

DOCKETED

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Memorandum

To: **Commissioner Janea A. Scott** – Presiding Member
Commissioner Karen Douglas – Associate Member
Raoul Renaud – Hearing Officer

Date: January 5, 2016
Telephone: 916-651-8891
File: 02-AFC-1C

From: **California Energy Commission- Mary Dyas**
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512
Compliance Project Manager

Subject: **STATUS REPORT #3 - SONORAN ENERGY PROJECT (02-AFC-1C) AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE PROJECT DESIGN**

On October 27, 2015, the Sonoran Energy Project (SEP) Amendment Committee issued a "Scheduling Order" requiring status reports on November 2, 2015 and December 2, 2015. Staff has prepared this status report to provide updates to the Sonoran Energy Project Amendment proceeding since December 2, 2015.

Energy Commission staff (staff) has been reviewing the Data Responses, Set No. 1 (TN 206606) and the project owner has provided clarifications to staff in the technical areas of Visual Resources, Hazardous Materials Management, and Air Quality. On December 17, 2015, the project owner filed additional air quality modeling information requested by staff pertaining to Air Quality Data Requests 2 and 4 (TN 207073). Staff also requested data pertaining to visual plumes, which the project owner said they will provide to staff as soon as possible.

On January 4, 2015, an email from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) to staff was docketed (TN 207174). The email pertains to the FWS review of the SEP Petition to Amend. The FWS has determined that the existing consultation and amendments for the project remain relevant. Due to impacts of transmission lines and evaporation ponds on resident and migratory birds, the FWS recommends that the transmission line be buried underground if possible, and that the SEP evaporation ponds be eliminated and shared with the adjacent Blythe Energy Project. The FWS also requests that the project owner provide a Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy. Staff will address these comments in their analysis.

The Committee's Scheduling Order requires that the Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) be published 30 days from the date of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District's Preliminary Determination of Compliance (PDOC). The PDOC was docketed (TN 207175) on December 18, 2015, resulting in a tentative PSA publication date of January 18, 2016. Staff continues to work on AQ and all other technical sections for the PSA. However, due to the holidays, staff anticipates publishing the PSA by January 29, 2016.