

## DOCKETED

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*Comment Received From: Alfredo A. Figueroa*

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**Opposition of CEC decision in Approving NextEra Blythe Solar Project**

*Additional submitted attachment is included below.*

February 12, 2014

Commissioner Karen Douglas  
Presiding Member of Committee Reviewing Blythe Solar Power Project Amendment  
California Energy Commission  
1516 Ninth Street  
Sacramento, Ca 95814-5512

RE: Letter in Opposition of the California Energy Commission's decision in approving the NextEra Blythe Solar Project

Dear Ms. Douglas:

We are totally perturbed by the California Energy Commission's recent decision of January 15, 2014 approving NextEra's Blythe solar project.

As stipulated in the Palo Verde Times newspaper, the Blythe Solar Power Amendment Committee said that the cumulative impacts that cannot be mitigated to less than significant levels are impacts to biological resources, cultural resources, land use, and visual resources. The CEC has now taken the same stance as the Genesis Solar Power's Attorney, Scott Galati, as stated in their defense against the Colorado River Indian Tribes (CRIT) preliminary injunction filing (TRO) against Genesis by allowing Genesis to continue its project at Ford Dry Lake. The Genesis attorney stated that **public interest in renewable energy was more important than preserving Native American Cultural Resources.**

We all know what happened at the Genesis Solar Site after Judge George H. Wu of the 9th District Federal Court denied the motion on June 28, 2012. This was one of the worst destructions of sacred sites and burials that were found just as the CRIT Elders had said were there.

The CEC's own cultural resources investigation had found an abundant of cultural resources as stipulated in their report. C-3 Cultural Resources Docket 09-AFC-8 C.3.1 Summary of conclusions dated 06/22/10 by Elizabeth A. Bagwell, Ph.D., RPA and Beverly E. Bastian: *Staff Finds that the GSEP construction impacts, when combined with impacts from past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, contribute in a small but significant way to the cumulatively considerable adverse impacts for cultural resources at both the local I-10 Corridor and regional levels. **This analysis estimates that more than 800 sites within the I-10 Corridor and 17,000 sites within the Southern California Desert Region will potentially be destroyed. Mitigation can reduce the impact of the destruction, but not to a less-than-significant level.***

We are also opposing to the construction of these solar panel projects because of their gross violation to the following Indigenous, State, Federal and United Nation laws that support our demands and why these projects should not be constructed within sacred areas:

- **National Congress of American Indians:** Resolution #LNK-12-036, opposing the Department of Interior Fast-Track Policies of Renewable Energy Projects on Ancestral Homelands, June 17, 2012.

**Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona: Resolution** 2012, opposing the Department of Interior Fast-Track Policies of Renewable Energy Projects on Ancestral Homelands, June 29, 2012. The Resolution specifies that whereas over 40 proposed solar and wind renewable energy projects are to be undertaken within a 50-mile radius of the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation which puts tens of thousands of acres of land within the ancestral territory homelands of CRIT as well as other Yuman tribes, at further risk of destruction.

- **Colorado River Indian Tribes Resolution and Letter to President Barack Obama:** opposing the construction of Solar Power Projects within 50-miles from the CRIT Reservation boundary of February 27, 2012.
- **United Nations Declaration on the Right of Indigenous People Resolution** of 2007: was adopted by the General Assembly during the 107<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting and was signed by President Barack Obama on December 15, 2010.
- **Native American Sacred Places**, March 6, 2003(S.B. 18)
- **Native American Sacred Lands Act**, June 11, 2003 (H.R. 2419)
- **The Sacred Land Protection Act**, July 18, 2002 (H.R. 5155)
- **The Native American Sacred Sites Protection Act**, February 22, 2002 (S.B. 1828)
- **Accommodations of Sacred Sites and Federal Land**, Signed by President Bill Clinton on May 24, 1996 (Executive Order 13007) This focuses on specific sites and Indian religion.
- **Native American Graves Protection & Repatriation Act** of 1990
- **Archeological Resources Protection Act** of 1979
- **American Indian Religious Freedom Act**, August 11, 1978
- **The Civil Right Act** of 1968
- **Antiquities Act** of 1906

During President Barack Obama's speech of January 28, 2014, he stated that "And while we are at it, I'll use my authority to protect more of our pristine federal lands for future generations." Also, 109 House Democratic members urged President Obama to protect National Monuments using the Antiquities Act.

