

**DOCKET****09-AFC-9****samiam**

**From:** Earl Wilson [zearl.email@gmail.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, April 23, 2010 4:02 AM  
**To:** ESolorio@energy.state.ca.us  
**Cc:** samiam@iwvisp.com; JAB, JAB  
**Subject:** CLAS written statement

DATE APR 23 2010

RECD. APR 27 2010

Eric,

Due to work commitments I am unable to attend the workshop and I understand my comments are requested for the workshop mitigation negotiations currently in progress.

I was not informed either by mail or via email that this was scheduled although I had checked the "staff revised schedule" on the website and evidently confused the high lighted 6/1-6/3 evidentiary hearings with the Ridgecrest meeting. In fact I planned my vacation around these dates so I could attend the meetings. I also was not notified of the availability of the Draft EIS.

Nevertheless my last contact by email from the Energy Commission in regards to this matter was an exchange with Shaelyn Strattan, Feb15/16th, when I provided Google satellite files for a more specific location of the China Lake Astronomical Society "Star party" site which I note has been included in the Mar. 26th "Staff Assessment" as Figures C.5-3 & C.5-4.

Comments:

Earl Wilson representing China Lake Astronomical Society (CLAS) as current president of CLAS.

I have not had time to review the DEIS in it's entirety but I am encouraged by the references to night lighting mitigation and recognition of the star party site as a recreational use of the area that will be impacted.

CLAS will not take a position either for or against the proposed project but does take a stand as a member society of the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and Western Amateur Astronomers (WAA) against excessive and improper use of night lighting and resultant light pollution that continues to diminished the quality of the desert environment for wildlife and humans as well.

As for mitigation for the star party site goes - we have not been extensively searching for another site.

Criteria for another site

would be the distance from Ridgecrest being in the 5 mile range and have an area similar in size to the one that will be under the footprint of the S'ly collector field and easy access by normal passanger cars. The Walker Pass campground suggestion is appreciated but the distance is just out of the question for the general public.

I talked to the proponents representative (Scott), during the Jan. workshop, and was told (orally) that another site nearby would be located. Of course, suitability for our public outreach program would

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depend on the ambient light from the project after completion. We would be willing to share a camping area in the wash or an open area nearby but it would have to be S'ly of Brown Rd., as far E'ly of the project as possible, and again dependent on light from the project. We would hope that BLM would be open to locations that we might locate in the near future.

I do note that the all lighting is specified to be fully shielded and pointing towards the "center" of the project. This should be changed to pointing towards the ground (earth centric) and luminaries not visible beyond the fence line i.e. no light trespass off the project footprint. This would only apply for the final project configuration and not for the construction phase.

An additional comment: I also serve on the board of directors of WAA, which is a regional umbrella organization incorporated in 1949, serving the western US and representing 19 astronomical societies with an aggregate membership of over 2500 individuals.

Many of these people regularly take their telescopes to the desert to observe and escape the city lights. There is concern about the amount of land that may be restricted/closed - not only by projects like this one but the quantity of proposed alternative energy projects that are already applied for - greatly exceeding one million acres. Added to this is the potential of another 5 million acres of habitat mitigation lands specified at the 5:1 ratio. If all these projects are on lands under the CDCA Plan this potentially precludes public access to 50% of the CDCA covered 12 million acres. This dose not include future applications.

In conclusion, I would encourage the California Energy Commission and BLM to address night lighting as an impact to "Visual Resources" in all of your permitting processes and require that they are mitigated in a night friendly manner.

Draft error found under "Land Use" B.2 - 11

"Astrological" should be changed to "Astronomical"

Astrological tells you whether you're going to have a lucky day or not.

Precluding asteroids hitting the earth, which would be an unlucky day, Astronomical refers to a science.

Thank you for allowing me to comment,  
Earl Wilson.

CLAS

<http://www.chinalakeastroc.org/>

IDA

<http://www.darksky.org/>

WAA

<http://www.waa.av.org/>