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Industry News Alert

Solar Race Heats Up the West Coast

SUGAR LAND--July 21, 2009--Researched by Industrial Info Resources (Sugar Land, Texas)--With the Department of Interior's move last month to speed up the development of commercial-size [solar projects](#) on federal lands, states like New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada and California are actively pursuing opportunities within the solar sector. The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) office in Santa Fe, New Mexico, recently told Industrial Info that it has tracked a rise in application submissions for solar projects since the announcement by the Department of Interior. Such applications take some time to process, as certain size projects only need to clear permitting with the BLM and the county, but larger solar projects have to clear permitting with the state public utilities commission as well. Sources from the BLM informed Industrial Info that the permitting process usually takes about 18 months at best.

During the past two years, developers of all sizes have submitted applications for both small and large solar projects to be developed across 1.8 million acres of federally held land, while an official review of the use of federal lands will not be completed until the end of next year. Solar development on other private and publicly held lands is also moving forward and picking up pace.

There is currently more than 10,000 megawatts (MW) of solar generation being developed throughout the United States. The state of California is home to more than 60% of this development and currently has 957 MW of solar generation in operation. The state of Nevada has more than 1,100 MW in development, with 74 MW of operational solar generation. Arizona has 7 MW of solar generation with more than 2,000 MW in development. Finally, the state of New Mexico, which has more than 300 days of sunshine per year, actually has no commercial operational solar generation facilities at this time, and only approximately 120 MW of solar generation under development. With several initiatives and the current administration's push for more renewable energy generation, we will see large increases in commercial solar generation throughout the country.

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