

CATEGORY 1

REGULATORY INFORMATION DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM (RIDS)

ACCESSION NBR:9811030106 DOC.DATE: 98/10/26 NOTARIZED: NO DOCKET #

FACIL:STN-50-528 Palo Verde Nuclear Station, Unit 1, Arizona Publi 05000528

STN-50-529 Palo Verde Nuclear Station, Unit 2, Arizona Publi 05000529

STN-50-530 Palo Verde Nuclear Station, Unit 3, Arizona Publi 05000530

AUTH.NAME AUTHOR AFFILIATION

RUSSELL, E. Energy, Dept. of

RECIP.NAME RECIPIENT AFFILIATION

ESSIG, T.H.

SUBJECT: Extends invitation to participate in preparation of EIS as either contributor in area of expertise or cooperating agency to insure that any Federal jurisdiction NRC may have by law will be adequately addressed in document.

DISTRIBUTION CODE: A001D COPIES RECEIVED: LTR 1 ENCL 1 SIZE: 6

TITLE: OR Submittal: General Distribution

NOTES: STANDARDIZED PLANT 05000528

Standardized plant. 05000529

Standardized plant. 05000530

	RECIPIENT ID CODE/NAME	COPIES LTTR ENCL	RECIPIENT ID CODE/NAME	COPIES LTTR ENCL
	PD4-2 LA	1 1	PD4-2 PD	1 1
	FIELDS, M	1 1		
INTERNAL:	ACRS	1 1	<u>FILE CENTER</u> 01	1 1
	NRR/DE/ECGB/A	1 1	NRR/DE/EMCB	1 1
	NRR/DRCH/HICB	1 1	NRR/DSSA/SPLB	1 1
	NRR/DSSA/SRXB	1 1	NUDOCS-ABSTRACT	1 1
	OGC/HDS2	1 0		
EXTERNAL:	NOAC	1 1	NRC PDR	1 1

NOTE TO ALL "RIDS" RECIPIENTS:
PLEASE HELP US TO REDUCE WASTE. TO HAVE YOUR NAME OR ORGANIZATION REMOVED FROM DISTRIBUTION LISTS OR REDUCE THE NUMBER OF COPIES RECEIVED BY YOU OR YOUR ORGANIZATION, CONTACT THE DOCUMENT CONTROL DESK (DCD) ON EXTENSION 415-2083

TOTAL NUMBER OF COPIES REQUIRED: LTTR 14 ENCL 13

C
A
T
E
G
O
R
Y
1

D
O
C
U
M
E
N
T

EV



Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

50-528/529/530

October 26, 1998

Mr. Thomas H. Essig
Acting Chief, Generic Issues and
Environmental Branch
Office of Nuclear Regulation
Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Mail Stop O10H5
Washington, DC 20555

Re: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, NRG Energy, Inc.

Dear Mr. Essig:

In accordance with the regulations implementing the procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), specifically 40 CFR 1501.6, the Department of Energy (DOE) is inviting your agency to participate in the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) as either a contributor in your area of expertise or a cooperating agency to insure that any Federal jurisdiction you may have by law will be adequately addressed in the document. The EIS is being prepared to assess the environmental impacts of issuing a Presidential permit for the construction of a transmission line across the U.S.-Mexico border.

On August 17, 1998, NRG Energy, Inc. (NRG), filed an application with the Office of Fossil Energy of DOE for a Presidential permit to construct a 500,000-volt transmission line from the switchyard of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, near Phoenix, Arizona, to the U.S.-Mexico border near Calexico, California. As proposed, the line would be 177 miles in length with all but 2.5 miles of this line paralleling the existing "Southwest Powerlink" transmission corridor. 11
Add

We are contacting you directly because, as you will note from the attached map, the transmission line will originate at the switchyard of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station. A complete copy of the NRG application can be downloaded from the Fossil Energy Home Page at: <http://www.fe.doe.gov>. Upon reaching the Fossil Energy Home page, select "Regulatory," then "Electricity," and then "News" from the options menus. In addition we are sending you a copy of the scoping notice which was published today in the Federal Register.

For further information on this proposal, the DOE Presidential permit process, or any other coordination issues, please contact me directly at the U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Fossil Energy (FE-52), 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20505, (202) 586-9624. You may also contact me by electronic mail at Ellen.Russell@HQ.DOE.GOV.

9811030106 981026
PDR ADDCK 05000528
PDR

Printed with soy ink on recycled paper



For questions regarding the DOE's EIS process, contact Carolyn Osborne of the Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance at (202) 586-4596.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ellen Russell".

