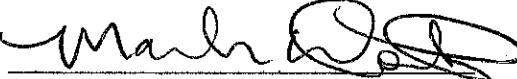
**Board of Commissioners
Lincoln County, State of New Mexico**


Eileen Sedillo, Chair

Kathryn Minter, Member

Tom Battin, Member


Jackie Powell, Vice Chair


Mark Doth, Member

ATTEST:

Rhonda Burrows, County Clerk

