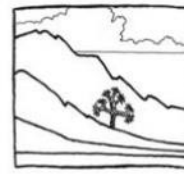




FRIENDS of NEVADA WILDERNESS



Basin and Range Watch

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Conservation organizations sue federal agencies to protect desert ecosystem

May 28, 2025 - Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Basin and Range Watch today filed a lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada because the decisions by three federal land management agencies to authorize portions of a controversial power transmission line in western Nevada violated federal law, were arbitrary and capricious, and were an abuse of the agencies' discretion. The plaintiffs are asking the court to order the agencies to rescind their decisions to approve the project and halt construction of the line until the agencies comply with federal laws.

At the center of the case is the federal government's unlawful approval of primarily two portions of NV Energy's proposed Greenlink West project (Project), an approximately 472-mile system of new overhead electric transmission facilities and substations running between Reno and Las Vegas, which when constructed would directly facilitate the proliferation of solar energy development throughout the desert ecosystems, including the gargantuan proposed Esmeralda 7 industrial solar facilities in Esmeralda County.

The line would be constructed through the Friends of Nevada Wilderness's proposed Esmeralda/Fish Lake Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), causing irreparable environmental damage. The proposed ACEC provides irreplaceable habitat for iconic Nevada wildlife, including bighorn sheep and desert tortoises, as well as precious historic, archeological, and paleontological artifacts and resources.

The suit also seeks judicial intervention for BLM's failure to meet in its legal duty to analyze the future impacts of the proposed Esmeralda 7, a 62,000-acre industrial solar field complex in Esmeralda County and the proposed ACEC. NV Energy, as the suit points out, has clearly stated that the purpose of the new Greenlink West transmission line is to support new industrial solar energy development in Western Nevada.

"The fact that the final EIS completely ignored the future impacts of a proposed industrial solar field complex the size of Las Vegas is simply a dereliction of duty," said Friends Executive Director Shaaron

Netherton. "The transmission line and the new complex are inextricably linked, and the impacts of both should have been thoroughly analyzed. They were not."

"Friends of Nevada Wilderness has a long history of engaging in public lands management decisions working directly with our land management agencies," Netherton added. "We did so again for this project, commenting during the scoping process, again on the draft EIS and filing a protest against the final EIS. We were incredibly frustrated that the agencies ignored our comments and those submitted by many others throughout the process, refusing to address the impacts of the massive industrial solar facilities through Esmeralda County that would occur with the placement of the line through a completely undeveloped corridor when other options exist."

The BLM in 2022 recommended that this corridor be relocated to collate with existing infrastructure and provide access to the Millers Solar Energy Zone.

"Opposition to the current placement of the Greenlink West line and associated solar development has been strong, including from rural Esmeralda County itself, the Yerington and Walker River Paiute Tribes, and the sportsmen and conservation community," said Netherton. "Unfortunately, we were left with no other choice but to file this lawsuit to protect one of the most intact natural landscapes left in Nevada. As an organization that represents thousands of people who love and value their public lands, places like our proposed ACEC, we simply had to make the difficult and expensive decision to fight this project approval as hard as we possibly can."

The Project will also cut through the Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument ("TUSK"), a unit of the National Park System that encompasses one of the largest and most diverse late Pleistocene vertebrate fossil assemblages in the southern Great Basin and Mojave Deserts.

The Tule Springs Fossil Beds National Monument was established in 2014 as the 405th unit of the National Park Service to conserve and protect important paleontological, scientific, educational, and recreational resources for future generations. Basin and Range Watch Co-Founder Kevin Emmerich was a National Park Service ranger for 17 years and is deeply concerned about how the Greenlink West Project violates that National Park Service Organic Act.

"The National Park Service Organic Act of 2016 clearly states that natural and historic objects must remain unimpaired for future generations," Emmerich said. "The massive construction footprint from the Greenlink West Transmission Project will destroy delicate fossils that are legally mandated to be protected for the future. The Interior Department moved the industrial Project to avoid a speculative mining claim near Beatty, Nevada, but refused to consider an alternative that would have moved the transmission line to avoid impacting irreplaceable resources in one of America's cherished national park units."

The suit against the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service describes how the agencies violated several federal environmental laws and administrative procedures, including the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. For example, the Plaintiffs say, specifically, that the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS):

- fails to analyze in detail a reasonable range of alternatives for avoiding or minimizing the serious adverse environmental impacts associated with the Project.
- rejects reasonable, viable alternatives based on vague cost concerns and/or other dubious feasibility grounds without adequate explanation or substantiation.
- fails to take a hard look at the adverse direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts associated with and stemming from the Project as a whole, including, but not limited to: the Project's direct, indirect, and cumulative effects on wildlife (e.g., the Mojave desert tortoise and bighorn desert sheep), intact landscapes, cultural resources, recreational resources and opportunities, and paleontological resources; and the expected, intended impacts of the project in stimulating the development of industrial solar energy in the Nevada desert.

Friends of Nevada Wilderness and Basin and Range Watch place the highest priority on protecting valuable natural and cultural resources, while supporting the development of renewable energy in the built environment and in low-impact areas.

The Plaintiffs are represented in this litigation by the public interest law firm Eubanks & Associates, PLLC. The filed complaint can be [viewed here](#).

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About Friends of Nevada Wilderness

Founded in 1984, Friends of Nevada Wilderness has helped protect nearly 3.6 million acres of Nevada's wild lands by leading efforts in the expansion or designation of all 73 Wilderness areas in the state. Over the past twenty years, the Wilderness Stewardship Volunteer Program has generated over \$3 million of in-kind services to benefit Nevada's public lands. For more information visit nevadawilderness.org.

About Basin and Range Watch

[Basin and Range Watch](#) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization working to conserve the deserts of Nevada and California and to educate the public about the diversity of life, cultures, and history of the desert, as well as sustainable local renewable energy alternatives. We support our local desert economies because we live here and visit here often.