

DOCKETED

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Memorandum

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

Date : March 17, 2016
Telephone: 916-651-8891
File: 02-AFC-1C

From: **California Energy Commission- Mary Dyas**
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Compliance Project Manager

Subject: **STATUS REPORT #5 - SONORAN ENERGY PROJECT (02-AFC-1C) AMENDMENT TO CHANGE THE PROJECT DESIGN**

Staff has prepared this status report to provide updates on the Sonoran Energy Project Amendment proceeding since Status Report No. 4 was filed on February 17, 2016.

On February 24, 2016, staff held a Preliminary Staff Assessment (PSA) workshop to discuss issues in the technical areas of Soil and Water Resources, Biological Resources, Traffic and Transportation and Transmission System Engineering as well as addressing comments and questions in the areas of Biological Resources, Cultural Resources, and Land Use. There were no members of the public in attendance and no public comments received. Unresolved issues still remain in the technical areas of Soil and Water Resources, and Traffic and Transportation (aviation).

On February 24, 2016, the project owner filed the Sonoran Energy Project Water Conservation Plan (TN 210520), a technical memorandum presenting an evaluation of water savings from lining Palo Verde Irrigation District (PVID) canals.

On February 24, 2016, a second round of letters was sent to the Native American tribes staff is consulting with inquiring if the tribes want to be among those listed in Condition of Certification **CUL-9** to be invited to bless the project area and conduct other appropriate ceremonies. The letter requests a response by March 21, 2016 if the tribes want to be added to the list in **CUL-9** or want information on the project.

On March 1, 2016, the comment period for the PSA ended. Written comments were received from the following:

- a) Project Owner submitted comments on most technical areas of the PSA. (TN 210578)
- b) Riverside County - Office of County Counsel, Riverside County submitted comments on the Land Use section and the need to address Public Use Permit requirements to comply with LORS. (TN 210566);
- c) Riverside County - Airport Land Use Commission submitted comments on aviation safety impacts including: thermal plumes, evaporation ponds and

transmission lines; and cumulative impacts regarding aviation safety. (TN 210563);

- d) Riverside County - Economic Development Agency (EDA) Aviation submitted comments on land use impacts from thermal plumes, cumulative aviation impacts, and Condition of Certification TRANS-9. (TN 210557);
- e) Metropolitan Water District of Southern California submitted comments regarding impacts to the Colorado River and MWD's water supplies, and the proposed Water Conservation Offset Program (TN 210560); and
- f) Colorado River Board of California submitted comments on the cooling methods and water use, Colorado River water rights, the Water Conservation Offset Program, and implications for Colorado River water supply accounting (TN 210560)

On March 7, 2016, the project owner docketed information and analysis related to the project owner's revised wastewater disposal method (TN 210635). The proposed method is to discharge SEP's wastewater to the existing Blythe Energy Project evaporation ponds and use the previously approved on-site ponds for emergency purposes as per Conditions of Certification **BIO-12** and **SOIL&WATER-4**.

Staff is currently reviewing all the comments submitted, and will address the comments in the Final Staff Assessment (FSA) for the Petition to Amend. Staff continues to work on the FSA. Staff is currently working on scheduling Issues Resolution Workshops for unresolved issues in the areas of Soil and Water Resources (date TBD), and Traffic and Transportation (tentatively mid-April).