

DOCKETED

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Data Requests Set No. 2 (Biological Resources) Bottle Rock Geothermal Power Plant (79-AFC-04C)

Dear Brady Olson:

The California Energy Commission (CEC) staff is asking for the information specified in the enclosed Data Requests which is necessary for the staff analysis of the Bottle Rock Geothermal Power Plant petition to amend (PTA) (TN # 262318). The Mayacma Geothermal, LLC, proposes to construct and operate a 7.5-megawatt (MW) Binary Geothermal Power Plant within the Bottle Rock Power Plant (BRPP) site.

These Data Requests seek further information in the area of Biological Resources for both the proposed 7.5 MW Binary project as well as the CEC-licensed 55 MW BRPP, based on the information provided in the PTA.

To assist CEC staff in timely completing its environmental review and to meet the requirements of CEQA (see Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, §§ 15108, 15109), the CEC staff is requesting responses to the data requests within 30 days. If you are unable to provide the information requested or need to revise the timeline, please let me know within 10 days of receipt of this letter.

If you have any questions, please email me at anwar.ali@energy.ca.gov.

Anwar Ali

Anwar Ali, Ph.D.

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Enclosure: Data Requests

BOTTLE ROCK GEOTHERMAL POWER PLANT (79-AFC-04C) DATA REQUESTS – SET NO. 2 (BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES)

A. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES UNIT

Author: Alex Single

BACKGROUND: The Petition to Amend (TN 262182 and TN 262183) is unclear about the exact locations of new groundwater supply wells and associated pipelines. Page 11 of the Petition to Amend states that “new well locations have not yet been determined”. As sensitive biological resources may occur near the project site, CEC staff need the actual location and acreage of temporary and permanent impacts to evaluate impacts to biological resources.

DATA REQUESTS

1. Provide the exact locations of permanent impacts such as groundwater supply wells and above-ground pipelines, and temporary impacts such as buried pipelines, access paths, or areas of vegetation removal.
Alternatively, provide a maximum extent that CEC staff can use to determine project impacts to biological resources. Impacts should be classified as temporary impacts or permanent impacts.
2. Provide maps of permanent and temporary impacts, or the maximum extent of potential impacts.

BACKGROUND: The Petition to Amend (TN 262182 and TN 262183) is not consistent regarding the number of additional groundwater supply wells that would be drilled. For example, page 16 of the Petition to Amend states that “up to four additional water supply wells will be drilled”, while page 11 states that “up to two additional water supply wells would be drilled”.

DATA REQUESTS

3. Clarify the maximum number of groundwater supply wells proposed to be constructed.

BACKGROUND: According to the Biological Resources Technical Report included in the Petition to Amend (TN 262182), only one recent biological survey has been conducted. This survey occurred on February 10, 2023. There are several sensitive status plants which may occur in the project area and be affected by construction. The survey was not conducted during the blooming period for several special-status plants which may occur in the project area, notably including Geysers Panicum (*Panicum acuminatum* var. *thermale*), which is listed as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

BOTTLE ROCK GEOTHERMAL POWER PLANT (79-AFC-04C) DATA REQUESTS – SET NO. 2 – BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

As described above, the exact locations of new groundwater supply wells and associated pipelines are not provided in the Petition to Amend (TN 262182 and TN 262183). While it is described that “no new ground disturbance will occur during the drilling process” (Petition to Amend page 16), species may have recolonized areas of old ground disturbance. In addition, trenching, vehicle access, staging areas, and other temporary impacts may impact special-status plant species.

DATA REQUESTS

4. Provide a survey report for results of special-status plant surveys conducted where new earthmoving, vegetation removal, or soil disturbance would occur. These surveys should be conducted following the Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Sensitive Natural Communities (CDFW 2021). As staff has not received protocol-level survey data for special-status plant species, staff may provide additional data requests upon receipt of the requested information.

Alternatively, provide information that all areas where would occur are in locations not suitable for special-status plant species, particularly Geysers Panicum (*Panicum acuminatum* var. *thermale*), which is listed as state Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act. Clarify the maximum number of groundwater supply wells proposed to be constructed.