

DOCKETED	
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*Comment Received From: Traci Heston
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Request Full Review of Water, Power, and Economic Impacts

I am a long-time resident of Ridgecrest, CA, writing to express concern about the proposed RB Inyokern Data Center currently under review under CEC Docket 26-SPPE-01, specifically the project's impact on the Indian Wells Valley (IWV) groundwater basin, power demands, and local economy.

Water is critically important for every resident in the IWV, whether they live in Ridgecrest, Inyokern, or rely on a private well. Our shared groundwater basin is the only source of water for our homes, farms, businesses, and Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake, which anchors our local economy. The IWV groundwater basin is formally designated as critically overdrafted. Current pumping is 20,840 acre-feet per year against the reported sustainable yield of only 7,650. A facility of this size, using evaporative cooling in desert conditions, can consume roughly 500,000 gallons of water per day—close to 8 percent of the basin's entire sustainable annual yield, used by a single facility every day. Any additional demand, even from an efficient hybrid system, accelerates the overdraft we are already facing and directly affects our monthly bills, well reliability, and long-term community viability. Water is not just another utility here; it is the foundation of life in the desert. The data center won't run out of the basin by itself, but it exacerbates our current water issues that are still being adjudicated.

Additionally, the data center needs a lot of power (99 MW at first, scaling to 198 MW). Southern California Edison (SCE) says they can handle the initial 99 MW phase with minimal upgrades (mainly a short new connection line). Even if SCE says they can handle it, rates could still increase, which is undesirable given the current state of our local and national economies, which are plagued by rising prices for all goods and services, inflation, and stagnant wages.

In terms of tax impacts, it is reasonable to assume that Kern County would receive most of the property taxes from the data center. While this helps fund county-wide services like roads and public safety that serve the whole valley indirectly, Inyokern and Ridgecrest would receive \$0 directly from this project. Why would residents want the aforementioned burdens without any direct or tangible benefit?

In conclusion, I respectfully request:

1. A full environmental review with specific attention to water supply impacts, and that any approval require demonstrated water-neutral or dry cooling technology before construction begins;
2. A full review and proposal of the supply/demand of power to the data center and subsequent cost impacts to IWV residents; and
3. A clear proposal on how this data center would financially benefit the Ridgecrest and

Inyokern, the two cities closest and most impacted by this project, and NAWS China Lake.

Thank you.