



September 17, 2010

Dear Reader:

The Department of Energy (DOE) invites comments on the enclosed document, *Draft Environmental Assessment for the West Tennessee Solar Farm Project Haywood County, Tennessee* (Solar Farm). The draft environmental assessment (EA) can also be found on DOE's National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL) website, <http://www.netl.doe.gov/publications/others/nepa/ea.html>.

DOE adopted the draft EA in accordance with the Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and DOE's NEPA implementing procedures (10 CFR Part 1021). It evaluates the potential environmental impacts of DOE allowing Tennessee to use some of its American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds received through the State Energy Program (SEP) for construction and operation of the Solar Farm. Tennessee plans to install and operate a 5 to 10-megawatt photovoltaic array including required utility transmission lines. As a connected action, a Tennessee Department of Transportation Information and Welcome Center would be constructed adjacent to the Solar Farm.

DOE's proposed action is to allow Tennessee to provide \$31 million of the state's ARRA SEP funds to the Solar Farm project. Estimated initial development and installation costs for the array are \$27.8 million. Any balance in funding would be used to increase the array above the 5-megawatt minimum and conduct education and outreach activities associated with the Solar Farm.

The preliminary draft EA was prepared by consultants at the direction of Tennessee. The document was provided to DOE, which is soliciting public comments on it. DOE intends to review, edit, and, if appropriate, adopt the document for purposes of NEPA.

The draft EA evaluates the resource areas DOE commonly addresses in EAs and identified no significant adverse environmental impacts from DOE's proposed action or Tennessee's proposed project. The project could result in beneficial impacts to the nation's energy efficiency and the local economy and air quality. Operating this renewable energy project would not generate carbon dioxide and could result in a decrease in carbon dioxide emissions from regional power plants. In addition, there would be small, positive socioeconomic impacts from the expenditures for the project.

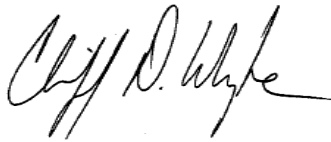
A Notice of Availability will be published in the *Jackson Sun* and the *Fayette Falcon* on September 22, 2010, and the *Brownsville States Graphic* on September 23, 2010 to announce the beginning of the public review and comment period. As stated in the notice, comments should be marked "West TN Solar Draft EA Comments" and sent to:

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Individual names and addresses, including email addresses, received as part of the comment documents, normally are considered part of the public record. Persons wishing to withhold names, addresses, or other identifying information from the public record must state this request prominently at the beginning of their comments. DOE will honor this request to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations, businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses will be included in the public record and open to public inspection in their entirety.

The public comment period ends on October 22, 2010. DOE will consider late submissions to the extent practicable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cliff D. Whyte". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cliff Whyte  
NEPA Document Manager