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Comments on RB Inyokern Data Center – CEC Docket 26-SPPE-01

I am a resident of Ridgecrest, writing to express concern about the proposed RB Inyokern Data Center currently under review under CEC Docket 26-SPPE-01. The Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin is formally designated as critically over-drafted. 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. Even at the numbers claimed by the developer, just the first phase would use almost 2% of our entire valley's sustainable yield, with at least one more phase already announced, bringing the project to 198MW according to investment marketing materials. This basin has no surface water. No river. No backup. The aquifer is the only source of water for 38,000 residents and Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake. Phase 2 of the water rights adjudication goes to trial June 1, 2026. The pipeline currently proposed to address this project has no appropriated funding or complete design, is considered by many to be unfeasible and depends on a State Water Project that delivered only 5% of contracted water in 2022 and sits at 30% for 2026. There is no margin for new large-scale groundwater demand at this time.

As a former educator, I am very concerned that this data center will be near an elementary school. What will be the environmental and psychological impacts on the children? I have heard about the noise and heat these centers can generate, and I am very concerned.

I respectfully request a full environmental review with specific attention to water-supply impacts, and that any approval require the use of demonstrated water-neutral or dry-cooling technology before construction begins.