



**Aubrey Dunn, State Land Commissioner  
State of New Mexico**

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Emily Strickler, Assistant Commissioner for Communications

(505) 827-3650 - office

(505) 470-8829 - mobile

[estrickler@slo.state.nm.us](mailto:estrickler@slo.state.nm.us)

**Commissioner Dunn Grants Right-of-Entry to Sunzia**

**Santa Fe, NM (November 16, 2016)** – New Mexico State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn announced that he has granted a right-of-entry for the Sunzia Transmission Project. The project is slated to cross 89 miles of New Mexico State Trust Land. Sunzia contains close to 515 miles of two single-circuit 500 kV transmission lines that will traverse New Mexico and Arizona. It is designed to connect and deliver electricity generated in Arizona and New Mexico to population centers in the Desert Southwest. The electricity distributed by SunZia is meant to help meet the nation's demand for renewable energy and reduce dependence on fossil fuels for power generation.

The right-of-entry will allow Sunzia to complete all surveys along the proposed route – including cultural, environmental and cadastral. The right-of-entry is an important precursor in order to grant a right-of-way easement for construction and operation of the power line. The Land Office does not intend to issue a right-of-way for the project if any portion of the transmission line on State Trust Land is located within close proximity of any residence without the written consent of the property owner.

Commissioner Dunn has implemented a new transmission line policy reflecting a more current market value for corridors involving transmission lines over 115 kV. The current right-of-way valuation system for lines like Sunzia is \$165 per acre per year.

“It is my fiduciary responsibility to receive fair market value for any use of State Trust Lands. Following a thorough review, we developed a more accurate valuation policy to ensure that New Mexico’s public schoolchildren and other beneficiaries receive their fair share based on the possible impacts of larger scale projects, like Sunzia, to State Trust Lands,” said Commissioner Dunn. “Over a forty-year easement with the Land Office, the Sunzia line is estimated to generate \$32 million for the beneficiaries of the trust – mainly the public schoolchildren of New Mexico. I am happy to see this project move forward as it will expand New Mexico’s renewable energy portfolio, create construction jobs as well as permanent jobs and generate revenue for the trust.”

The State Land Office is responsible for administering 9 million acres of surface and 13 million acres of subsurface estate for the beneficiaries of the state land trust, which includes schools, universities, hospitals and other important public institutions.

###