

DOCKETED

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*Comment Received From: John Auburn
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Deny this request

May 29, 2026

To: California Energy Commission
Re: Opposition to Docket 26-SPPE-01 – RB Inyokern Data Center (RBIDC)

Dear Commissioners,

I am a longtime Indian Wells Valley resident writing in firm opposition to Docket 26-SPPE-01. The Commission must deny this exemption request or require full environmental review before any approval is considered.

WATER. This project imposes significant water demand on an already overdrafted desert groundwater basin. Approving large-scale industrial cooling operations here will accelerate depletion and directly harm local residents and future generations.

PIECEMEAL CEQA EVASION. The 99 MW initial phase is not the full project. The developer's own materials disclose an 80-acre expansion site one mile away with an additional 99 MW. This is deliberate project splitting to avoid adequate review. CEQA mandates cumulative analysis of all reasonably foreseeable phases. The Commission must treat this as a single project.

AIR QUALITY. Extensive backup diesel generation – even during routine testing – produces cumulative emissions that harm public health. This is not speculative; it is a documented consequence of data center operations at this scale.

INADEQUATE PROCESS. The Small Power Plant Exemption is insufficient for a project of this scale and complexity. Significant impacts to air, water, biological resources, and community character require full environmental review and meaningful public participation.

LASTING HARM, LIMITED BENEFIT. Industrial lighting, noise, and transmission infrastructure will permanently alter this desert landscape. Highly automated data centers generate minimal permanent employment while creating lasting demands on land, water, and public infrastructure. The costs outweigh the benefits.

The Commission must deny this exemption and require a review process proportionate to the true scale of this project.

Respectfully submitted,

John Auburn
Indian Wells Valley Resident