

DOCKET 07-AFC-5
DATE _____
RECD. <u>AUG 30 2010</u>

Public comment in opposition of the Ivanpah SEGS

August 30, 2010

Docket No. 07-AFC-5

California Energy Commission Docket Unit

1516 Ninth Street, MS-4

Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Sirs and Madams,

This letter is to formally submit my comments in opposition of the Ivanpah SEGS project. I am a California resident and PhD candidate in the Graduate Group in Ecology at University of California, Davis. Ever since I moved to California in 2001, I have visited the Mojave desert a few times a year for recreation and work with desert fishes. Driving from Joshua Tree to Las Vegas and going through Ivanpah valley has always been a special treat, and I would be extremely disappointed to see acres and acres of ecologically and aesthetically amazing and spectacular desert turned over to industry for the sake of a solar energy generating plant that frankly will not solve the California energy crisis.

Destroying landscape in order to provide energy is not a step in the right direction. In fact it is a page from the old paradigm of exploiting non-renewable resources (the desert) in order to support people who are *not* trying to save energy. Only this time the project is egregiously built in the name of "renewable energies", conveniently ignoring the fact that the acres of Mojave desert and the organisms that call it home will be destroyed to build the array is most certainly *not renewable*.

To fast forward the permitting process in order to spur the development of solar arrays in the desert is outrageous. If this project goes through, it paves the way for more and more development. When will it stop? When we pave the entire desert with mirrors yet fail to curb our consumption?

In addition, the desert tortoises are a genetically distinct population and could possibly be petitioned for ESU (evolutionary significant unit) status, warranting further protection under the ESA. The project should at least be delayed until a petition process can be filed, in addition to circulating the Tortoise Translocation Plan to the public. It is a bit of a joke to think that moving the tortoises out of the valley will save them. Any ecologist worth their salt knows that this is an exercise in futility, and the smallest possible route of mitigation for Brightsource. It is practically doing nothing at all.

Beyond the tortoises, rare plants and birds share the general area and should be addressed in mitigation measures, beyond an interpretation center that does nothing to preserve the wildness of the Mojave desert.

I strongly encourage the California Energy Commission to halt or at least delay the Ivanpah SEGS. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Sincerely,

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