

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION®

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR UTILITY-SCALE SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

The National Trust for Historic Preservation fully supports efforts to expand our nation's renewable energy portfolio. We recognize that federal public lands will play a significant role in the development of these resources. Federal land managers, project proponents and the interested public have an opportunity to work together to advance our renewable energy goals while protecting the nation's sensitive historic and cultural resources. The National Trust is committed to contributing significantly to this process and proposes the following strategies:

INVENTORY

- Conduct early and thorough consultation with Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations in order to avoid impacts to properties of traditional religious and cultural significance.
- Complete early Sec. 110 and Sec. 106 cultural resource surveys of areas with high potential to produce commercial utility-scale solar energy in order to avoid impacts to significant cultural resources. If impacts are unavoidable, use survey findings to help identify the best measures for first, minimizing and second, mitigating impacts.



SITING

- Locate solar developments on land that has already been disturbed (e.g., brownfields) and does not contain significant historic or cultural resources. Once disturbed, desert landscapes cannot be restored to their natural conditions; they are lost forever.
- Locate solar developments as close as possible to existing energy corridors in order to minimize impacts of transmission infrastructure to cultural resources.
- Exclude from development lands that have been designated or acquired by the federal government for the purpose of conserving cultural resources, including, but not limited to, units of the National Park System, units of the National Landscape Conservation System, National Monuments, National Historic Trails, National Historic Byways, National Historic Landmarks, National Historic and Archaeological Districts, National Heritage Areas, Archaeological Areas, Areas designated by Congress for the purpose of protecting cultural resources, Traditional Cultural Properties, Sacred Sites identified by Executive Order 13007 and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern.
- Provide adequate buffers between solar developments and areas excluded from development in order to minimize visual impacts, including those to resource viewsheds.



TECHNOLOGY

- Support the use of current technologies and the development of future technologies that have the least physical and visual impacts to cultural resources (e.g., sited on un-graded landscapes; dispersed).
- Include stipulations in federal public land leases that, in ecologically feasible areas, require applicants to restore landscapes altered by renewable energy development to a natural state after termination of use.



For More Information: Denise Ryan, Program Manager for Public Lands Policy, 202-588-6347 or Barbara Pahl, Director of the Mountains/Plains Office, 303-623-1504; www.preservationnation.org/issues/public-lands