

An Overview of the Western Energy Corridor Initiative

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The United States faces an unprecedented threat to its economic and national security due to its dependence on foreign oil and gas. Given this threat, the U.S. must secure and steward its own domestic energy supplies more effectively. The Office of Naval Petroleum and Oil Shale Reserves is proposing a major technical study under the auspices of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, Section 369(i) to perform a regional analysis of the development potential of the Western Inland “Energy Corridor”.

The “Energy Corridor” contains massive undeveloped unconventional hydrocarbon resources, substantial conventional energy and mineral resources. Development of natural resources in this area will create increasing competition for limited resources of water, air, habitat and wildlife. Local communities, infrastructures and economies will face increasing demand for roads, electricity, law enforcement and labor. To guide wise development, government and industry need to improve their understanding of the potential impacts and benefits of concurrent development of multiple energy resources and identify strategies and approaches for impact minimization and mitigation. The Western Energy Corridor Initiative (WECI) seeks to help identify the best possible scenarios for energy development, within the carrying capacity of the region, while minimizing negative impacts to the environment and local communities.

The study will focus on the integrated development of multiple energy resources in a carbon neutral and environmentally acceptable manner. Emphasis will be placed on analyses of the environmental, infrastructure, employment, training, fiscal and economic demands placed on the region as a result of various development scenarios.