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September 1st, 2010

California Energy Commission  
ATTN: Presiding member, Mr. Jeffrey Byron

DOCKET
07-AFC-5
DATE SEP 01 2010
RECD. SEP 07 2010

RE: DOCKET NO. 07-AFC-5  
IVANPAH SEGS Proposed final decision

Mr. Byron,

Sir, I am writing you as a concerned California resident, in hopes of persuading you to delay your approval decision for this project, or to rescind it entirely, forcing Brightsource Energy to find a different location for their plant.

I understand the need to have renewable energy added to the state's portfolio, what I don't get is why does this project have to be sited on such a picturesque and environmentally sensitive location, the Ivanpah Valley, which your own documents admit will contribute to the development and industrialization of it in the future.

Others speak and write with far more eloquence than I possess; some are so well versed with the facts of this matter, why they seem to this old country boy that they are walking encyclopedias. However, if I may, I would like to point out a couple of things for your consideration.

As you are aware, the Conservation Biology Institute just made available for public comment, their 108 page DRECT Report drawn up for the REAT of which your commission is a member. They mention the following in several locations but I will just refer to the page 4 instance found in section 1.1 Introduction, Philosophy and Approach:

"We therefore strongly advocate using no regrets strategies in the near term - such as siting developments only in already

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disturbed areas - as more refined analyses become available to guide more difficult decisions."

I would like to point out that the site selected for the Ivanpah SEGS project is sited on publicly owned, desert land that is home to several endangered plant and animal species, and is very environmentally sensitive. I would also like to acquaint you with a fact - this site which I hiked extensively in March of this year, was cleaner by far, as far as any litter, tire marks etc, than its' neighbor, The Mojave National Preserve, in particular the roadside from Cirra down to where the road dead ends into the Ivanpah Road I believe. I was amazed when I walked it.

Also secondly, the 36 desert tortoises found in the survey, which I consider an extremely low number, when you consider the high quality of the habitat and the food sources available - in effect will be condemned to death by your decision, no exaggeration, no brag, just fact, see the results of the Fort Irwin translocation debacle for all the proof you need to see that I am right. 49% death rate within months of the translocation, and over 11% just this year, so far. Sir, no matter how you mitigate this, you are talking "tortoise" pure and simple, your decision for approval equates to a "death warrant for the tortoises" with no chance of appeal and no chance of a reprieve. I and many of my friends and colleagues believe this just as surely as we believe that the sun will rise in the morning. Again, so that there can be no doubt, these imminent desert tortoise's deaths will be on your head, not on ours.

I propose that if you still go ahead and over-ride these and other environmental "facts on the ground" - that at the minimum, with proper and stringent safeguards in place, that the plant operator be required to house them in the proper location, to cherish them, until they die a natural and normal death.

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after living a normal life once they have been removed from their current homes, not to be cooped up in zoo like conditions, but in a natural home, thus minimizing the chances of their imminent demise.

If Brightsource Energy complains, you might point out to them, that their federal ADRA LOAN GUARANTEE is for 1.37 Billion dollars or there about, and their estimate for construction costs is about 1.1 Billion dollars, there is obvious room here to pay for this.

By doing mitigation like this, it will send a strong signal to those who site these plants on valuable species habitat, instead of using a commonsense approach such as proposed by the scientists in the DRECT, that your agency and staff, including the commission members, feel so strongly about protection of the species, that mitigation efforts truly will conform to the letter and spirit of the laws that they and you are operating under. In this case, that the endangered desert tortoise and others have value and must be protected.

Sir, I am only a small time bus driver and blogger, but I have loved this area for decades. I really don't want to see it developed at all. But I know that my wishes, as well as those of friends, relatives and colleagues probably aren't as important in the grand scheme of things. Still though, I am asking that you reconsider or delay your proposed decision, to allow more time for reflection about the DRECT and other matters relating to this most important, and permanent decision affecting this beautiful valley that so many people love and hold dear.

Thank you for considering my comments.

With best regards,

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