

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	15-AFC-02
Project Title:	Mission Rock Energy Center
TN #:	212569
Document Title:	Audrey W. Vincent Comments: Audrey W. Vincent IH Comments on Mission Rock
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Audrey W. Vincent
Submitter Role:	Public
Submission Date:	8/2/2016 11:43:55 AM
Docketed Date:	8/2/2016

Comment Received From: Audrey W. Vincent

Submitted On: 8/2/2016

Docket Number: 15-AFC-02

Audrey W. Vincent IH Comments on Mission Rock

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

California Energy Commission

Informational Meeting

6/28/16

Santa Paula

Commissioners:

Re: Mission Rock Energy Center 15-AFC-02

Good evening. Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. In April I wrote you about environmental justice issues, specifically the severe needs of our disadvantaged residents, low income whites and Latinos, how our town ranks high on what the Ventura County Civic Alliance's 2015 Report of the Region calls a "misery index" stemming from poverty, low education, and other factors. I wrote of what I have seen as a retired parish minister, now congregant, visiting and serving in our church pantries and Many Meals programs.

While I remain concerned about these issues, this evening I speak as well about caring for the non-human life in this valley and its benefit to us. Caring for human beings and caring for this valley are not unrelated; we are all dependent upon the natural resources around us. This river valley is a hidden treasure, hidden in the fact that what we see we too often dismiss as trash land, spaces we take for granted, a void, a place to discard what we don't want. Beyond our vision is the world we do not see, the 1,600 square miles of watershed from four mountain areas, the San Gabriels, Castaic, Santa Susana, and Sierra Madre that feed this last free flowing Southern California river, the Santa Clara River flowing to the Pacific. This great watershed provides natural riparian systems making it possible the support of a wide range of diverse wildlife—aquatic, semi-aquatic, and terrestrial organisms. The watershed and river do this by providing breeding sites, routes of travel, and ponds in rainy times that recharge ground water resources.

Learning about the vastness of the Santa Clara River watershed, we should hardly be surprised to discover rare ecosystems, sensitive plant communities, amphibians, reptiles, fish, birds, and mammals plus threatened, endangered, and sensitive species like the California red legged frog and Southwestern pond turtle. There is a wealth of life here we know little about. Conservation groups like the Nature Conservancy and Sierra Club do know what's here and want to make it visible and accessible to all.

One organization has been quietly purchasing land along the river for the planning of a river walk, or parkway, with trails for hiking, horseback riding, and other recreation. Recreation that is cost-free, that is family friendly, that is informative of life right here, and above all is deeply restorative. This is the hidden possibility the Santa Clara River provides. This river walk or parkway is the kind of clean economics and industry Santa Paula craves and from which the town would greatly benefit. The Nature Conservancy has done studies demonstrating the economic benefits to a community which improves its natural resources:

By improving habitat and making the preserve more accessible, the restoration attracted many birders who would not otherwise have visited the county and played a key role in over \$200 million in per year in new spending.

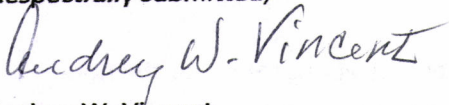
<http://blog.nature.org/science/2014/08/13/ecological-restoration-birds-birders-economic-development-nature/>

For those of us who have no discretionary income to travel anywhere, not even to the beach 12 miles away, children and adults who have never experienced wilderness such a river preservation resource, a river parkway 10 minutes from town would provide that, would invite families to recreate together, to offer restorative time to reflect how we are one species among many, to be awed how we are a part of something so much larger than ourselves, that this watershed and floodplain eons in age will survive us, that we are a part of this timelessness. We human beings need this and it is right here.

A Riverwalk or parkway fits what is naturally here; it enhances what has preceded anything we humans have put here; it adds to, does not detract, degrade, or diminish.

I urge your rejection of the fossil fuel peaker plant for this still wild, still ecologically rich river valley.

Respectfully submitted,



Audrey W. Vincent