The Obama administration is preparing to designate areas in New Mexico and California off-limits to development under its executive authority, a move that signals a bolder public-lands policy in the President's second term.

One of the two sites, the nearly 500,000-acre [Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks](#) region near Las Cruces, N.M., is twice as large as the largest national monument established by President Obama. The other site is about 1,600 acres on California's central coast known as the [Point Arena-Stornetta Public Lands](#). We wholeheartedly support this effort by President Obama but would strongly encourage him to support the cultural resources that are related to the Native American creation story and support all the laws that have been approved by the United States government and the United Nations.

Blythe Solar Millennium Power Project is so close to the Palo Verde Valley and the orchards remaining near there. Due to the heat intensity of the project changing the atmospheric conditions, the agriculture will be affected.

In a recent article regarding the Jenko Solar Project in China, the Chinese are setting an example in protesting against the large solar panel projects in their country because they have not only contaminated their water but also the climate change has ruined their agriculture industry. Apparently not even China is benefitting from these thousands of solar panel projects. The Jenko Solar Project is an excellent example of why we do not need these projects near agricultural land much less near the Colorado River where its water reserve in Lake Mead is barely 1/3 of its capacity and all of its water has already been allocated. Currently California is suffering its worst drought since the records have been kept and this is a well-known fact. The Blythe Solar Power Project will drill wells from aquifers that lead to the Colorado River. The Colorado River Board of California has stipulated that all these aquifers within 50 miles go the Colorado River and any water taken from these aquifers has to be approved by the Board of Directors. On February 14, 2014, during his recent visit to Fresno, California, President Obama said he will direct federal facilities in California to curb water use, including a moratorium on new or unnecessary landscaping projects. Soitec Solar Development Project Company in Boulevard, California, found it had severely underestimated its water usage on the project and other high profile projects according to an East County magazine article by Mirian Rafferty. The solar power projects should be included in the moratorium because they require an abundance of water to function.

When the Blythe Natural Gas Plant was constructed, it destroyed 1,500 acres of citrus so they could obtain the water rights of those citrus orchards thus leaving about 550 citrus farm workers unemployed that worked with the Coachella Growers Citrus Company. Now the solar power projects are going to destroy all the existing citrus orchards for all the water rights causing further farm worker unemployment. These farm workers are all permanent residents of the Palo Verde Valley. Currently the Palo Verde Valley is suffering the highest unemployment rate in California with the exception of the Imperial and Yuma Valleys.

The U.S. Government does not need to continue its manifest destiny policy of the 1900s. The Native American cultural cosmic tradition is still alive despite its 500 years of domination by the Spanish and English. We all know that the Taliban tried to destroy all remnants of the Buddha tradition in Afghanistan. In the United States, one of the most popular geoglyph images, the Kokopilli/Cicmitl Twin Group of the Creator, recognized throughout the United States and Mexico is being threatened to be destroyed by the solar power companies.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack has called for the USDA and the U.S. Forest Service to work more closely with tribal governments in the protection, respectful interpretation and appropriate access to Indian sacred sites. Vilsack said, "American Indian and Alaska Native values and culture have spirit and deserve to be honored and respected. By honoring and protecting sacred sites on national forests and grasslands, we foster improved tribal relationships and a better understanding of the Native people's deep reverence for natural resources and contributions to society."

We strongly urge that the Commission reconsider its decision to approve this notorious solar power project like they did when the Palen Solar Power Project attorneys requested an extension before deciding to deny or approve their project. It will behoove President Obama to continue his motivation and concern in protecting those sacred sites by enforcing the laws and establish a National Monument in the McCoy/Big Maria Mountains.