Ellen Russell
NEPA Document Manager
Office of Coal & Power Im/Ex
Office of Coal & Power Systems
Office of Fossil Energy

Enclosures

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

[Docket No. PP-192]

Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and Notice of Floodplain and Wetlands Involvement; NRG Energy, Inc.**AGENCY:** Department of Energy (DOE).**ACTION:** Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement and to Conduct Public Scoping Meetings.**SUMMARY:** NRG Energy, Inc. (NRG) has applied to the Department of Energy

(DOE) for a Presidential permit to construct a 500,000-volt transmission line originating at the switchyard of the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station near Phoenix, Arizona, and extending approximately 177 miles to the southwest, where it would cross the United States (U.S.) border with Mexico in the vicinity of Calexico, California. From the border, NRG would extend the line approximately 2.5 miles into Mexico. DOE has determined that the issuance of the permit would constitute a major Federal action that may have significant impact upon the environment within the meaning of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). For this reason, DOE intends to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) to address reasonably foreseeable impacts from the proposed action and reasonable alternatives.

The purpose of this Notice of Intent is to inform the public about the proposed action, announce the plans for three public scoping meetings in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line, invite public participation in the scoping process, and solicit public comments for consideration in establishing the scope and content of the EIS. Because the proposed project may involve an action in floodplains or wetlands, the EIS will include a floodplain and wetlands assessment and floodplain statement of findings in accordance with DOE regulations for compliance with floodplains and wetlands environmental review requirements (10 CFR Part 1022).

DATES: DOE invites interested agencies, organizations, and members of the public to submit comments or suggestions to assist in identifying significant environmental issues and in determining the appropriate scope of the EIS. The public scoping period starts with the publication of this Notice in the Federal Register and will continue until November 25, 1998. Written and oral comments will be given equal weight, and DOE will consider all comments received or postmarked by

November 25, 1998, in defining the scope of this EIS. Comments received or postmarked after that date will be considered to the extent practicable.

Dates for the public scoping meetings are:

1. November 16, 1998, 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M., and 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M., Phoenix, Arizona.
2. November 17, 1998, 2:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M., and 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M., Yuma, Arizona.
3. November 18, 1998, 4:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M., El Centro, California.

DOE will publish additional notices of the date, times, and location of the scoping meetings in local newspapers in advance of the scheduled meetings. Any necessary changes will be announced in the local media.

Requests to speak at a public scoping meeting(s) should be received by Mrs. Ellen Russell at the address indicated below on or before November 12, 1998. Requests to speak may also be made at the time of registration for the scoping meeting(s). However, persons who submitted advance requests to speak will be given priority if time should become limited during the meeting.

ADDRESSES: Written comments or suggestions on the scope of the EIS, and requests to speak at the scoping meeting(s), should be addressed to: Mrs. Ellen Russell, Office of Fossil Energy (FE-27), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585-0350; Phone 202-586-9624, facsimile: 202-287-5736, or by electronic mail at Ellen.Russell@hq.doe.gov.

The locations of the scoping meetings are:

1. Embassy Suites Hotel, 1515 N. 44th Street, Phoenix, AZ
2. Yuma Civic & Convention Center, 1440 Desert Hills Drive, Yuma, AZ
3. Vacation Inn/Scribbles, 2015 Cottonwood Circle, El Centro, CA

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: For general information on the DOE NEPA review process, contact: Carol M. Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (EH-42), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585-0119; Phone: 202-586-4600 or leave a message at 800-472-2756; facsimile: 202-586-7031.

For information on the proposed project or to receive a copy of the Draft EIS when it is issued, contact Mrs. Russell at the address above.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**Background and Need for Agency Action**

Executive Order 10485, as amended by Executive Order 12038, requires that a Presidential permit be issued by DOE before electric transmission facilities may be constructed, connected, operated, or maintained at the U.S. International border. The Executive Order provides that a Presidential permit may be issued after a finding that the proposed project is consistent with the public interest. In determining consistency with the public interest, DOE considers the impact of the project on the reliability of the U.S. electric power system and on the environment. The regulations implementing the Executive Order have been codified at 10 CFR 205.320-205.329. Issuance of the permit indicates that there is no Federal objection to the project, but does not mandate that the project be completed.

On August 17, 1998, NRG, an independent power producer and wholly-owned subsidiary of Northern States Power Company, filed an application for a Presidential permit with the Office of Fossil Energy of DOE. NRG proposes to construct approximately 177 miles of 500,000-volt transmission line from the switchyard adjacent to the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station, located 30 miles west of Phoenix, Arizona, to the U.S.-Mexico border in the vicinity of Calexico, California. South of the border, NRG would construct an additional 2.5 miles of transmission line to the Cety's Substation, located east of Mexicali, Mexico, and owned by the Comision Federal de Electricidad (CFE), the national electric utility of Mexico.

