Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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WASHINGTON - Assistant Secretary -Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn issued a Record of Decision this week to approve an application submitted by the Ewiiaapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians to lease up to 720 acres of reservation land to Tule Wind, LLC, for a portion of the Tule Wind Energy Project located near San Diego, California.

The lease approval will allow the Ewiiaapaayp Band, which is located in Alpine, California, to move forward with the construction, maintenance, and operation of up to 20 wind turbines and related facilities on the tribe's trust lands.

The Tule Wind Project is a significant renewable energy project involving several governmental actors in addition to the Ewiiaapaayp tribal government. A total of 128 wind turbines are proposed for the entire project. In addition to turbines on the reservation land, additional turbines would be sited on lands of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the State of California, and San Diego County. These federal, state and county lands are all located in the McCain Valley.

The tribe submitted the lease agreement in 2010 for approval by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), which has jurisdiction over Federal Indian trust lands. An Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) was prepared pursuant to both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The BLM served as the Lead Federal Agency in drafting the Tule Wind Energy Project EIR/EIS and the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) served as the Lead State Agency. The project proponent/applicant must comply with all applicable federal laws and will apply for an eagle take permit under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act.

Assistant Secretary Washburn issued the Record of Decision on Monday, December 16, 2013. The Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs oversees the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED), which implements the Indian Energy Resource Development Program under Title V of the Energy Policy Act of 2005. IEED's mission is to foster stronger American Indian and Alaska Native communities by helping federally recognized tribes developing their renewable and non-renewable energy and mineral resources. For more information about IEED programs and services, visit the Indian Affairs website at http://www.indianaffairs.gov/WhoWeAre/AS-IA/IEED/index.htm