Sincerely,

Patricia Robles

Alfredo Acosta Figueroa

Patricia Robles

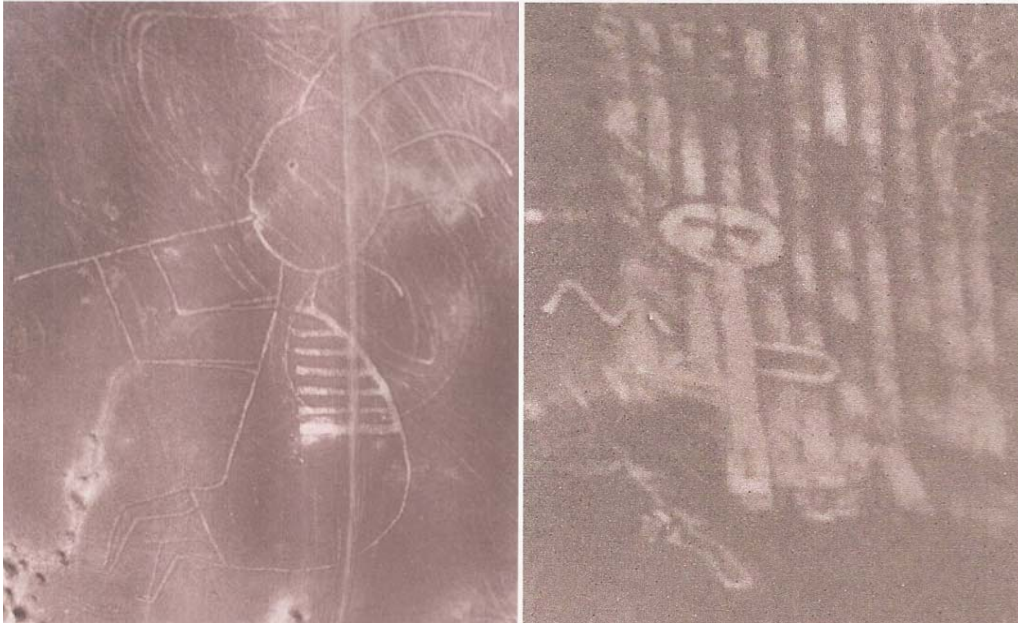
Elder/Historian/Chemehuevi Tribe Monitor  
de Aztlan Sacred Sites

President of La Cuna  
Protection Circle

*Attachments Included*

## Twin Geoglyphs of Kokopilli/Cicimitl

Sacred geoglyphs that are within the approved NextEra Blythe Solar Energy Project by the California Energy Commission, January 15, 2014



Kokopilli is the Creator's image of Quetzalcoatl in the form of a half human, half insect. He is leaving during the end of the 3rd sun of the suns in the Aztec Sunstone Calendar. Kokopilli means koko-hurt and pilli-our Lord. He is hurt because humans have not respected the Creator's dictation of harmonious equilibrium among all species

Cicimitl, the Great Spirit, El Cucuy, Kokopilli's twin takes the human spirits to the 4 directions and to its final destination at the Topock Maze which is 13 magnetic north from the Mule Mountains (Calli-earth). In English, this image is called extra-terrestrial (ET)



Bamiyan Buddha twins carved into a sandstone cliff near the provincial capital in Central Afghanistan. They stand 165 feet and 114 feet tall. They were built around the 2nd century. Appeals came from all over the world such as the World Monument Fund and the United Nations Secretary General for the Taliban government of Afghanistan to preserve these sacred sites of the Buddha creation story in Afghanistan. W.L. Rathje an archaeologist at Stanford University described the destruction of the statues as a crime against humanity. Afghanistan was later invaded by the United States after they destroyed the statues that the world considered to be masterpieces. The United State Government fought for these foreign religious sacred sites but is not willing to fight to preserve sacred sites in its own country.

