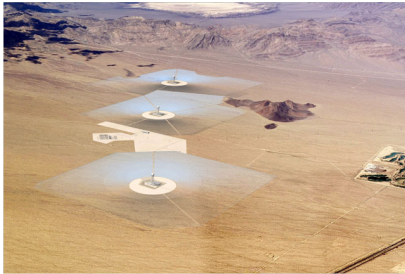




State committee likes huge solar plant in Mojave Desert

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A California Energy Commission committee is recommending approval of BrightSource Energy's 392 megawatt Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating System near the California-Nevada border.

The siting committee, which oversees the permitting process, decided Tuesday that despite the project's negative environmental impacts, its benefits outweigh those impacts. The public has 30 days to comment on the committee's decision before the entire California Energy Commission makes its final decision.

If approved by the Commission, the project would start construction in the fall of 2010.

BrightSource Energy, Inc. would develop three solar thermal power plants and shared facilities near Ivanpah Dry Lake in San Bernardino County, California on public land managed by the federal Bureau of Land Management in the Mojave Desert. The proposed project would be constructed in three phases: one 120-megawatt (MW) phase and two 125-MW phases and is based on distributed power tower and heliostat mirror technology, in which heliostat (mirror) fields focus solar energy on power tower receivers near the center of each heliostat array to generate steam-driven electricity.

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