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Comment Received From: Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake
Submitted On: 6/10/2026
Docket Number: 26-SPPE-01

NAWS China Lake Mission Concerns

Please find the attached letter from the Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake commanding officer identifying the initial mission concerns associated with the proposed RB Inyokern Data Center Project Docket Number 26-SPPE-01

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
NAVAL AIR WEAPONS STATION
1 ADMINISTRATION CIRCLE
CHINA LAKE CA 93555-6100

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10 Jun 26

Ms. Elizabeth Huber
California Energy Commission
715 "P" Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT FOR THE RB INYOKERN DATA
CENTER PROJECT BY R&L CAPITAL, INC (DOCKET NUMBER: 26-SPPE-01)

Thank you for allowing Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) China Lake the opportunity to review the proposed RB Inyokern data center (Docket Number 26-SPPE-01) in Inyokern, California. We have identified several critical areas of concern regarding water sustainability, electromagnetic interference (EMI), and thermal plumes. Our priority is to ensure this development does not adversely impact the NAWS China Lake research, development, acquisition, test, and evaluation (RDAT&E) mission, which is vital to supporting the warfighter.

Long-term water sustainability is a primary concern. The Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin (IWVGB) is the sole water source for surrounding communities and the Navy's RDAT&E mission. The basin is already designated as "critically over-drafted" and is subject to California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The data center's current plans estimate a maximum annual water consumption of 49 acre-feet by relying on compressor-based air chillers. However, this technology is notoriously unreliable in the 100-plus degree summer heat of the Indian Wells Valley. If the facility must revert to alternative cooling methods, such as wet cooling towers, water consumption would drastically increase above designed specifications, threatening the long-term sustainability of the aquifer.

Furthermore, the proposed facility is located in close proximity to NAWS China Lake's potable water wells. The data center's demand will significantly increase the Inyokern Consumer Service District's (ICSD) daily water production, potentially expanding the cone of depression near Navy wells. Combined with the planned on-site data center well, this increased pumping raises serious concerns about local aquifer integrity. This risk is exacerbated by a lack of specific data regarding the proposed size and depth of the data center's well.

Beyond water concerns, large data centers and high-voltage substations inherently generate ambient electromagnetic interference (EMI). There is currently no empirical data on how this scale of EMI might disrupt the Navy's weapons testing environment, telemetry systems, and range facilities. An in-depth analysis is required to determine the exact scale and propagation of ambient EMI into the ranges and its potential impact on Navy systems.

Additionally, the facility's cooling systems and 40 diesel generators will generate a considerable thermal plume which prevailing winds will likely transport directly over the NAWS China Lake test range. This plume will create non-homogenous thermal mixing, resulting in

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severe visible and infrared optical haze and shimmer. For our instrumentation and sensors looking through this plume, the refractive effects will severely reduce target contrast, degrade resolution, and cause unpredictable shifts in line-of-sight. To fully understand these potential impacts to the Navy's testing environment, a formal thermal plume analysis is required to model transport and optical disruption over the range.

The Navy highly values its collaborative relationship with the California Energy Commission. This partnership ensures compatible regional development and socioeconomic growth while protecting the military's mission. We welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with your team to address and resolve these key issues.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the proposed project. My point of contact is Mr. John Kersey, NAWS China Lake Community Planning Liaison Officer. He is available to meet with you or answer any questions at (760) 939-9438 or via email at John.Kersey@navy.mil.

Sincerely,



W. Van Allen
Captain, U.S. Navy
Commanding Officer

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