The transmission line proposed by NRG would be designed and constructed with a nominal capacity of 1000 megawatts of electrical power but would be restricted to a 600-megawatt capacity under certain conditions. All but 2.5 miles of the U.S. portion of the proposed transmission line is expected to be located within an existing utility corridor designated by the Bureau of Land Management. However, the applicant would need to obtain approximately 4,300 acres of additional right-of-way from public and private landowners.

The route proposed by NRG would parallel the existing Southwest PowerLink 500,000-volt transmission line beginning at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station Switchyard. The route would continue southwest, crossing the Gila Bend Mountains approximately one mile north of the Signal Mountain Wilderness Area. The route would traverse the Muggins Mountains on the northern boundary of the Muggins Mountains Wilderness

Area, and 8.2 miles of the Army's Yuma Proving Grounds. The line would cross the Colorado River from Arizona into California and proceed northwest, crossing the northeast corner of the Fort Yuma-Quechan Indian Reservation for 1.7 miles before turning southwest and paralleling the Bureau of Land Management-designated utility corridor through the Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area. The route would continue north of the northern boundary of the Indian reservation, about one mile south of the Pichacho Peak Wilderness

Area and then turn to a southeastern direction, crossing 2.1 miles of the northwest corner of the Fort Yuma-Quechan Indian Reservation. The route would then continue west between the U.S.-Mexico boundary and the All-American Canal. At the Hemlock Canal, the route would turn south, following the Hemlock Canal alignment for 2.5 miles to the border. The proposed route would cross approximately 25 linear miles of 100-year floodplains.

Project activities would include clearing rights-of-way and access roads, digging tower footings, setting transmission towers, hanging transmission wires, and modifying existing substation(s).

The NRG application, which can be downloaded in its entirety (including maps) from the Office of Fossil Energy's web site (www.fe.doe.gov; choose regulatory, then electricity), states that there are no firm contracts in place for the sale of power to Mexico using the proposed transmission line. Prior to commencing electricity exports to Mexico using the proposed line, NRG, or any other electricity exporter, must obtain an electricity export authorization from DOE pursuant to section 202(e) of the Federal Power Act.

Identification of Environmental Issues

A purpose of this notice is to solicit comments and suggestions for consideration in the preparation of the EIS. As background for public comment, this notice contains a list of potential environmental issues that DOE has tentatively identified for analysis. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive or to imply any predetermination of impacts. Following is a preliminary list of issues that may be analyzed in the EIS:

(1) Socioeconomic impacts of development of the land tracts and their subsequent uses;

(2) Impacts to protected, threatened, endangered, or sensitive species of animals or plants, or their critical habitats;

(3) Impacts to floodplains and wetlands;

(4) Impacts to cultural or historic resources;

(5) Impacts to human health and safety;

(6) Impacts on air, soil, and water;

(7) Visual impacts;

(8) Disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority and low-income populations; and

(9) Environmental impacts within Mexico.

The EIS will also consider alternatives to the proposed transmission line, including:

(1) No Action Alternative: The EIS will analyze the impacts associated with "no action." Since the proposed action is the issuance of a Presidential permit for the construction of the proposed transmission line, "no action" means that the permit would not be issued. However, not issuing the permit would not necessarily imply maintenance of the status quo. It is possible that the applicant and/or the Mexican government may take other actions if the proposed transmission line is not built. The No Action Alternative will address the environmental impacts that are reasonably foreseeable to occur if the Presidential permit is not issued, to the extent practicable;

(2) Alternative transmission line routes;

(3) Construction of a powerplant in the U.S. closer to the U.S.-Mexico border with a shorter transmission line extending to the border, an alternative concept for supplying electric power to the target region.

Scoping Process

Interested parties are invited to participate in the scoping process both to refine the preliminary alternatives and environmental issues to be analyzed in depth, and to eliminate from detailed study those alternatives and environmental issues that are not significant or pertinent. The scoping process is intended to involve all interested agencies (Federal, state, county, and local), public interest groups, Native American Tribes, businesses, and members of the public. Potential Federal cooperating agencies include the U.S. Department of the Interior (including Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Fish and Wildlife Service) and the International Boundary and Water Commission.

Public scoping meetings will be held at the locations, dates, and times indicated above. These scoping meetings will be informal and conducted as a discussion between attendees and DOE. The DOE presiding officer will establish only those procedures needed to ensure that everyone who wishes to speak has a

chance to do so and that DOE understands all issues and comments. Speakers will be allocated approximately 10 minutes for their oral statements. Depending upon the number of persons wishing to speak, DOE may allow longer times for representatives of organizations. Consequently, persons wishing to speak on behalf of an organization should identify that organization in their request to speak. Persons who have not submitted a request to speak in advance may register to speak at the scoping meeting(s). However, advance requests to speak are encouraged. Should any speaker desire to provide for the record further information that cannot be presented within the designated time, such additional information may be submitted in writing by the date listed above in the DATES section. Both oral and written comments will be considered and given equal weight by DOE. Meetings will commence at the times specified above and will continue until all those present who wish to participate have had an opportunity to do so.

