SUMMARY: In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (NEPA), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, as amended (FLPMA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has prepared a Proposed California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan Amendment/Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Alta East Wind Project (Project), and by this notice is announcing its availability.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
[CACA—052537, LLCADO05000, Ls1010000.LYRWBF1184520.FX0000]

Notice of Availability of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Alta East Wind Project, Kern County, CA, and Proposed Land Use Plan Amendment

AGENCY: Bureau of Land Management, Interior.

ACTION: Notice of availability.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Wanda Tate, Office of Trade Relations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW., Room 3.5A, Washington, DC 20229.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the words “Department of Homeland Security” and the docket number for this action. Comments received will be posted without alteration at http://www.regulations.gov, including any personal information provided. Do not submit personal information to this docket.

Docket: For access to the docket to read background documents or comments received by the COAC, go to http://www.regulations.gov.

There will be two public comment periods held during the meeting on March 6, 2013. Speakers are requested to limit their comments to two (2) minutes or less to facilitate greater participation. Contact the individual listed below to register as a speaker.

Please note that the public comment period for speakers may end before the time indicated on the schedule that is posted on the CBP Web page at the time of the meeting.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Wanda Tate, Office of Trade Relations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW., Room 3.5A, Washington, DC 20229; telephone 202–344–1440; facsimile 202–325–4290.

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acres are on public land under the jurisdiction of the BLM and 568 acres are on private land under the jurisdiction of Kern County. The Project, if approved, would require approximately 418 acres of the private land portion of the Project site to be rezoned to be consistent with the Kern County Zoning Ordinance Wind Energy Combining District.

The BLM’s purpose and need for the Project is to respond to AWD’s application for a ROW grant to construct, operate, maintain, and decommission a wind-energy generation facility on public lands in compliance with FLPMA, BLM ROW regulations, and other applicable requirements. The BLM will decide whether to grant, grant with modification, or deny a ROW on public lands to AWD for the proposed Project. The BLM is proposing to amend the CDCA Plan by designating the project area as either available or unavailable for wind-energy projects. The CDCA Plan (1980, as amended), while recognizing the potential compatibility of wind-energy generation facilities with other uses on public lands, requires that all sites proposed for power generation or transmission not already identified in the plan be considered through the plan amendment process. In order for the BLM to grant a ROW for this Project, the CDCA Plan would need to be amended.

In addition to the proposed action (106 turbines) and a no action alternative, the BLM is analyzing an alternative layout configuration and two reduced footprint (97 and 87 turbines) alternatives. The proposed plan amendment/final EIS also analyzes two “no project” alternatives that reject the Project but amend the CDCA Plan to find the project area either (1) suitable for future wind energy generation projects; or (2) unsuitable for future wind energy generation projects. The BLM has selected Alternative C (97 turbines) as the preferred alternative in the proposed plan amendment/final EIS.

The proposed plan amendment/final EIS evaluates the potential impacts of the Project and the cumulative effects on air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, biological resources including Golden Eagles and California Condors, special status species, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use, noise, recreation, traffic, visual resources, lands with wilderness characteristics, and areas with high potential for renewable energy development. A Notice of Availability of the draft proposed plan amendment/final EIS environmental impact report (EIR) for the Project was published on June 29, 2012 followed by a BLM/Kern County joint public meeting on August 1, 2012 in Mojave, California. A Notice of Intent to prepare a plan amendment/EIS/EIR for the Project was published in the Federal Register on July 15, 2011 (76 FR 41817) followed by a joint public scoping meeting with Kern County in Mojave, California, on August 4, 2011. The County completed its California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process and has already certified its EIR for the Project. For additional information about or copies of the Project’s certified EIR, interested members of the public should contact Kern County. As a result of the County’s certification of the EIR, the BLM is releasing its final EIS document as a NEPA document; it is no longer a joint NEPA/CEQA document.

Comments on the draft plan amendment/EIS/EIR received from the public and internal BLM review were considered and incorporated as appropriate into the proposed plan amendment/final EIS. Public comments resulted in the addition of clarifying text, but did not significantly change proposed actions or land use plan decisions analyzed here.

Instructions for filing a protest with the BLM Director regarding the proposed plan amendment/final EIS may be found in the “Dear Reader” Letter of the proposed plan amendment/final EIS and at 43 CFR 1610.5–2. Emailed and faxed protests will not be accepted as valid protests unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the emailed or faxed protest as an advance copy and it will receive full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct faxed or emailed protests to the attention of the BLM protest coordinator at 202–245–0028 or bhudgens@blm.gov.

All protests must be in writing and mailed to the appropriate address, as set forth in the ADDRESSES section above. Before including your phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your protest, you should be aware that your entire protest—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your protest to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.