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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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CEC-70 (Revised 7/22)



IN THE MATTER OF:

Willow Rock Energy Storage Center

Docket No. 21-AFC-02

Order No: 25-1219-06

COMMISSION ADOPTION ORDER

The California Energy Commission (CEC) adopts the Presiding Member's Proposed Decision (PMPD) (TN 267183) and Errata (TN 267949) prepared and recommended by the Committee, as set forth in the Proposed Final Decision (TN 267950) for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center Application for Certification plus two additional corrections on pages A-135 and A-137 identified in CEC Staff's communication to the Hearing Office (TN 267974). These adopted documents and recommendations comprise the CEC's Final Decision (Decision).

The Decision is based upon the hearing record of these proceedings and considers the comments received on the PMPD prior to and at the Public Hearing held on December 19, 2025. The Decision contains a summary of the proceedings and evidence presented, and the rationale for the findings reached and Conditions of Certification imposed.

This Commission Adoption Order (Order) incorporates by reference the text, evidence, Conditions of Certification, compliance verifications, and Appendices contained in the PMPD and Errata. The requirements contained in the Decision ensure that the proposed Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will be designed, sited, constructed, and operated in a manner to protect environmental quality, to assure public health and safety, and to operate in a safe and reliable manner.

FINDINGS

The CEC hereby adopts the following findings pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code sections 21000 *et seq.*), the Warren-Alquist Act (Public Resources Code sections 25500 *et seq.*), and the CEC regulations (California Code of Regulations, title 20), in addition to those contained in the Decision:

1. The Conditions of Certification contained in the Decision ensure that the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will be designed, constructed, sited, and operated in conformity with applicable local, regional, state, and federal laws, ordinances, regulations, and

standards, including applicable public health and safety standards, and air and water quality standards.

2. Implementation of the Conditions of Certification contained in the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center Decision will ensure protection of the environmental quality and reasonably safe and reliable operation of the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center.
3. Implementation of the Conditions of Certification contained in the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center Decision will also ensure that the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center project will neither result in, nor contribute substantially to, any significant direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental impacts, with the exception of unmitigable significant impacts to visual resources.
4. Impacts to visual resources caused by the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will be significant and unavoidable at Key Observation Points 2, 3 and 4. There are no feasible alternatives to the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center that would reduce the significant impacts to visual resources and achieve most of the benefits and objectives of the project.
5. The Decision details specific energy and non-energy benefits from the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center, including: sustainable, non-combustible, and quick-starting energy storage technology that will facilitate the integration of renewable energy into the electrical grid while displacing more greenhouse gas intensive and less efficient energy generation; and direct and indirect economic benefits through creation of highly skilled jobs, state and local tax revenues, and expenditures for materials and supplies.
6. Changes or alterations have been incorporated into the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center that lessen the impacts of the project, and that mitigate to a less than significant impact in all areas except for visual resources.
7. Existing governmental land use restrictions are sufficient to adequately control population density in the area surrounding the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center and may be reasonably expected to ensure public health and safety.
8. The Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will, with implementation of the Conditions of Certification, avoid any substantial adverse environmental effects on nearby state, regional, county, and city parks, and areas for wildlife protection.
9. There is an environmental justice population, based on either the presence of minority or low-income populations, within a six-mile radius from the project. With the exception of significant impacts to visual resources, the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will not have any significant environmental impacts and therefore will not have a disproportionate impact on environmental justice populations.
10. Based on the federal and state guidelines on environmental justice, the significant impacts to visual resources from the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will not have a disproportionate socioeconomic impact on minority or low-income populations.

11. The Decision contains a discussion of the public benefits of the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center as required by Public Resources Code section 25523(h).
12. The Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will benefit the local and regional area in local expenditures and payrolls during the construction and operation of the facility, as well as a benefit to public finance and local economies through taxation. These activities will provide an economic benefit to the local and regional area.
13. The Willow Rock Energy Storage Center Decision contains measures to ensure that the planned, temporary, or unexpected closure of the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center will conform to applicable laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards.
14. Specific economic, legal, social, technological, and other considerations including the provision of employment opportunities for highly trained workers, make infeasible the alternatives identified in the Decision which might avoid the significant impacts to visual resources.
15. With respect to the unavoidable significant impacts to visual resources, the CEC finds that specific energy, economic, technological, and other benefits of the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center outweigh the significant impacts to visual resources. The Decision describes the CEC's specific reasons for this statement of overriding considerations and those reasons are supported by substantial evidence in the record.
16. The proceedings leading to the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center Decision have been conducted in conformity with the regulations governing the consideration of an Application for Certification, and thereby meet the requirements of Public Resources Code sections 21000 *et seq.* and 25500 *et seq.*

ORDER

Therefore, the Commission orders the following:

1. The Presiding Member's Proposed Decision (PMPD) filed on November 12, 2025 (TN 263183) and Errata filed on December 16, 2025 (TN 267949), as set forth in the Proposed Final Decision (TN 267950) plus two additional corrections on pages A-135 and A-137 identified in CEC Staff's communication to the Hearing Office (TN 267974), are hereby adopted as the CEC's Final Decision and incorporated by reference in this Order.
2. The Application for Certification for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center as described in the Decision and a certificate to construct and operate the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center are hereby granted.
3. The approval of the Application for Certification for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center is subject to the timely performance of all Conditions of Certification and compliance verifications.

4. The Conditions of Certification and compliance verifications for the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center are integrated with this Order and are not severable therefrom.
5. While the project owner may delegate the performance of a condition or verification, the duty to ensure adequate conformance of a condition or verification may not be delegated.
6. This Order is adopted, issued, effective, and final on December 19, 2025.
7. Reconsideration of this Order is governed by Public Resources Code section 25530.
8. Judicial review of this Order is governed by Public Resources Code section 25531 and Communities for a Better Environment v. Energy Resources Conservation & Development Commission (1st District 2020) 57 Cal.App.5th 786.
9. The CEC hereby adopts the Conditions of Certification, compliance verifications, and associated dispute resolution procedures set forth in the Decision as its monitoring system required by Public Resources Code section 25532.
10. All Conditions of Certification take effect immediately upon adoption and apply to all construction and site preparation activities including, but not limited to, ground disturbance, site preparation, excavation, controlled detonations, and permanent structure construction.
11. This Order licenses the project owner to commence construction of the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center. Subject to the provisions of California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1720.3, this license expires by operation of law when the Willow Rock Energy Storage Center's commencement of construction deadline passes with no construction.
12. The Executive Director shall transmit a Notice of Decision and appropriate accompanying documents as provided by Public Resource Code section 25537 and California Code of Regulations, title 20, section 1768.
13. The Hearing Officer shall incorporate the PMPD and Errata, as set forth in the Proposed Final Decision plus the two additional corrections identified on the record during the Public Hearing on December 19, 2025, into a single document as the Final Decision. Publication of that document shall not affect the adoption, effective, issuance or final dates of this Order established in paragraph 6, above.

IT IS SO ORDERED

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned Secretariat to the Commission does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of an Order duly and regularly adopted at a meeting of the California Energy Commission held on December 19, 2025.

AYE: Hochschild, McAllister, Gallardo, Skinner

NAY: NONE

ABSENT: Gunda

ABSTAIN: NONE

Dated: December 19, 2025

SIGNED BY:

Kim Todd
Secretariat