



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

November 23, 2009

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0002

Dear Honorable Secretary Salazar:

Thank you for your efforts to advance the development of renewable energy resources in the United States. The transformation of the nation's energy economy toward a low-carbon future is among the most urgent challenges we confront and the State of New Mexico stands ready to do its part in this transformation.

New Mexico is blessed with an abundance of world-class renewable energy resources. The development of those resources – including wind, solar, and geothermal – will enable New Mexico to diversify its fossil fuel-based energy economy. Our state has adopted a number of incentives to stimulate such development including a 20% by 2020 renewable portfolio standard and a renewable energy production tax credit. Because we need expanded electricity transmission capacity to move renewable energy produced here to markets outside the state, we also created the nation's first renewable energy transmission authority to help address transmission constraints in our state and the region.

The Bureau of Land Management is leading an extensive environmental review for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project. SunZia is proposing a 500-kilovolt interstate transmission project that will provide up to 3,000 megawatts of needed transmission capacity from New Mexico to Western markets and customers. SunZia is the leading proposed transmission project that could provide access to the state's valuable wind and solar resources currently stranded due to lack of transmission capacity.

The BLM's environmental review of SunZia's proposed 460-mile route is considering over 2,000-miles of alternate routes within its study area in order to find the most appropriate route with the protections needed for Wilderness Study Areas, the Rio Grande Bosque, and other concerns. The environmental review of this project is well under way, and the time has come for a collaborative process with stakeholders including landowners, conservation and environmental groups, state and county government entities, and federal agencies including the Department of

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Defense, meeting with the developers. Together, we must ensure that the legal and regulatory processes that protect our environment can also produce a successful decision for an important project in a timely manner.

I pledge the State of New Mexico's full cooperation in BLM's environmental review of SunZia. I believe this project may bring significant benefits to New Mexico, the West, and the country. Please include this letter in the record of the environmental review of SunZia's project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Richardson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Bill Richardson
Governor of New Mexico

BR/fl

cc: Linda Rundell, BLM New Mexico State Director