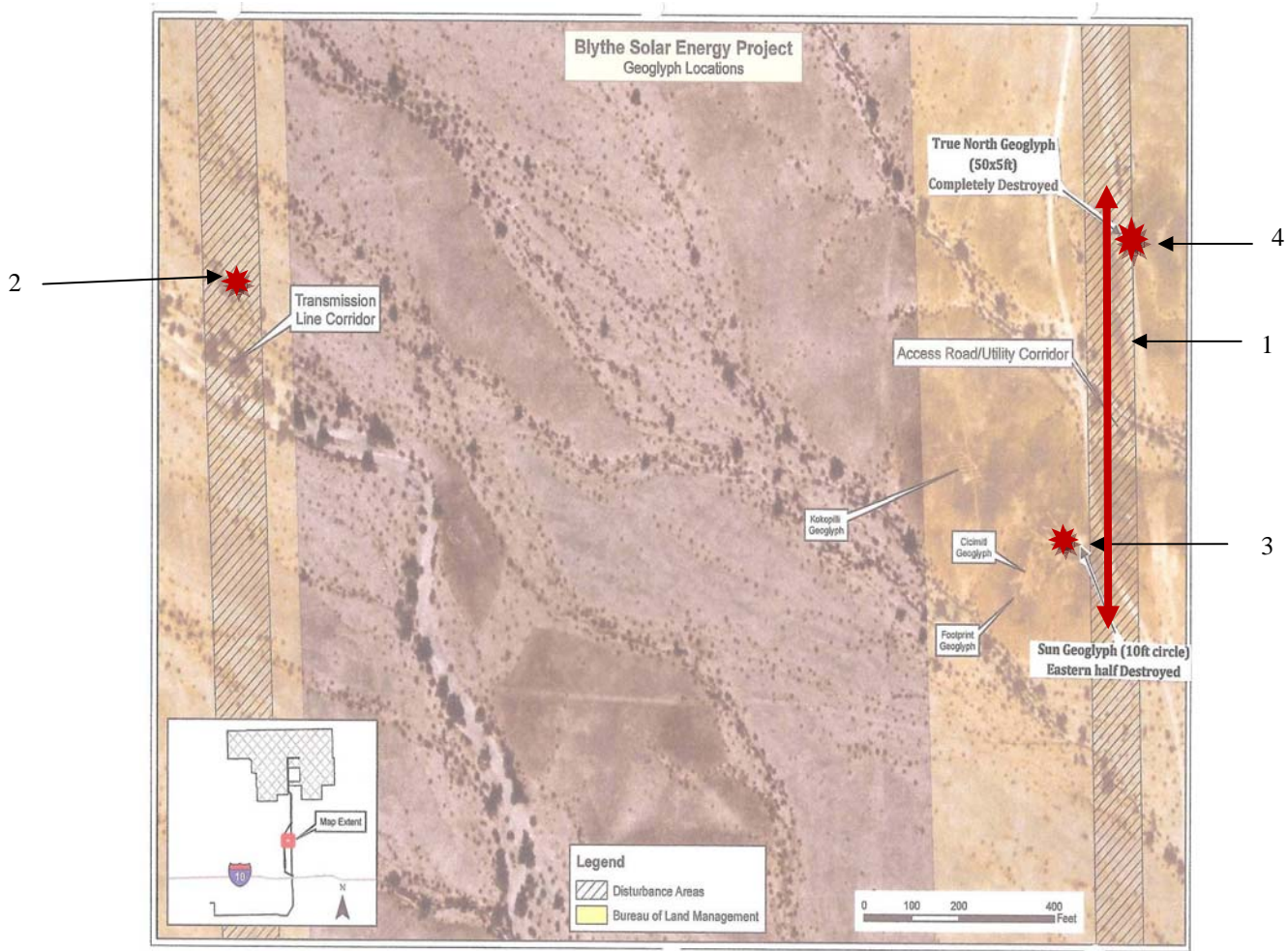
The protection of sacred sites has been well demonstrated during the 2nd World War. On June 23, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in war areas. The commission drew up lists of cultural treasures with the hope that military action might be planned to avoid harming them. During World War II, Dwight D. Eisenhower understood the importance of the protection and preservation of these sacred sites. Eisenhower stated "if we have to choose between destroying a famous building and sacrificing our own men, then our men's lives count infinitely more and the building must go". He prefaced the proclamation by saying, "Shortly we will be fighting our way across the Continent of Europe in battles designed to preserve our civilization....". His order made clear that destruction of everything in an army's path was not justifiable, that a people's long-established culture and the most beautiful manifestations of what it believes in and values matter and we, when we enter and defend it, are duty-bound to respect those things. Currently a movie is in theaters directed by George Clooney, and based on the book by Robert M. Edsel called "Monuments Men". This is a story of how strongly Eisenhower felt about saving these cultural sites and artistic monuments. Cathedrals, historic structures, famous paintings, sculptures and more were saved for the preservation of the culture of our civilization.

