

# Plan to streamline solar development in West OK'd

October 12 2012

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(AP)—Federal officials have approved a plan that sets aside public lands across the West for big solar power plants, cementing a new government approach to renewable energy development after years of delays and false starts.

Interior Secretary [Ken Salazar](#) called the new plan a "roadmap ... that will lead to faster, smarter utility-scale solar development on public lands."

The plan replaces the department's previous first-come, first-served system of approving [solar projects](#), which mired government land managers in years of study and review of projects on a case-by-case basis.

Now the department is directing development toward lands with fewer conservation concerns that also are near power lines.

The new "solar energy zones" consist of 285,000 acres in six states: California, Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado and New Mexico.

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Citation: Plan to streamline solar development in West OK'd (2012, October 12) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2012-10-solar-west-okd.html>

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