

STATE OF NEW MEXICO
HIDALGO COUNTY

COMMISSIONERS

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RICHARD CHAIRES



COUNTY MANAGER

JOSE J. SALAZAR

April 21, 2012

Secretary Ken Salazar
US Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington DC 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

I write to express my support for your Department's continued and thorough review of the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project's application to build up to two major high-voltage transmission lines in southern and central portions of New Mexico. The SunZia Project would enable New Mexico to continue our strong heritage of supplying energy resources to our Nation while also strengthening the region's vital electricity infrastructure.

The Bureau of Land Management is conducting a complete environmental review, while the Pentagon has determined that the SunZia Project is compatible with military missions in the Project area. **An area of concern is the time the BLM is taking to release the draft Environmental Impact Statement, as we understand the draft was due to be released last year.**

We need the jobs that New Mexico State University estimates that SunZia will bring to New Mexico during the construction and operation of the Project. Additionally, SunZia will enable thousands more jobs as it attracts electricity generators to New Mexico. Electricity generation enabled by SunZia will contribute millions of new property tax dollars to depleted county treasuries.

The Project will help New Mexico's school children since much of the Project will be located on New Mexico State Trust Lands. Lease revenues generated on those lands are dedicated to public education.

The SunZia Project would enable needed jobs and revenues, strengthen the region's electricity grid, maintain military mission, and open-up electricity markets to new electricity generation projects inside my state.

I would like to ask your assistance by encouraging the BLM to move the review process ahead to enable us to benefit while there are still renewable energy prospects looking in our area to build. I thank you in advance for understanding what the renewables mean to us.

Sincerely,



Richard Chaires
Hidalgo County Commission Chair