Draft EIS Schedule and Availability

The Draft EIS is scheduled for completion by March 1999, at which time its availability will be announced in the Federal Register and public comments again will be solicited.

Those individuals who do not wish to submit comments or suggestions at this time but who would like to receive a copy of the Draft EIS for review and comment when it is issued should notify Mrs. Russell at the address above.

The Draft EIS will be made available for public inspection at several public libraries or reading rooms in Arizona and California. A notice of these locations will be provided in the Federal Register at a later date.

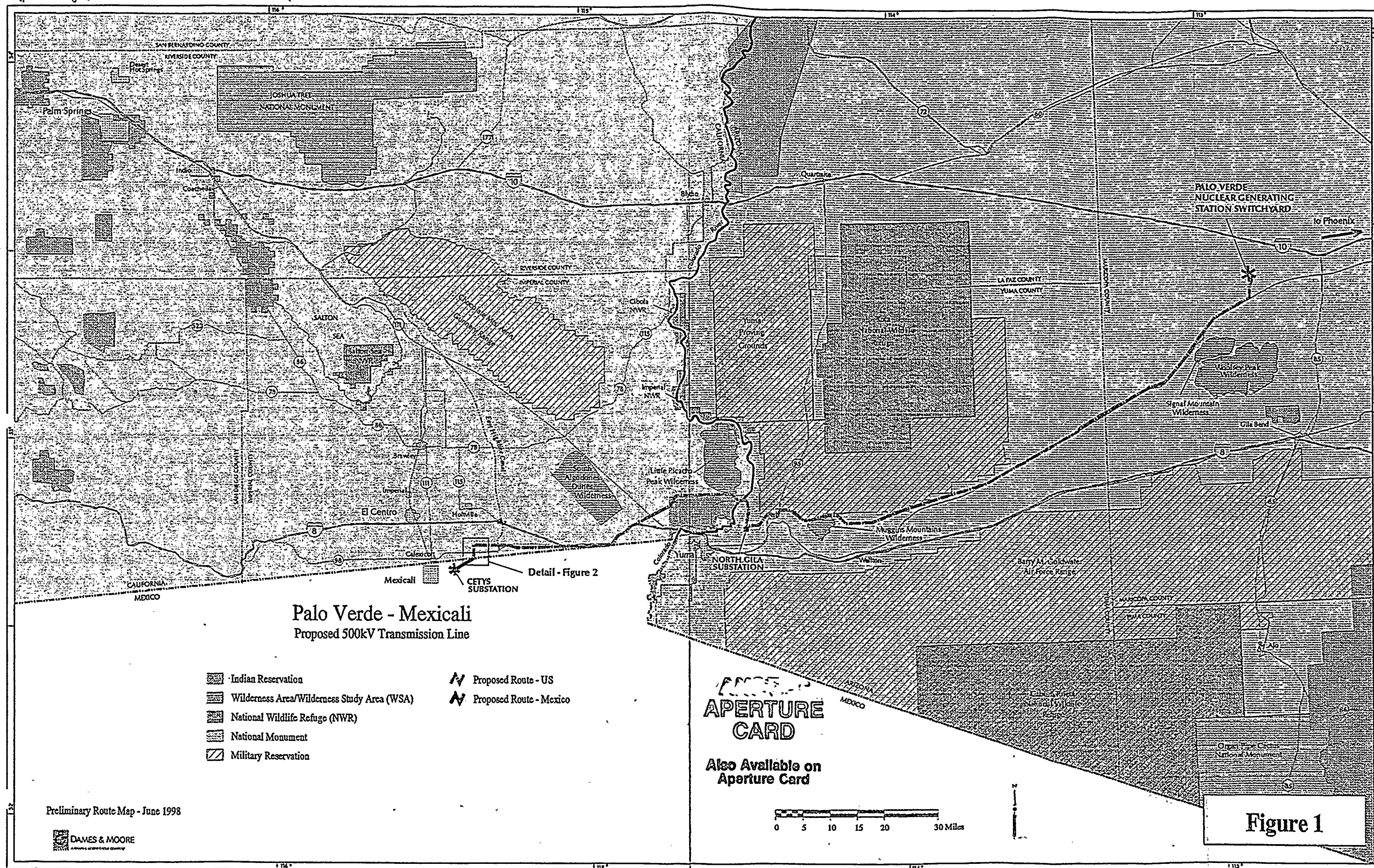
Issued in Washington, D.C. on October 22, 1998.

Peter N. Brush,

Acting Assistant Secretary, Environment, Safety and Health.

[FR Doc. 98-28703 Filed 10-23-98; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6450-01-P



APERTURE
CARD

Also Available on
Aperture Card

9811030106-1