

GRANT COUNTY

COMMISSIONERS

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COUNTY MANAGER

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February 14, 2013

Honorable Ken Salazar, Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

On February 7, 2013 I attended a meeting in Santa Fe with New Mexico BLM Director Jesse Juen concerning the Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") for the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project. During this meeting we discussed the three years of planning and multitude of routes studied at an approximate expense of \$35 million to the developers. It is apparent to many that the military continues to bring up new reasons why SunZia conflicts with military activities, even after the Department of Defense issued a letter during May 2011 that suggested a route that was compatible with military missions, which ultimately the BLM selected as the preferred alternative.

We support the economic benefits the military brings to New Mexico, but at the same time, we recognize the potential loss of much needed additional revenues through the transmission and generation of renewable energy. New Mexico has wind, solar and geothermal capabilities, but without much needed transmission, the resources in New Mexico will not be utilized. The needed electrical transmission infrastructure in New Mexico will result in the creation of much needed employment in our area. This area of New Mexico has been hit hard during the recession and we need projects like SunZia to help our area recover and prosper.

We hope you can find compatibility with the military and renewable energy projects to create needed economic growth that can be enjoyed by all. I hope you are able to publish the Final EIS soon without further delay and study. Your efforts are certainly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Brett A. Kasten, Chairman
Grant County Commission

Cc: John Strand, SunZia Project
NM Congressional Delegation