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Centinela Breaks Ground on \$700 Million Solar Energy Project

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A new \$700 million solar energy facility will soon generate 170 megawatts (MW) and supply San Diego Gas & Electric with enough electricity to power one million homes annually. The power will be sold to SDG&E through 20-year power purchase agreements. The Centinela Solar Energy project is set to begin commercial operation in the fall of 2014 and will utilize one million solar panels across 1,600 acres of land near Calexico in the Imperial Valley. Built on private land, the project will utilize its own transmission lines and bypass the Imperial Irrigation District (IID) grid. According to officials, more than 400 jobs will be created during the facility's two-year construction period.

To minimize environmental impacts, the project will be bundled with other solar projects where the lines cross IID's Westside Main Canal and connect to the Imperial Valley Substation. Since the project connects to IID's infrastructure, Centinela will mitigate potential impacts to IID's grid. According to IID Director John Pierre Menvielle, Centinela will cover the cost of its share of necessary upgrades to the IID transmission system, preventing IID ratepayers from carrying any of the costs of the project.

[Michael Niggli of San Diego Gas & Electric said the facility is a key step toward SDG&E's goals of having 33 percent of the energy provided to its customers generated from renewable resources and will help the state reach its goal of providing clean, renewable energy to California residents.](#)

Michael Picker, senior adviser to the governor for renewable energy, reminded participants at the groundbreaking ceremony, "Unlike natural gas or coal, the (solar) fuels are free."

Centinela Solar Energy LLC, is a subsidiary of the U.S.-based energy company LS Power Development LLC. Engaging in the development, acquisition and management of power generation and transmission infrastructure, LS Power has been involved in more than 25,000 MW of power generation throughout the United States, raising about \$17 billion to support investment in energy infrastructure.

San Diego Gas & Electric is a regulated public utility with a service area spanning 4,100 square miles. SDG&E provides service to 3.4 million consumers, with 1.4 million electric meters and more than 850,000 natural gas meters in San Diego and southern Orange counties.