

DOCKETED

Docket Number:	15-RETI-02
Project Title:	Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative 2.0
TN #:	211992
Document Title:	Kern County Planning & Natural Resources Comments: Request for Transmission Special Study Area - Solar
Description:	N/A
Filer:	System
Organization:	Kern County Planning & Natural Resources
Submitter Role:	Public Agency
Submission Date:	6/27/2016 4:07:22 PM
Docketed Date:	6/27/2016

Comment Received From: Kern County Planning & Natural Resources

Submitted On: 6/27/2016

Docket Number: 15-RETI-02

Request for Transmission Special Study Area - Solar

Additional submitted attachment is included below.

Lorelei H. Oviatt, AICP, Director
2700 "M" Street, Suite 100
Bakersfield, CA 93301-2323
Phone: (661) 862-8600
Fax: (661) 862-8601 TTY Relay 1-800-735-2929
Email: planning@co.kern.ca.us
Web Address: <http://pcd.kerndsa.com/>



**PLANNING AND NATURAL
RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**

Planning
Community Development
Administrative Operations

June 14, 2016

File: IWV Management Plan

California Public Utilities Commission
President, Michael Picker
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

California Energy Commission
Chair Robert B Wesienmiller, Ph.D
1516 Ninth Street, MS -29
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

California ISO
Chair Richard Maullin
P.O Box 639014
Folsom, California 93560

RE: Request for Transmissions Special Study Area – Solar
Kern County Indian Wells Valley, Ridgecrest, California

Dear Gentlemen,

This is a request for the designation of the Indian Wells Valley, near Ridgecrest California in Kern County, as Special Study Area for expansion of transmission capacity for commercial solar production.

With abundant natural resources of wind and solar, a business friendly Board of Supervisors, and a streamlined permit process, Kern County has now permitted for all types of renewable energy, county-wide over 11,000 MW with over \$28 billion of investment. This includes roof top, distributed generation for onsite use, and commercial scale wind and solar. With the success of the Tehachapi Renewable Transmission Project and the on-going construction of commercial scale solar and repowering of wind, we now have 4 large scale battery storage projects in formulation.

Based on this success, the Planning and Natural Resources Department, in consultation with the Board Chairman Supervisor Mick Gleason, has identified renewable energy as part of our solution for our challenging situation in the Indian Wells Valley. The home for over 46,000 residents in the City of Ridgecrest, Inyokern, and China Lake Naval Weapons Station has been designated a critically over drafted basin (Bulletin 118) by California Department of Water Resources (DWR). In advance of the new State directives on water, the Kern County Board of Supervisors directed staff to prepare a program EIR and rebalance the land uses for the over drafted basin. This EIR identifies this basin, which is wholly dependent on groundwater, as already using three times the safe yield with a projection base on the existing agricultural land uses, natural growth and China Lake for 5 times the safe yield.

June 14, 2016

Page 2

The situation is unsustainable and while the leaders of Kern County with small portions of Inyo and San Bernardino County are moving forward to form with the City of Ridgecrest and Indian Wells Valley Water District a Groundwater Sustainability Agency and Plan, solutions need to be found. Renewable energy in the form of Commercial scale solar is a potential primary centerpiece of a water balance solution.

This area of the Mojave Desert has high solar radiation and appropriate areas that could be mitigated for endangered species issues with other indicatives the county is pursuing. The private land area of over 223,000 acres is surrounded by land that is owned by the Federal Government: Bureau of Land Management and Department of Defense. Yet even with the mandates to utilized land for renewable energy by the BLM and DOD, commercial scale solar is not feasible in this area without increased transmission capacity. At the present time there are no commercial scale solar projects. Commercial scale wind has been deemed not feasible for the area due to the Military Airspace of the R-2507 for the Department of Defense.

Formulation of a Tehachapi Renewable Transmission (TRTP) type transmission project, including battery storage opportunities, for this area would provide the following benefits:

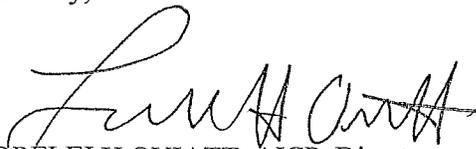
- Alternative low water land use for property owners.
- Ability for Department of Defense to do large scale commercial solar both inside and outside the installation boundary to monetize lands.
- Significant construction jobs and sales tax revenue for Kern County
- Centerpiece solution for a Groundwater Sustainability Plan for the Valley, critical to the future of China Lake Naval Weapons Station, BLM, private property owners and the City of Ridgecrest.
- Streamlined permitting of commercial scale solar projects through a zoning overlay.

Kern County has been a supportive partner with the CPUC, CEC, and CAISO in achieving the RPS for California. Designation of this area for a Transmissions Special Study Area is the next phase of renewable energy development to demonstrate that the siting of such projects has co-benefits in our water dialogue and on a landscape scale can be implemented with appropriate biological sensitivity.

The Kern County Board of Supervisors will be providing confirmation of this request on their July 19, 2016 afternoon Board Hearing. I am available for any questions you or your staff may have at Loreleio@co.kern.ca.us or 661-862-8866.

Thank you for your support of this growing industry and your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



LORELEI H OVIATT, AICP, Director
Kern County Planning and Natural Resources Department

cc: Kern County Board of Supervisors Chairman Gleason
CAO