



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
FORT YUMA AGENCY
256 S. 2nd Avenue, Suite D
Yuma, Arizona 85364



IN REPLY REFER TO:
Office of the Superintendent

August 3, 2016

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Notice of Availability of an Environmental Assessment/Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Statement

SUMMARY: The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Fort Yuma Agency is publishing a Final Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the extension of high-speed internet service on the Fort Yuma-Quechan Indian Reservation, Imperial County, California. The EA and FONSI have been prepared by BIA in order to fulfill its responsibilities under and comply with, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (as amended) (NEPA).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The BIA, in response to a request by the Winterhaven Telephone Company doing business as TDS Telecom, Inc. to extend high-speed internet service to an area approximately 15.67 square miles in size, including a portion of the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation, is granting right-of-ways on the reservation. Other areas served by the proposed project would include the community of Winterhaven and other areas of unincorporated Imperial County in southeastern California. The Proposed Project would involve installation of approximately 15.31 miles of new fiber optic cable underground within protective conduit, as well as buried vaults, equipment cabinets, and splice boxes along existing roads in the project area.

FINDING

Pursuant to 25 CFR (Indians), implementing procedures in 516 DM and 59 IAM 3-H (BIA NEPA Guidebook) codified at 43 CFR Part 46, and the regulations issued by the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ), 40 CFR parts 1500 to 1508, this notice advises the public of our finding that the action described above will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment.

The agency proposed action (“Project”) will result in minor temporary construction effects involving air quality (dust) and noise and vibration, minor effects on special-status species or their habitats, minor effects on wetlands, minor historic or archaeological resources effects, minor soil erosion and soil instability, minor hazardous material-related hazards, minor stormwater-related effects, minor and temporary traffic inconveniences.

To mitigate any adverse effects, BIA will implement the measures that are discussed in the Final EA and FONSI.

Basis for Finding

The environmental impacts of disapproving (the No Action alternative) and approving (the agency proposed Action Alternative) the high-speed internet service extension were considered in the Final EA pursuant to NEPA and CEQ regulations implementing NEPA. The Final EA and FONSI will be available for review at the BIA Fort Yuma Agency, Yuma, AZ, or may be accessed directly at: <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/Environment/info/horizonh2o/winterhaven/index.html> for a period of 30 days upon posting of this notice.

The decision has been made to approve granting of right-of-ways to facilitate construction based on the content of the EA and the issuance of the FONSI. This decision will become final 30 days after posting of this notice. Members of the public determined to have standing may appeal this decision pursuant to appeal procedures published at 25 CFR, Part 2.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Kathy Bowen, Acting Superintendent, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fort Yuma Agency, 256 South 2nd Avenue, Suite D, Yuma, AZ 85364, phone: (928) 782-1202, fax: (928)-782-1266, email: kathy.bowen@bia.gov.