During the Iraq war, in 2003 and 2004, the United States caused damage to ancient sites with their heavy vehicles and machinery. Military forces built a helipad, carved out parking areas and trenches destroying these sites. Babylon, Iraq was damaged by war and by looters. The U.S. has said it will help rehabilitate Babylon, funding an effort by the World Monuments Fund and Iraq's State Board of Antiquities. This site is tremendously important according to Gaetano Palumbo of the World Monuments Fund, yet in its present state, Babylon is "hardly understandable" as a place where so much happened in history".

On July 22, 2012, columnist Victor Davis Hanson said, "sometimes post-modern, politically correct westerners can be every bit as zealous-and as potentially destructive of the pass- as pre-modern Islamics.



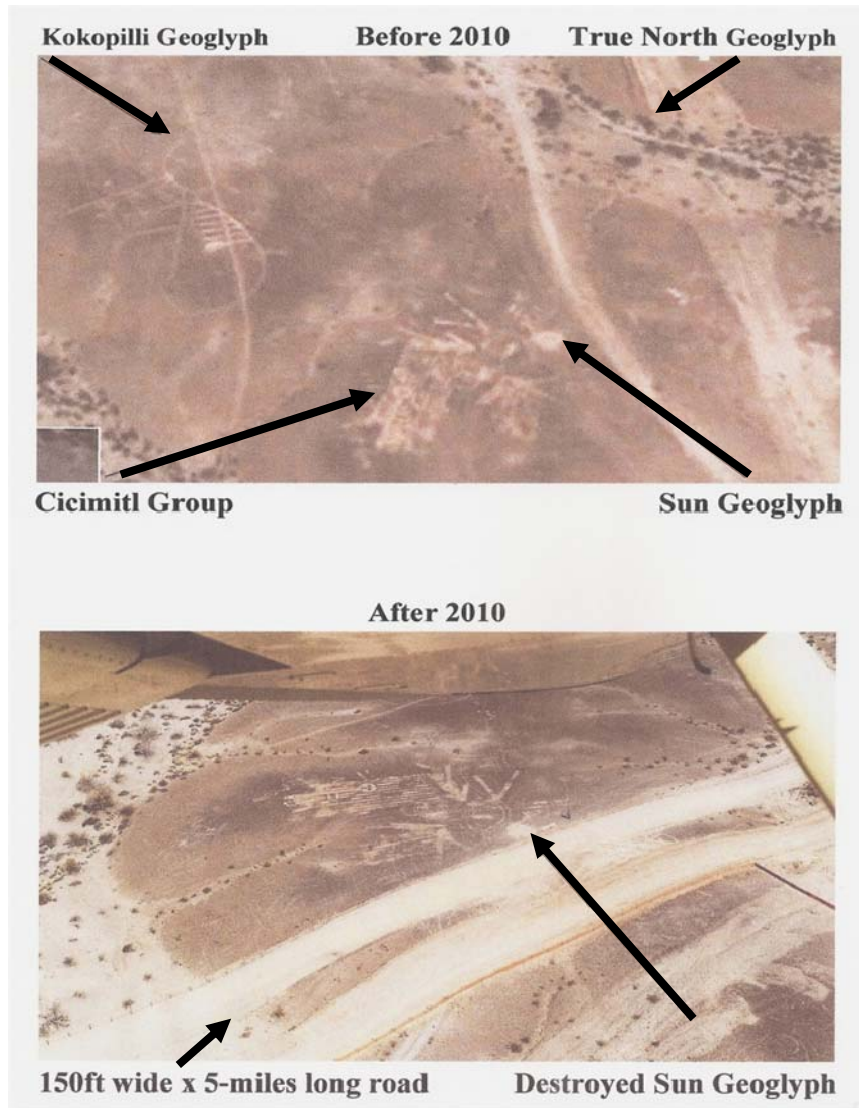
# 2010 Map of Proposed Blythe Solar Energy Project Transmission Corridors and Location of Kokopilli/Cicimitl Twin Geoglyph Group



After protest by the Indigenous people, Blythe Solar proposed to move the transmission corridor to the approximately 1 1/2 miles to the west but that road will also destroy Sacred Sites such as Quetzalcoatl Human Quartz Image. All of the McCoy Valley is the most sacred place and is inter-related with the other Sacred Sites along the Colorado River.

