



SunZia Southwest Transmission Project Landowner Outreach

Overview of the SunZia Project

The SunZia project consists of two electric transmission lines spanning parts of New Mexico and Arizona. When completed, the 520-mile transmission project will provide an opportunity to deliver up to 4,500 MW of renewable energy from New Mexico and Arizona to homes, offices and communities in the Southwestern United States. Renewable wind and solar energy projects: do not deplete resources over time, have no fuel costs, do not consume precious groundwater and, once in operation, do not release greenhouse gases.

As the country accelerates its transition to rely on greater amounts of clean and renewable energy, the SunZia team is working expeditiously to accomplish the next phase in the development process. SunZia has spent the last 15 years working with landowners, communities and governmental entities to establish the most environmentally responsible and efficient routing on which to construct and operate the SunZia project.

Landowner Engagement

Engaging with landowners is a critical part of our process and is used to help inform us about routing alternatives. Our real property team works closely with landowners to ensure fair compensation for right-of-way easements and ensure that the project's construction and operations results in the least possible impacts to their farming and ranching operations.

Creating and maintaining dialogue with SunZia stakeholders is our priority. We value the land and the landowners who are helping us do our part in creating a future powered by renewable energy.

Development & Planning

SunZia is committed to minimizing the impacts of our transmission project to the environment in which we operate. How the SunZia transmission line is constructed and maintained on private and public lands is an important consideration. Scientists have invested over 11,000 field hours collecting cultural, biological and paleontological data within and around the project area. This data, and biological and wildlife studies, have assisted the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in its environmental review process to reach a routing determination

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a transmission line?

Transmission lines flow electricity from one location to another enabling power needs to be met throughout the country. They also create an electric high voltage grid network that provides enough redundancy to virtually eliminate widespread power outages resulting from many different causes. Transmission lines provide the opportunity for renewable energy to be transported from rural areas, where it is normally generated, to urban areas where energy it is consumed.

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Why do we need transmission lines?

Transmission lines simply carry electricity over large distances with minimum energy losses or disruption. Without transmission lines, the energy has no way of connecting wind farms or solar projects to homes and businesses.

How does SunZia partner with landowners?

Based on the route, which is largely determined by the BLM, SunZia's property team respectfully works with landowners to discuss specific site concerns or other issues to determine the best path forward to secure the necessary easements. SunZia strives to negotiate truthfully and honestly and to arrive at compensation agreements with owners that are fair and equitable.

What is a right-of-way?

A right-of-way is a legal arrangement to allow use of a portion of property for a specific purpose, such as an easement for a transmission line or access road.

Are transmission lines able to span waterways and wetlands?

Yes, often the span of a transmission line between structures is long enough that transmission structures can be placed to avoid sensitive areas like wetlands and bodies of water.

Can landowners install fencing within the easement right-of-way?

Yes, provided that SunZia continues to have access to the transmission line for operation and maintenance.

Can farming and ranching continue in the easement area or under the line?

Yes, SunZia will acquire easements, but the land will still belong to the landowners and can be used for farming, grazing, outdoor recreation and other activities that do not interfere with the operation of the line. Permanent housing or other structures cannot be constructed or occupied in the easement area due to the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) requirements. Less than one percent of the total transmission easement area for the project will be occupied by structure footprints.

What can be planted in the easement area?

Crops less than 10 feet tall may be grown safely under SunZia's transmission lines. The easement area can also be used for pasture and grazing lands. SunZia must comply with the requirements of the NESC and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation. These standards place restrictions on vegetation height within the transmission line easement area.

Can hunting occur near the transmission line or within the right-of-way?

Hunting is one of the many compatible outdoor recreational activities that can occur within and adjacent to the transmission line right-of-way.

Who do I contact if I am interested in learning more about SunZia and proposed routing in New Mexico?

Landowner specific questions can be directed to Leon Porter, lporter@southwesternpower.com and/or Lorelee Hunt, lhunt@southwesternpower.com. General project questions can be directed to John Ryan, jryan@southwesternpower.com.