1. Roadway leveled out 5 miles long and 300 foot wide by the bankrupt Blythe Solar Millennium
2. Quetzalcoatl Quartz Human Image leaving to the sunset.
3. Sun Geoglyph, eastern half destroyed
4. True north geoglyph destroyed

## **Destruction of Kokopilli/Cicimitl Group by the Bankrupt Blythe Solar Millennium**

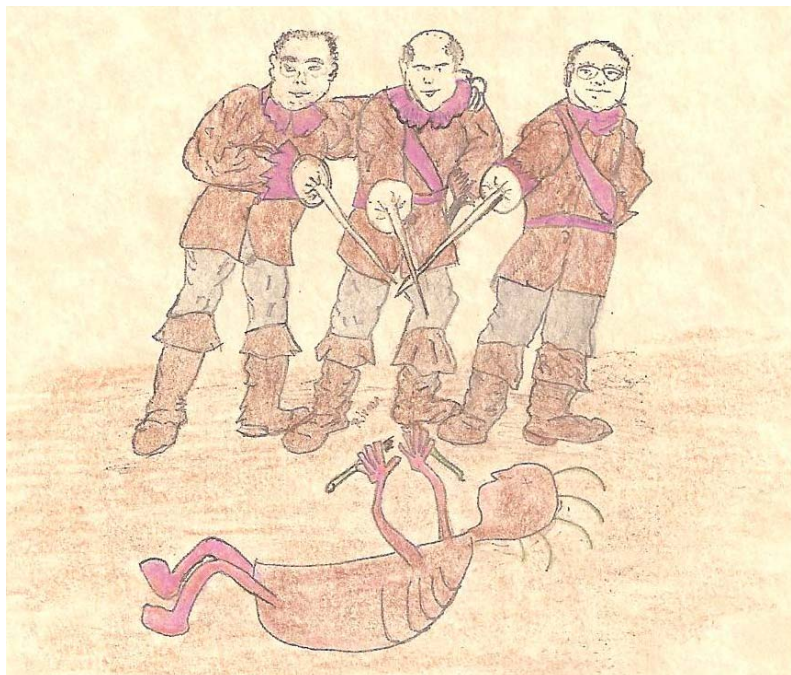


These are aerial photographs of the geoglyph images of Kokopilli and Cicimitl. Comparison of the two photos shows the destruction to the site by the solar projects, including the destruction of the Sun Complex and True North Geoglyphs.

# Groundbreaking of the Solar Trust of American Solar Power Project at the Blythe Site on June 17, 2011



Left to Right: City of Blythe Mayor Joseph DeConinck, California Governor Jerry Brown, Solar Trust of America Chairman and CEO Uwe T. Schmidt, U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and 80th Assembly District Assemblymember V. Manuel Perez shovel dirt on June 17, 2011 during a groundbreaking event near Blythe, California for the Blythe Solar Power Project.



**Three Musketeer cartoon emulating what the above government officials and company representatives are manifesting in the destruction of the Kokopilli/Cicimitl Geoglyph Sites.**

Left to right are 80th Assembly District Assemblymember V. Manuel Perez (Señor El Vendido), Governor Jerry Brown and Secretary of Interior, Ken Salazar. Mr Perez has been fully aware of the sacredness of the site and is knowledgeable of its significance. He had previously taken a tour of the sacred sites. Governor Brown was a main supporter in stopping the construction of the Sun Desert Nuclear Power Plant 10 miles south of the Kokopilli/Cicimitl site in 1979, now one of the main supporters of destroying the sacred sites. Mr. Salazar is well aware of the atrocities that are being committed.

# La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle

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February 14, 2014

We are opposing to the construction of the Blythe Solar and McCoy Solar projects because of their gross violation to the following **Indigenous, State, Federal** and **United Nation laws** that support our demands and why these projects should not be constructed within sacred areas:

- ☐ **National Congress of American Indians:** Resolution #LNK-12-036, opposing the Department of Interior Fast-Track Polices of Renewable Energy Projects on Ancestral Homelands, June 17, 2012.
- ☐ **Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona:** Resolution 0212, opposing the Department of Interior Fast-Track Polices of Renewable Energy Projects on Ancestral Homelands, June 29, 2012. The Resolution specifies that whereas over 40 proposed solar and wind renewable energy projects are to be undertaken within a 50-mile radius of the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation which puts tens of thousands of acres of land within the ancestral territory homelands of CRIT as well as other Yuma tribes, at further risk of destruction.
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